

Ginny (Overberg) and Jeff Platania  
Somerset, NJ

Club: Rutgers Promenaders



How did you start square dancing?

Ginny: I started with Teen Promenaders when I was 14. I joined Rutgers Promenaders when I started attending Douglass College in 1977, and have been a member ever since.

Jeff: I started with Rutgers Promenaders in Fall 1980 when my best friend dragged me there – it was after the break-up of a relationship, and he said I was “bumming him out” and needed to meet some new women.

What year did you meet? Fall 1980 And marry? January 1985

Square dancing wasn't supposed to be a part of our wedding, originally, but Jeff's family refused to believe he had met me through square dancing, and wanted us to prove it by dancing at the reception. We ended up dancing a tip with Jeff's guitar teacher playing “Rocky Top” along with the band, and Betsy Gotta calling. We also had a square dance party for our dancing friends a week or so before the wedding.

Circumstances of your meeting and dating?

Jeff: As soon as I saw Ginny, I told my friend, “That's the one.” He said, “What?” I said, “That's the girl I'm going to marry.” I asked who she was, and he told me her name and said, “Forget it; she won't even talk to you.” It took me a couple of months to get up the nerve to even talk to her. By then, she was mad at me for some unknown reason. I didn't know what I had done. Read on for the explanation... Meanwhile, at our wedding, I reminded my friend of what I had said to him the first time I saw Ginny, and pointed out that I had, in fact, just married her!

Ginny: Early in my senior year of college, a friend pointed him out to me as someone she was interested in. He was in the fall square dance class at the time. I thought he looked okay but wasn't interested in him myself. A couple of months later she told me he had done something really unkind so of course I took her word for it and I decided I hated him, too. It turned out that she was jealous because he had asked her about me and was interested in asking me out. Three months later, at the end of a dance, I found myself first trading smart-ass remarks, then flirting with him – to this day I have no idea why! – and he asked me out and I said yes. We dated for five months but had problems and broke up. Nine months later, when I was halfway through grad school, I ran into him at a summer dance. It may sound silly, but when he walked in the door, it was like I saw him with a new set of eyes. A thought instantly popped into my head: “That's the man I'm going to marry.” At the same time that I thought “that's a ridiculous thought,” I also knew deep-down it was true. We went out after the dance, talked for a long time about what had gone wrong before, and decided to give it another try. About eighteen months later, we were engaged, and just over a year after that we got married. We've been married 26½ years now.

Favorite square dance memories?

Annual Labor Day square dance weekends, first in Ohio, then in Virginia, now at Cherry Ridge, where we get to dance and cut up with our friends, most of whom we knew back when we were all young and still single

Going out after dances, whether for a late-night diner raid or a potluck at someone's house

A square dance cruise to Bermuda in 1995, where we danced on board the tour boat that took us to/from our snorkeling excursion – it was a three-hour tour on board the Minnow, and we danced as it went through part of the Bermuda Triangle!

Annual winter barbecue at the Gottas' where we get to catch up with the old college crowd

Having a great group of friends for over 30 years with whom we've shared the good and the bad, the highs and the lows of life, and knowing that when times get tough, they'll always be there for us, ready to help, listen, and care

Seeing the younger members – children of the old crew – who have a bar on their club badges that says "The Next Generation." A great way to get new members for a club with shrinking attendance is to "grow your own"!

Anything else?

Ask Betsy Gotta about how they changed renters but kept the same boyfriend – who ended up marrying the new renter.

When we were all single and college-aged, you either learned how to get along with a person after you broke up, or one of you would have to quit the club. Since most of us couldn't imagine quitting, some of our weddings looked like, as a friend described it, a reunion of the bride's/groom's exes!