

Holly and Bill Smythe
Warren, NJ

Current clubs: Bee Sharps; Mountain Squares

Former clubs:

Bill – Rutgers Promenaders, Friendly Squares, Valley Squares, Solitaires (singles club), Harmony Dancers

Holly – Do-Si-Doers (teen club; Indiana, PA), Footloose Squares, Golden Triangle Singles (Pittsburgh, PA)



How did you start square dancing?

Maria Light invited Bill to Rutgers Promenaders lessons. Holly answered a newspaper advertisement for “Modern Dance” (no mention of “western” or “square”). She went to see what it was all about and she was hooked. The teenage club, Do-Si-Doers, had matching outfits and danced at all of the little county fairs in western PA.

What year did you meet? 1996 And marry? 1998

Our wedding took place in the outdoor “Chapel in the Woods” at St. Paul’s UMC in Pittsburgh, but we had a square dance wedding reception at the First Presbyterian Church of Cranford one week later. We hired caller John Kaltenthaler, cuer Dave Roberts, and a DJ. We had square dancers, family, and non-square dancing friends at the reception.

Circumstances of your meeting and dating?

We met on January 26, 1996. This was the first time Holly attended a square dance after moving to New Jersey. Bill was visiting Bee Sharps. Irma Huhn introduced us. Bill proposed on September 26, 1997 during a Bee Sharps dance while John Kaltenthaler called “diamond” calls. Peg Dockery was the cuer and she really enjoyed watching the proposal. We were married on September 26, 1998.

Favorite square dance memories?

Holly: Dancing at all of the little county fairs with my teenage club. Dancing in the pool at the Star Spangled Banner Festival. Dancing in a pool to an Australian square dance caller and getting a platypus badge (no ducks in Australia!). Going to the National Singles and International Singles Square Dance Conventions with my Canadian friends Karen and Lynda. Going to out-of-state conventions and dances with Bill.

Bill: Good – From the start with square dance lessons everything was great. I have very much enjoyed going to the various clubs, NJ Sate Conventions, Mini-Festivals, and other types of square dance activities. Bad – I have attended dances as a solo dancer and was not permitted to dance. I asked for a refund and they said “no.” So I just left and never returned. On another occasion at the end of a dance I was not feeling well and wanted to sit out. I was rudely asked to get up and move. I kept my cool and tried to move to another area to rest. Sad – I was at a Valley Square club dance and after an hour or so a fellow dancer collapsed and a dancer right away started CPR until the rescue squad arrived. The EMTs worked on him for a while but he did not make it. Whatever – I have traveled five hours to a dance in Lewisburg, PA for a few hours and then returned the

same day. On the way back home I got stuck in traffic for an hour and a half. I got home around midnight then had to work the next day. At one time I danced 14 days straight. On one of those 14 days, I danced in the Poconos in the morning and then traveled to Elmwood Park, NJ for a dance in the afternoon.

Anything else?

For the past 28 plus years I (Bill) have been dancing and I still love the wonderful world of square dancing. (Holly has been dancing on and off since fall 1972 – started as a teen.) We have both served as Association Delegate and Club Treasurer.