

“RED DOT” DANCERS

In 1999 I attended the National Square and Round Dance Convention as a “solo” dancer since my husband at the time could not attend due to other conflicts. Although I had attended many of our local dances without a partner, this seemed more difficult at the larger conventions. I know most of the dancers in the Western Massachusetts area and do not mind asking others to dance either male or female, if needed. However, at the larger dances, it was more difficult to determine who was “solo” or a “single dancer” or available to dance at least one tip despite the ribbons or other type of designation. With interest I attended Jo Yakimowski’s seminar entitled “Surviving Singles in a Couples Activity”. During this seminar Ms. Yakimowski mentioned that by 2005, it is estimated that over 50% of the dancers will be “singles”. “Singles” referred to “those who do not have a partner”. This may include the solo dancer, a dancer whose spouse does not dance due to choice, work schedule, illness, or a dancer who is widowed.

At this seminar I presented the idea of the “red dot dancer” which was used at Swingles Square Dance Club in West Springfield, Massachusetts—the club to which I belonged at the time. This idea was well-received by those in attendance at that seminar. It was also used at Madhatters in Danbury, Connecticut for a period of time. Since I lost my contact with a dancer in that area, I am not sure if it is still used.

It is now 2010 almost 2011 and as predicted, there are more and more single dancers in the square and round dance activity. Although I am now remarried, I spend a great deal of time networking at dances and my husband would love to be known as a “red dot dancer” as would I when he has to leave because of the need to get up early for work the next day. This is how it works:

Members of the club and any guests may place a ¾ inch fluorescent red dot on his or her badge or in a prominent place. There is a sign (page 2) on the table explaining the “red dot dancer” designation and the dots are available for the taking. These dots are easily accessible from any office supply store and are usually in packs of 3000—enough to last more than one dance season! They are removable and do not harm the badges in any way. This dot lets others know this person is a “solo” dancer (without a partner) or a dancer who is willing to dance with others as partners for certain tips during the night. I would suggest that a club offer at least two “red dot dancer” tips (one during the second tip before the Break and one during the second tip after the Break). The terms “Hitching Post” or “Solo Stop” tend to have negative connotations for some dancers or others sit in the area unintentionally and then realize it when asked to dance by someone other than his or her partner.

As President of the Eastern District Square and Round Dance Association, I would like to see the “Red Dot Dancer” designation used universally, then all could dance without a “label” placed on them. There may continue to be opportunities for “solos” to meet socially but most want to dance first and foremost. Let’s make it a little easier and less stigmatizing! For more information, please contact me at (860)653-0621 or ritawood0709@sbcglobal.net. Hope to CUNA[☺]!

“RED DOT DANCERS

Attention Dancers!

Please feel free to take a red dot and display it on your badge or a prominent place if you would like to be a “red dot dancer” for the night. The red dot can easily be removed later.

This red dot indicates that you are:

- 1) a solo dancer—one who does not have a partner OR
- 2) a dancer who is willing to dance with others for certain tips during the night.

This red dot allows others to know who is available to dance during a “Red Dot Dancer” tip, “Ladies’ Choice” or if a person’s spouse may not be able to dance every tip due to health or other issues.