



UNITED SQUARE DANCERS OF AMERICA

SQUARE DANCE – AMERICAN FOLK DANCE



Subject: Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Updated response from the United Square Dancers of America

Date: March 20, 2021

Hello dancers and dance leaders,

We would like to begin this COVID response update by reminding our readers that the United Square Dancers of America (USDA) is an organization that is run by dancers for dancers. We are educational in nature and not a governing body. The ideas expressed in this article are suggestions presented for individual dancers and dance leaders to consider as they begin to think about resuming dancing.

We would be remiss if we didn't begin by saying that different areas of the country are in various phases of reopening due to the state and local guidelines. Anything we suggest here should be considered in light of current conditions in your geographical area. As dances begin to open up we encourage everyone to respect the right of individuals to make the decisions they are most comfortable with in regards to whether or not they are ready to return to dancing. We continue to encourage dancers and dance leaders to follow the safety guidelines outlined in the first USDA Response to COVID 19 as posted on the USDA website, www.usda.org in conjunction with state and local guidance.

Recently the USDA Webinar Series, "Beyond the Dance Floor", hosted Mike Hogan as the guest presenter. Mr. Hogan has been a square dance caller for 45 years, has a 30 year career in the field of marketing, and is currently Market President for iHeart Media. He has combined his expertise in both fields to present many fresh ideas on the why and how of marketing square dancing. Mr. Hogan's hypothesis is that recruiting new square dancers has become difficult because the approach is backwards. He suggests, "People haven't associated square dancing as a product that satisfies a need or want. The solution is to promote the product now and recruit the dancers later!" For more details please go to www.usda.org, from the homepage click on "webinar", then "February 13, 2021". All of those links will provide details of Mike Hogan's presentation including his slides and video of the webinar. We strongly encourage you to check out this free resource for new ideas.

At our January 2021 ZOOM Winter Meeting of the USDA Executive Committee, Barry Clasper was a guest speaker who presented on "Social & Sustainable Square Dancing" or commonly referred to as SSD. This program was developed within CALLERLAB with one of the principle authors being the late Jerry Story. Much more information can still be found on the web at www.JerryStory.com. Information can also be found on the



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CALLERLAB Knowledge website at www.CallerLabKnowledge.org/?s=ssddoc. Sadly the social aspect of square dancing (SD) has eroded over time. The SSD program reintroduces the social aspect back into square dancing. The goal is to create a social activity that people will want to come back and have fun at. The SSD approach is designed to be more casual rather than a continuing learning process. Following over 15 months of social isolation, the general population is ripe with the desire to get out, socialize, and do something fun together.

Now is the perfect time to get together with your club and set your plan for moving forward in the post COVID isolation era. A combination of new marketing ideas gleaned from Mike Hogan's webinar presentation and CALLERLAB's Social (& Sustainable) Square Dancing looks like it could be the ticket to the rebirth of the activity we love so dearly. It may look a little different, but what is the goal? Do we want square dancing to continue to die a slow and painful death or do we want to keep it alive and vibrant? Do you want more information? The USDA webinar series, "Beyond the Dance Floor" has two more sessions planned that will be extremely helpful as square dancing moves forward. Please keep in mind that all webinar sessions will be available on usda.org under the "webinar" tab on the home page.

- July 10th – SSD Program with Bear Miller and 2 additional callers
- August 14th – Social Connections: The Key to Club Success with Mike Seastrom

We hope this information will be helpful as square dancing opens up following such a difficult year of isolation. We look forward to dancing together very soon, until then we send everyone a virtual yellow rock!

Live Lively Square Dance,
Tony & Diana Rock
USDA President

USDA Response to COVID 19 posted March 20, 2020
www.usda.org/USDA_Miscellaneous/Coronavirus_Lletter_03-20-20.pdf

Beyond the Dance Floor
www.usda.org/WEbinar/Schedule.pdf