

LATEST UPDATE FROM THE COMMITTEE TO PROMOTE SQUARE DANCING

By the time you read this our 7 major promotions will be in full swing-the KRTY ads, KLIV ads, Century 21-25 movie theater ads, VALPAC coupons, Public Service Announcements, our web page on the Internet, and our dance teams. Our promotions focus on our image (fun loving and energetic people) and our product (a fun way to socialize, exercise, and travel). As we all know, our objective is to greatly increase the number of newer dancers in our area. But these efforts can only succeed with FOLLOW UP BY ALL OF US.

There are 2 significant parts to follow up. First, many of you know friends and neighbors who might want to join a class or people who previously started a class but dropped out. As described below, it is very important that you contact these people and encourage their participation. Even if your club does not have a beginner class in September, IF THEY ARE "READY"-encourage them to join now. Some of you might feel that calling is being "pushy." Be assured, a well organized call impresses prospective members that we are professionally run and we care about them.

The second effort is the result of The Committee forwarding the names, phone number, and preferences of people who responded to our promotions. In both situations you are being asked to function as a MENTOR-one who helps them understand the fun and sociability of dancing, answers their questions and concerns, and encourages them to attend-at least during the first 3 "open enrollment" classes.

In general, there are 4 important parts to contacting prospective dancers.

1. THE INITIAL CONTACT. The initial contact sets the tone and greatly influences those "sitting on the fence."

THE INTRODUCTION. Introduce yourself, express hope that they will join one of our classes, explain why you love to dance, and offer to answer their questions.

THE QUESTIONS/CONCERNS. Be prepared to answer the typical questions that people want to know about the class (how long, what nights, how to get there, break for holidays), what to wear, do they need a partner, (all classes

are for singles or couples), what is the cost, do they have to join (the first 3 classes are open for them to see if they like it), what happens after the classes (we have monthly dances planned for them or they can continue on), can I dance with 2 left feet, etc.?

CLOSING. Determine their status (no, maybe, yes) and thank them for their interest. For "maybe or yes" responses, offer your name and phone number as a contact (you can even pick them up), and a "looking forward to seeing you at class."

2. ANSWERING MACHINES. It's recommended that you leave just your name and number if you want them to call you. A "sell" message is not effective.

3. FOLLOW THROUGH. Consideration should be given to follow up phone calls and/or notes of thank you, missed you at the class, hope you'll join, etc.,

4. DATA BASE. We do plan a data base which maintains the status of potential and actual dancers. This helps us to follow up on both people who decide they won't attend (why not, maybe in the future, etc.) and those who start but drop out (why, maybe restart in the future, etc.) For each person you contact, we would appreciate your forwarding this information to us (sdwithus@aol.com or 408-274-3770).

As you can see, it takes a cooperative effort by all of us to really make a difference in ATTRACTING AND RETAINING DANCERS. This note and additional details will be forwarded to all clubs conducting September classes.

And finally, one piece of financial news. The Committee to Promote Square Dancing achieved a significant and unique ruling from the IRS (not California Franchise tax). We are classified as a 501(c)3 organization for 1999 through 2003 which means during these years, you may claim your donations, that exceed "value received" as a charitable deduction. A canceled check will generally be sufficient for contributions less than \$250.00. Note that you must subtract "value received" such as our normal charge at the door of \$5.00 to \$6.00 per person. Since several dancers contributed more than \$250.00, a written acknowledgment is required from me (just send me a copy of your check and I will forward a note). Any questions, just give me a call.

During these last 2 months several square dancers have worked exceptionally hard to complete our promotions. I'm sure that Walt Fant, Joe Carboni, Roger Havasy, and Don Gaubatz would appreciate your thanks for their many efforts on behalf of all square dancers. Special

thanks also goes to the Rafter Rockers and Gadabouts who decided to initiate a fund raiser on August 18 so that we can promote the January and May 2000 classes. Such support is greatly appreciated and it certainly motivated The Committee to work even harder.