



Donna Sullivan and Walter Sacarto, both of Burlington, square danced Saturday, as Marie Edwards called a dance at Edwards Hall. Members of the club promenading home were (from left) Janet Olivieri, Kathryn Wedermeyer, Jim Wedermeyer, Walter Sacarto and Edwards. Photos by Sharon Corcoran/The Goodland Star-News



Square dancing calls echo dancers' enthusiasm

By Sharon Corcoran

The Goodland Star-News
Square dance calls echoed from the rafters Saturday at Edwards Hall: "Swing your partner round and round," "do si do," "promenade home."

Eighteen members of the Goodland Promenaders Square-dance Club met at the hall, as the club normally does on the first and third Saturday of each month, for food and dancing.

Members say modern life and the aging of dancers threaten the club's

survival, but distance doesn't seem to hold the dancers back.

Members of the club travel from western Kansas and eastern Colorado to form squares for the namesake dance, and callers are hired from across Kansas and Colorado.

The Goodland club is about the only one between here and Denver, said Marie Edwards, owner of the hall, but there is one in Colby. Members come from Stratton, Cheyenne Wells and Burlington, Colo., Winona and Goodland.

The caller Saturday was Mike

Olivieri, who traveled from Lakewood, Colo., with his wife Janet to call the dance and to cut up the floor when he could get a chance.

Though the members have a good time, their numbers are dwindling. Modern lifestyles are helping to push the traditional American dance into obscurity.

"We're losing members to old age and bad hips," said Bob Daise, president of the club, "and it seems young people aren't interested in square dancing."

People used to get together to

dance in barns nearly every weekend, Daise said. It was just expected that people either went out or had people over every weekend. People used to have to make their own fun, he said, but now they watch television.

Admitting that the dance is not being the hottest new trend, diehard square dancers do all they can to keep it alive. And they have a blast doing it.

Edwards said she offers lessons in the fall to anyone interested in joining the club, and members

travel to festivals and conventions to learn new steps and dance with and meet thousands of fellow "squares."

The Goodland club belongs to the Tri-State Square Dance Council, a member of the Colorado State Square Dance Association, and the Northwest Kansas Square Dance Association, a member of the Kansas State Association.

Each state has a festival every year, which many of the dancers attend. The Kansas festival will be Friday and Saturday, June 4 and 5,

in Salina. The 53rd National Square Dance Convention will be in Denver at the National Western Complex near I-70, next month.

The club meets at 7:30 p.m. on the first and third Saturday of each month except July and August at the hall, at 2431 Walnut in Goodland. There is no alcohol or smoking, and families and people of all ages are welcome. Edwards is the club's caller and round dance cuer, and Kathryn Wedermeyer is the secretary-treasurer.

City hires expert witnesses for water park dispute

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said, but the issue could wind up in arbitration, or in court.

"Mediation is sort of over," said attorney Mike Foust, representing Bankwest.

"The contracts require going to arbitration," said attorney Jerry Fairbanks, representing First National Bank of Goodland.

The banks are involved because the city used a lease/purchase plan to build the water park. The banks are the lease holders and the city

pays them yearly rent until the lease is paid off in 10 years.

Commissioner Dean Blume asked if the expert witnesses are going to be able to decide who is at fault.

"That is what our expert witnesses are going to say," Foust said. "They will examine the whole project and determine what is wrong and what it will cost to have it fixed."

"You have to be able to specifically show there is something wrong," Fairbanks said. "Some

people believe that arbitration will keep them out of the courtroom, and be cheaper. That is not true. The process is treated much like a trial, with both sides putting on their experts and then the arbitration committee, which is usually three people, will decide who is right and assign the blame and costs."

"Kind of expensive," Blume said. "If we don't do this, we will have to fix it ourselves. Do we get these costs back?"

"There is no guarantee,"

Fairbanks said. "This can go back to the original design to see if there was an engineering error all the way through the construction."

"We have to get our own experts," Foust added.

"No one wants to take responsibility," Pickman said, "partly because they don't know what it will take to fix it."

"This hasn't been done on a speedy basis. We have been trying to get this solved over the past two years or more. We started this process in 2001 when the problem first

appeared after the new water park had been open for the first few months.

Mayor Rick Billinger asked the lawyers if they were comfortable with the selection of the experts.

"If we are going to spend the money, we want to get good ones," the mayor said.

Pickman said this process will not be quick, but that it should end the disagreement.

"No matter what the final decision and who they decide is at fault," he said, "it will be the end of the process."

Commissioner Chuck Lutters moved to hire Building Tech Consultants of Niwot, Colo. as the construction consultant and Merlo Consulting Engineers of Englewood, Colo., as the consulting forensic engineers. Blume seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Pickman said representatives

from both firms had already been in Goodland and started their research.

The rates for the professional services from Building Tech start at \$110 an hour for the principal engineer, \$90 an hour for the associate engineer, \$45 an hour for other staff, \$30 an hour for typing and clerical. Travel is 33 cents per mile and deposition testimony is \$210 per hour with a three-hour minimum.

The hourly rates for Merlo Consulting starts at \$275 for George Merlo's expert witness testimony, and \$180 an hour for investigation. Other experts would cost \$225 an hour for testimony and \$140 an hour for investigation.

Typing and administration would be \$45 an hour.

Merlo's contract says they bill services in a four-hour minimum increments, and time over four hours but less than eight is invoiced at eight hours.

Plant moving ahead, president says

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can't train them overnight. This is very involved.

"We have a significant investor who is not from the local area, since the local investment did not happen.

"I personally have taken the chance and I am not going anywhere. No one in Goodland has been financially injured. We have spent money in the city, and we will be spending more in the future.

"Every bit of resources we have we are spending in that building. We said we would spend our \$800,000 to get it up and needed the \$800,000 from investors. The city and state

have stepped up, but we have not seen any significant local investment, so we have to go outside the area.

"I am positive and am not disheartened about how it is moving along. We are committed to getting that plant open. I am 100 percent committed, I have too much money invested.

"We can only spend at the rate I can get it or as I can get people to invest in it. I wish we had some private investment quicker. We are very close, and one more truck load of equipment is to arrive in the next week.

We will be able to start making a

limited amount of parts, and expect to ship out the first finished parts around the end of June.

"We will be set up properly so when we ship parts out, they will be properly documented and inspected.

"The computer system is now up and interlinked between Corona, Calif., Wichita and Goodland.

"Andy Laue is now doing financial statements for all the operations. We had a time getting the tele-

phone companies to get this up and running.

"It is an important part that allows the inspectors to prove the production process and how we get the material.

"We have our first PMAs in Wichita, and with that in place, we are making progress. Making the parts will be the easiest part of this.

"I can tell you Herb Menold is not going away."

corrections

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