

WHO OWNS SQUARE DANCING ?

By Jeff Garbutt

The way some people think and talk, you'd think they "owned" square dancing. How many times have you heard comments such as "He is running a club in my area on my night", or "That Plus club is stealing my Mainstream dancers"?

Most of us either know of , or have been involved in, a dispute about square dancing sometime.

To me, fighting over the ownership of Square Dancing is a bit like two fleas fighting over the ownership of a dog - the dog is bigger than them - and the dog owns them.

For Square Dancing it is exactly the same - we don't own Square Dancing - Square Dancing owns us.

Square Dancing has been around long before most of us - and hopefully will continue to be around long after most of us have moved on. At best we can claim that we have "custodianship" of a particular task that supports the "movement" - but we don't in any way own any of it.

There is a saying I've heard somewhere that goes something like "we are all greater than the sum of our parts". Meaning of course that we are more than the physical bits that fit together to make our bodies - there is also our life experiences, our intellectual property, our beliefs, our interests, our families, our friends - these are all part of what goes into making us human.

So it is with square dancing. It is not just made up of the current callers, clubs, committees, associations and dancers. Square dancing has evolved over many years and has it's own language, music, history, ethics, beliefs - Square Dancing is a life form all it's own - we each are just one part of it. And as we believe that the human still exists long after the body dies - even if you only believe it exists in the memories of others - Square Dancing still exists long after a caller, dancer or club has passed on.

So once again I say - we don't own Square Dancing - Square Dancing owns us.

But of course, if too many fleas fight over our dog, he might get a little sick. The poor dog might get seriously sick. In fact the owners might decide to be merciful to the dog and put him to sleep. Then where will our fleas go?

That is also the same for Square Dancing. If we fight too much over something we don't own - we might kill it.

The solution of course is to work together. And always ask yourselves - "is what we are doing good for the movement?"

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