



## **JOKERS SQUARE DANCE CLUB – “A SEARCH FOR ITS ROOTS”**

**Updated July 2000**

**Back in the summer of 1951, the earliest beginning of Jokers was taking form. Johnny White had his first beginners class at San Tomas School. This class plus the next one, which met in an unfinished store building in the Quito Shopping Center, formed the nucleus of the club in October 1951. In true Joker fashion however, the club’s birthday “Traditionally” comes whenever in the year that it seems appropriate, usually in November or December.**

**At first we moved around a bit, dancing at the San Jose YMCA and Cambrian School, but we finally settled down for many years of good dancing at Quito School. When we lost the school, we moved around again for a while until we found our present most long-lasting home, at the American Legion Hall in Campbell.**

**After several trials of unsatisfactory names, the name “JOKERS” was chosen, since the group consisted of a bunch of Jokers and someone happened to have a Joker from a deck of playing cards that was particularly expressive of the male membership, (an interesting note – recently, a duplicate of the original playing card that inspired the Joker emblem was discovered in a very unusual place by one of the original Jokers.)**

**Back in the early days, before there were many hoedowns in the San Jose area, all the club members would travel in car caravans on Saturday nights – 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday to Grasshoppers, 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday to Valley Swinger, 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday to Harmony Hoedowners or 49ers, and 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday to Dip ‘N Divers. Most of these dances were across the bay, except 49ers in San Francisco, and neither rain, sleet, nor fog could keep us from our Saturday night square dance. Some of these jaunts, at times, resulted in the whole caravan getting lost, trying to find a hall, while being led by someone who claimed to know the way.**

**At the 1954 Golden State Roundup in Oakland, the first animated club banner made its appearance – the tongue-wagging, eye-blinking “JOKER.” It has always given people something to talk about and, once again, was the center of attention when it appeared at the 25<sup>th</sup> National Square Dance Convention in Anaheim in 1976.**

**In 1954, long before Hawaii became a state, Jokers had a hoedown with a Hawaiian theme, grass skirts and all. This was the start of a procession of theme dances, many with elaborate stage and hall settings. There was a riverboat dance, among others, and the Jokers were the real leaders of the Space Age. They and their guests were “Dancing on the Moon” back in November 1955.**

**The club's first "Camp Campbell Weekend" for square dancers and their families was held in June of 1955, with 65 attending. This became an annual affair and by 1959, the 5<sup>th</sup> annual, the attendance had grown to 180. This went on for about 10 years, with dancers from several other clubs joining us from time to time.**

**The "Camp Campbell Follies" was always a special attraction during these weekends. When the Saturday night dance was over and all the little ones put to bed, the "adults" would let their hair down. We'd work for months preparing some of these skits and shows. One year a movie was made of all the activities of the weekend.**

**The Jokers were active in the formation of the Santa Clara Valley Square Dancers Association, and supplied its first president, RAY WORRELL. In 1962, our association hosted the State Square Dance Convention in San Jose. The Jokers had a fun-type exhibition group at the time, and we presented our "Olympic Square Dance Team" at the convention.**

**Every once in a while, the club lost some good members, such as Ken & Audrey Oburne, John & Dorothy Crawford, Ken & Georgia Clark, Sol & Mickey Turbowski, Jeanne & Bud Fischer, Don & Pat Hills, Jerry & Kay Firenzi, Barbara & Phil Patnude, Dick & Marge Steinhauer, Chuck & Becky Lowe and others who got too busy with beginners classes and the clubs for which they called. But that is not such a bad way to lose members and they are always welcomed back for a visit – and that goes for former dancer members, as well as callers.**

**A successful re-union was held in May 1975. "Jokers Old-timers Night" attracted 27 couples who came back to visit. Johnny White presented such a well-coordinated program that everyone was able to enter into the dancing and some had been away for a very long time. We even put on a skit for the occasion, though those in the act felt it necessary to disguise their faces.**

**Jokers recently gave Johnny White a Birthday & Christmas present combined, a California license plate "1 JOKER", which can be seen on his motor home if you go on one of the campouts that are held for club members, their families and friends.**

**In addition to camping weekends, other extra activities are planned whenever there is a 5<sup>th</sup> Wednesday. Sometimes we go to the 5<sup>th</sup> Wednesday dances and dance with other Wednesday night clubs, but we also do a great variety of other things, such as bowling, roller skating, ice skating, shows, mystery trips, beach parties, wine tasting, etc.**

**Through the years there have been some outstanding members who have added a great deal to the success and fun of the club. When these members found it necessary to drop out, they were made "Honorary Members of the Jokers." At our annual Bar-B-Que in the fall of 1976 three couples were presented with "Honorary Member Plaques" Wally & Polly Doucett, Bob & Mickey Brown, and Bud & Page Cavallaro. The annual Bar-B-Que in the fall and the family picnic in the summer are two other Joker traditions.**

**The club is getting ready for its Silver Anniversary in December 1976. We will celebrate 25 years of dancing as a club that has the distinction of being one of the few clubs that old that still has its original caller. Ray & Floss Worrell are the last charter members remaining in the club. Some others who have been members almost since the beginning are Ira & Elaine Stamm, Ruth (Bohner) Hubley, Walt & Norene Wyszynski and Frank & Marlene Rivas (who started in the club as singles, then married and took numerous short leaves whenever Marlene had another baby – but they always came back!)**

**Many square dancers have had a part in the good times of the Jokers for the last 25 years. The statement that appears at the beginning of our club constitution is as true today as when it was first written: "THE MEMBERS OF THE JOKERS ARE BANDED TOGETHER IN THE SPIRIT OF FRIENDLINESS AND GOOD FELLOWSHIP TO SHARE THE PLEASURES OF SQUARE DANCING"**

**Frank & Marlene Rivas were made life members on June 9, 1982. They were given the honor when they had been in the club 25 years. The club presented them with a silver Joker badge. Family & friends help celebrate this occasion. They joined the club in 1957, so they've been in the club for 43 years, and they're still active members. We're going to make them stay until they get it right.**

**"Twich" & Helen Twichell celebrated their 25 years with the Jokers in Oct. 1992. With a surprise party with family & friends. They also received their silver Joker Badge. Twich & Helen have been members since Oct. 1967 and still very active after 33 years.**

**Johnny White called for the Jokers for 26 years retiring in 1978. He called for the Jokers from 1951 to May 1978 when he left we had 26 couples in the club. In July 1978 the Jokers hired Dick Lawrence, there were 24 couples in the club when he started. He left us in December 1980 with 13 couples in the club. When Dick left we hired Johnny Robertson in March 1981 with 13 couples in the Jokers. He left in December 1982 with 18 couples left in the club. In March 1983 we had the opportunity to get Kip Garvey as our caller. He started with 18 couples and built our club up to 59 couples when he left in 1987. When Kip left we were lucky again, a new caller from Southern California was transferred to our area. His name was Scott Slocum. He started with us in 1987 with 57 couples. He was transferred to another area in December 1990, leaving with 42 couples. We then hired Doug Davis. He started in January 1991 with 42 couples and left in April 1992 with 50 couples in the club. Scott Slocum again came back to the area and started to call for us in May 1992 with 39 couples he left in March 1996 with 35 couples in the club, then he was transferred again. In 1996 Gary Carnes became our caller with 35 couples. He left in March 2000 with 28 couples left in the club. We are very proud to say that our present caller is Bob Elling starting in June 2000 with 25 couples remaining in the Jokers.**

**Resource:**

**Floss Worrell  
Helen Twichell  
Marlene Rivas**

**Documented by:**

**Ellie Murphy**

January 26, 2005

## **Jokers and Rafter Rockers Merger**

### **Choice of the Name, logo, and Badge**

The combined club will have a "name the Club" contest. All names are eligible except the original names of the clubs, Jokers and Rafter Rockers, although a combination of the two names is acceptable. The contest will be drawn up by the merger committee. Once the name is chosen, Carol Glesser and a member of the Rafter Rockers will submit logo and badge ideas to the clubs for their approval

### **Timing**

The two clubs will officially merge on May 1, 2005.

### **Treasury**

The treasuries from both clubs will be combined. Allen Glesser and Bob Cavallaro will determine the legal aspects of combining two nonprofit organizations and submit a plan to both boards.

### **Officers**

Because the Rafter Rocker officers' term-of-office ends in end of April and the Jokers ends in end of October, the Jokers' officers and board will continue as an interim board until November. On May 1<sup>st</sup> at least 3 board members will be added to the interim board from the Rafter Rockers.

### **Board meetings**

Board meetings will be held the second Tuesday of each month. They will be held at board member homes on a rotational schedule.

### **Club Bylaws**

Allen Glesser and Bob Cavallaro will review the bylaws of both clubs and submit a recommendation on how to combine them to the Merger committee. After the merger committee agrees upon them, the new bylaws will be submitted to each club for approval by the general club memberships.

### **Dance Location**

American Legion Hall at 1344 Dell Ave, Campbell, CA 95008, from 7:30 PM to 9:45PM. If a class is in session, class hours will be from 7:00 PM to 8:30 PM and club level dancing will continue until 9:45 PM.

### **Caller**

Roger H. Smith

## **Membership**

The club will remain a couples club unless a canvas of each club indicates little objection to opening the club to singles. Existing singles will be grandfathered into the club.

## **Life-time members**

Each club has three life-time members and they will remain as life-time members.

## **Dues**

The dues will remain the same, \$10.00 per person per month. Visitors will be \$3.00 per person for visitors and class fees will be \$10.00 per person per month.

## **Duty Roster**

An annual duty roster will be drawn up. Square duty will be performed by 6 people for a full month. One of the couples, or single person, will be designated Square Head.

## **Hoedowns**

Two hoedowns, currently known as Circus-Circus and the Luau, will be held each year. In addition to these two hoedowns, one or two newer dancer hoedowns will be sponsored by the club.

## **Social activities**

The clubs will combine their social activities such as group camping and summer picnics and social gatherings.

## **Club dance attire**

After the merger, the subject of new club attire will be considered.

## **SCVSDA**

While the Jokers are currently members of the SCVSDA, the Rafter Rockers are not. The renewal period for membership and insurance begins on June 1, 2005, and the check is due by July 31st. During the month of May 2005, the merged club will ascertain how many members are *against* belonging to the SCVSDA. If the majority of the members are OK with belonging to the association, the merged club could possibly pay the membership/insurance fee for all of the members and the insurance fee for the caller and his significant other (approx \$11/person – around \$1,100). The Jokers are charter members of the association and the “longest belonging” club.



# "The Waggin'-Tongue"

Published by Floss\* and Carleen\*

## Hi Jokers!

Of course we have all heard about the coming Santa Clara Valley Square Dance Association "Whing-Ding", which will be a "Hobo" costume affair - (costumes not mandatory, of course, but recommended for maximum fun ). There will be six local callers--all excellent, naturally--for your dancing variety and pleasure.

The date is March 30, 1963 (5th Saturday), 8:30 to 11:30 PM.  
The place is the Santa Clara County Fair Grounds Pavilion.  
Cost, \$.75 per person.

"Jokers" should be able to feel right at home at the "Whing-Ding". Just start hunting up your oldest rags----and, if Wally says--- "Throw the bum out" that night, he may find himself in a bit of a spot. See back cover of February Square Dance News for further "Whing-Ding" details

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It was nice to see so many Jokers out at the 5th Wednesday Dance in January at the Sunnyvale Armory. This staunch group are not sugar-babies and were not afraid of melting on that rainy night.

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Speaking of events, the latest Round of the Month is a lively little number that seems to have picked up a few twist movements since the original composition of the dance. It will be taught to the Jokers sometime soon, we understand.

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Still speaking of events, Happy Birthday greetings to the following members. These wishes may be belated to some, but the thought and intention is sincere.

Wes Moberley	--	February 1
Nadine Chandler	--	February 1
Pat Halter	--	February 2
Ron Murrell	--	February 19
Jack Lietz	--	February 21
Jo Hood	--	February 28
Dick Graves	--	March 3
Marlene Rivas	--	March 4
Lee White	--	March 5
Becky Lowe	--	March 11

Oh yes, Happy belated Anniversary greetings to:  
Bill and Barbara Wider-2/8      Joe and Carole Smith-2/10

- - - - -  
What?--nobody married in March???

To all the rest of the membership that we missed in the foregoing greetings--a happy Un-birthday, Happy Valentines Day, Lincoln's Birthday, Washington's, Labor Day, etc.,etc.,etc.-----

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For all those who have requested copies, here we are:

TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR SQUARE DANCERS

- I Thou shalt square dance only for the fun thou shalt find in it.
- II Thou shalt not be a snob, considering thyself too good to dance with any and all, sitting out the mixers, or leaving a square lest thou be required to dance with those whom thou deemest unworthy of thy talents, for the gods of retribution are zealous gods and will visit their mischief upon thee, and thou wilt be the one to GOOF THE SQUARE!
- III Thou shalt not forget that thou wert once a beginner.
- IV Thou shalt be exuberant, but shall act thy age. Do not offend others by the high-flung legs and out-flared skirts.
- V Thou shalt go abroad and dance with other Callers, so that thy opinions expressed as to the merits of this one or that one are based on fact.
- VI Thou shalt not let the stranger in thy midst sit on the sidelines and cool his heels, nor fail to speak to him.
- VII Thou shalt bathe diligently, that the sweet aroma of soap and shaving lotion may assail the nostrils of thy associates, leaving the more earthy smells to the farmyard.
- VIII Thou shalt take care that the words of thy mouth are not scented with garlic or beer.
- IX Thou shalt honor thy Club and give it thy loyalty, for if thou canst not do this, it were better to separate thyself from it and join thyself to another whose methods, members, and Caller are more to thy liking.
- X Thou shalt not kill thy Club with bickering and fault finding.
- Oh good words of wisdom!

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This paper was published purely in the interest of F U N!! There may be another issue someday if the editors get in the mood again, and if we have any volunteer reporters! Do YOU have a choice item that the Jokers might enjoy? If so, please contact Floss\* or Carleen\*.

\*Members of the Square Dance Newspaper Women's Association.

• T H E •



J O K E R S



Campbell, California

THANKS  
FOR THE DANCE!

You've just danced with a

*Joker*

REMEMBER THE DATE!! Saturday, Nov. 14, 1959  
The Jokers Present . . .

**BOB PAGE — JOHNNY WHITE  
THE WESTERNAIRES**

— Help us celebrate our Seventh Birthday —

SECOND SATURDAY - NOV. 14, 1959

CAMDEN HIGH SCHOOL

Refreshments

Donation

### Trans-Planetary Spaceways

THE SPACE TRAVEL SERVICE OF THE JOKERS CORPORATION  
TO COMMEMORATE THE JOKERS 17th ANNIVERSARY - PRESENT

#### MOON CHARTER FLIGHT

First Passenger Flight to the Moon

FLIGHT TO EARTH'S HIGH ORBIT - SPACEPORT  
CAMDEN, CALIF. - NOV. 14, 1959

PILOT - HARVEY SMITH                      CO-PILOT - CLARK SMITH

FLIGHT DIRECTOR - JOHNNY WHITE

Departure - Camden, California 8:30 P.M.  
Re-arrival - Camden, California 11:30 P.M.  
Cost - \$100.00 (Includes Round Trip  
Space Flight - 11 P.M. to 11 P.M.)

THANKS FOR THE DANCE

We'd be pleased if you would reserve  
this date to dance with us

SECOND SATURDAY — NOVEMBER 8TH, 1958

### JOKERS SIXTH ANNIVERSARY HOEDOWN

Bob Page - Guest Caller  
Camden High 8:30 P.M.  
Door Prizes

Live Music

Johnny White - M.C.  
Donation  
Refreshments

*Jokers'*

*25th*

### SILVER ANNIVERSARY HOEDOWN

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10, 1977

PETERSON HIGH SCHOOL

END OF HAM AVE., SUNNYVALE — OFF EL CAMINO  
(BETWEEN LAWRENCE EXPRESSWAY AND WOLFE ROAD)

ROUND DANCING

8:00 p.m.

SQUARE DANCING

8:30 p.m.

SURPRISES!

REFRESHMENTS

TICKETS AT THE DOOR