

SQUARE DANCING YESTERDAY AND TODAY

By JoKay Bednar (with Karl Belser)

Check out the dress on my grandma Jo Louvier in this 1953 photo (left) as my grandpa George shows her off to the camera.



Notice that the dress and petticoat are long and heavy, which I bet made square dancing much more aerobic than it is today. Also the dress and petticoat were made of cotton that needed hours of ironing after every use. I think that my grandmother must have been really dedicated to be a square dancer.

Why were those dresses so long? Maybe because they had to hide the garters that held up the thigh length nylon stockings. Today we have panty hose, so there is no “equipment” to hide and the ladies can show off their legs. Our dresses are made of permanent press cloth, and we have lightweight petticoats made of synthetic fabric to make our dresses flair. You can see the difference in dress in the photo (right) of my husband Kirk and me. How times have changed.

Square dancing was different also. There were fewer calls and it took about 16 weeks to complete a class. There was round dancing too, and my grandparents were part of an exhibition group. Since there were no cuers, they had to memorize all of the dance routines. My grandpa had a poor memory so my grandma would whisper the cues to my grandpa while they danced.

I started square and round dancing more than 20 years ago at Sunnyvale Singles where I met Kirk. We are charter members of the Rockin’ Jokers Square Dance Club where we have served on the board as Secretary since its inception in 2005. I like to think that I followed “in my grandmother’s dance steps.” I love to dance!