

**News From Washington Area Square Dancers Cooperative Association (WASCA)**  
Boomerangs Square Dance Teaching Council  
(March 2004)

The Boomerangs is a club that is not a club. We are not a dancing club; rather we are a teaching council with multi-tiered classes. We exist for one purpose, to hold square dance classes. Our concept has been a combination of already tried ideas and new ideas. We are always evolving and trying to adjust to changing times.

We started with a small group of dancers and one caller who met almost on a weekly basis during the formative months. The members began with a vision and contributed their time, energy and funds to begin the council. Then we recruited additional callers and dedicated angels to help make this teaching concept a reality. We exist through the support of our local callers, angels and a very dedicated council who are the managers and administrator of our group.

Our program is set up with four new classes beginning per year. We are fortunate to have a hall, Lincolnia Senior Center that divides into thirds with automated folding partition walls. This allows us to hold three classes simultaneously. Our sessions are set up in 12-week series. Every week, for 48 weeks of the year, we hold classes in Basic (Mainstream 1), Mainstream 2 and Plus. To do this we have three callers/instructors on staff for each 12-week session.

Our concept gives people a chance to begin classes four times a year. It also allows students the opportunity to progress at different levels. If a student needs a refresher or needs a stronger foundation in the fundamentals, then they simply move to the class that allows them to work on those fundamentals. Hopefully, this will make them a stronger dancer — and if students become stronger and comfortable with the calls, they are more likely to continue dancing. This also accommodates students that have to miss multiple classes due to health, injuries or travel, etc.

With our present class structure we have four graduations a year for Mainstream and Plus. For the last hour during graduation night we open the walls between the three halls and all the students dance together. We also hold a Halloween Costume Party and a Christmas Party. These special times enable everyone to become better acquainted and become a part of the square dance community. The first Wednesday of the month we hold a 50/50 drawing. The funds collected pay for our parlor at the WASCA Festival in March. The parlor is open to all dancers throughout the festival. On Saturday afternoon after the Class Level Invitational we host a special party celebrating our current students first introduction to the festival. Once a year we hold a reunion dance as a thank you for our angels, current and past students and callers/instructors.

We encourage dancers to assist and angel the classes. We also invite club representatives to visit on graduation night and invite our students to their clubs. The clubs that have active angels and those that extend the personal invitations are the clubs reaping the benefits of new members into their clubs from our classes.

We have tried numerous ways to advertise. We have even take expensive ads in newspapers and magazines. Now we only use the free ads in the newspapers, etc. before beginning a new series. We have a long list of these contacts and are willing to share this information with other clubs. We have a large sign advertising our new class, which we place next to the street at Lincolnia Senior Center prior to the first of a new class.

In addition, we will target a densely populated area and distribute flyers door-to-door. Also, our council members and angels are very active in attending demos and parades in promoting square dancing. However, we have found that the way to recruit students is still the personal touch of one-to-one. A dancer invites a friend, then brings them to class, stays and angels. That student is the one most likely to stay with square dancing.

The management of our club is by what we call the council. At present we are 16 in number. There are still some of the charter members, but many of our current council were once students in our classes. Council members are recruited from active angels in the area who have shown a dedication and commitment to classes in the square dance community.

We do not pay dues, but instead everyone contributes and donates when events dictate. We do not have a President. We have a rotating schedule and each council member takes his or her turn chairing a business meeting. The next meeting that person takes the minutes. We do have one council member who acts as treasurer and others who fill positions in advertising, badges, etc. Each council member takes their turn as a Class Coordinator; these are the administrative and management duties for each class. The Class Coordinator begins with a basic class and stays with that class through the plus graduation.

The Boomerangs could not exist without the support of the square dance community of dancers and callers. We welcome help, constructive ideas and solutions and your support. Come out on Wednesday night and be a part of the fun and fellowship.

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