

News From
Spring Park, Minnesota
History of "*Friendship Set to Music*"
(January 2005)

Questions & Answers

What is cable TV?

It's a public access facility for members of the public to air shows they make.

Does the cable studio provide a staff for new TV show on public access?

No.

What is aired on cable TV?

Tapes brought into the studio by the public served by that station or shows made in that facility by folks who have taken the necessary training to become 'certified producers' in that studio.

Who produces "*Friendship Set to Music*"?

Square dancers who are members of Westonka Whirlers

Who operates cameras "*Friendship Set to Music*"?

Square dancers who are members of Westonka Whirlers

Who sets up the lights, sets, and cameras?

Square dancers who are members of Westonka Whirlers

Who operates the studio control room?

Square dancers who are members of Westonka Whirlers

Who distributes the tapes?

Square dancers who are members of Westonka Whirlers plus square dancers from many other clubs

How many cable stations air the show?

43

How many communities are covered?

149

What is the potential viewer ship?

Over a million people

Who has paid the costs for the show so far?

The CE Region and local square-dance clubs

How can square dancers help with costs?

By buying a copy of a show. The more tapes sold at \$6 each, the cheaper the cost to duplicate the show.

Can the regions be involved?

Yes

How can the regions be involved?

By having clubs in their region spotlighted

By buying tapes and distributing them to cable stations in their region

By contributing to the costs of the shows

How can the State Federation be involved?

By encouraging their regions to participate in this all-out effort to inform the public about square and round dancing

By encouraging all square dancers to support the show with lots of energy, enthusiasm, ideas, and participation.

History of “Friendship Set to Music”

In October and November, 2003, Ken and Dee Scott took classes at the Lake Minnetonka Communications Commission TV studio in Spring Park, Minnesota and became ‘certified community television producers.’

This certification entitled them to use the LMCC studio free of cost for any TV production they wished to undertake. Being square dancers, they thought a TV show would be the perfect way to communicate the many extraordinary qualities of square dance to the public.

Ken and Dee then held a meeting with interested square dancers from the Westonka Whirlers. Because nine Whirlers were interested in becoming ‘certified’ and working on a square dance show, they arranged for a special day-long class at the LMCC for them. That afternoon, that class produced a news show, that Dee scripted, entitled, “*News from Square Dance Land*” that announced the new TV show: “*Friendship Set to Music*.” That news show aired over a dozen times on LMCC Channel 21.

Station manager Jim Lundberg encouraged and advised the group as “*Friendship Set to Music*” was drafted. The TV show needed a director and producer: that individual would be responsible for the final content of the show and would be the contact person to other cable stations. Dee Scott, who conceived and initiated the show and is a certified producer at the LMCC, holds that role. The show is currently airing on 43 cable stations that serve 149 cities or towns.

The show needed to be scripted and put on cue cards so the floor director can control the show once “tape is rolling.” Ken Scott is the floor director.

Four camera operators were needed; five ‘certified’ square dancers rotate in those positions: Bill Ayers, Dick Davideit, Floyd Rust, Ed Garlock, and Ron Davidson. The TV control room needed a character generator: certified square-dancer Bruce Clark, a computer guru, generates graphics during all the shows.

Also needed in the control room were an audio person and a ‘switcher’, who is the director for the show. Square dancer Wayne Provart learned the position of audio engineer and Dee Scott operates the switcher during the tapings.

To fill the many other positions off camera, many other square dancers volunteered. Production assistants are Velma Wolff, Pat Davideit, Dorothy Rust and Nancy Ayers. Studio hostesses are Diana Clark and Martha Davidson; the market facilitator is Ruth Garlock; the CNT supervisor is June Hestad; the visual director is John Vining.

Thus, this show is created entirely by square and round dancers who have stepped forward to devote many, many hours to create this TV show that educates the public about square and round dancing. At least two shows are taped each month. From eighty to a hundred square and round dancers participate each Saturday. Cuers Ken and Barb LaBau, Mike and Edie Kirsch, and Robin Fryman dance on the shows. Caller Mike Driscoll called with Dick Rueter on Show 4 as well as danced on Shows 3 & 4 & 11. Tom Allen called with Dick on shows 9, 10, and 12. Abe Maier did the patriotic numbers on Shows 5 & 6. For show 11, “Timbre Junction” provided live music for Dick and the dancers.

To distribute tapes of this show, Dee contacted all the cable stations in the metro area. Many of these public access facilities require that a person living in their coverage area request that the show be aired and sign the hold-harmless forms. Dee then located square dancers from those localities to deliver the tapes and sign the forms. This logistical jungle provides Ken and Dee a week of miles and mailings after every taping session.

Caller Dick Rueter agreed to call for the square-dance segments on the show, without pay if necessary. Cuer Ray Belanger agreed to cue for the round-dance segments on the show, without pay if necessary. Both want to promote square and round dancing and put that above their financial concerns. Because the show is scripted before every taping, the caller and cuer must submit their song titles at least a week before the scheduled Saturday. Obviously, fairness says they are professionals and should receive a fair wage (which has not happened) for the hours they dedicate to this show.

At the first committee meeting, Bob Wolff and Arduis Vining were elected to the positions of hosts for the show.

Funding was needed to finance the shows. First the Westonka Whirlers donated \$100. Then the CE Region donated \$600. Because the "master tape" needs to be duplicated at least 43 times and then mailed to each station with a SASE enclosed, duplication and mailing costs are a significant cost each month.

Other clubs have since donated to the show to keep it alive: Bloomington Swirlers, Hotfoot Stompers, Dakota Grand, Crystal Crosstrailers, Spares and Pairs. The CE Region has donated a total of \$3,100 to this venture.

The production costs are insignificant when one considers the cost per viewer. If just 30,000 viewers (out of the million potential viewers) see a show, the current cost is one cent per viewer!

Most importantly, for a mere penny, "*Friendship Set to Music*" shares the best-kept secret in this nation: that square dance and round dance today offers "fun, fitness, and friendship" to people of all ages. (We're keeping the secret that it also offers another "P" - great food!)

Two phone numbers are offered during the show to viewers: one is 952-472-0006 (a viewer-response line dedicated to "*Friendship Set to Music*" and 763-557-5113 (the State Federation phone number). Calls come in daily. Viewers requesting lessons generated three "Fun-for-the-Whole-Family" introductory dances in May. Viewers not in the metro-viewing area are referred to a caller or club president in their area so they can get further details about lessons in that city or locality.

Many viewers call to say "We love the show. Keep it coming." Others have called and requested a dance for beginners. One party wanted to dedicate their new pole barn before they filled it with hay, one wanted to host a 40th birthday party for the spouse, one wanted a dance to be part of their graduation party, etc. Dozens of viewers have called to learn which clubs are near them so they can return to square dancing or have called to learn where they can join square dancing.

Twelve shows were taped between January 17 and May 8. Another dozen are planned between July 10 and December. Because this TV show is aired on cable, viewers often find it only when flipping channels. Thus it is important that the show air at least weekly--some channels play it several times a week, some daily. Giving one tape to a station will not net many, if any, calls. Most stations appreciate receiving a "series" show where they know that each month they will get two new shows to air. Many stations then give the show a "series" spot, which means that the show will air regularly in that time slot, making it much easier for viewers to know when to watch. "Prime-time" slots (between 7 and 10 p.m.) yield the most "viewer-response" calls.

This show is much like the life of a beautiful rose. God dropped a seed on fertile ground. Square and round dancers planted it, watered it, watched it germinate, watered it, and gave it some fertilizer. By tending it carefully, today they have a beautiful rose that is being enjoyed in Minnesota, North Dakota and Wisconsin.

What is the goal? That lots of square and round dancers will lend their energy, enthusiasm and ideas so this rose (the show) can produce thousands of new square and round dancers. Hopefully "*Friendship Set to Music*" will make the world a more beautiful place for everyone who sees it or participates in it.

Questions about the show should be directed to producer/director Dee Scott: 952-472-2987. Tapes are also available from her for \$6 each.

Yellow rocks to all!