

Approved: 3/8/95
Date

MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Al Ramirez at 1:30 p.m. on March 7, 1995 in Room 531-N of the Capitol.

All members were present except: Senator Lee - Absent

Committee staff present:

Fred Carman, Revisor of Statutes
Jacqueline Breymeyer, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Tom Young, Square Dancer - Pomona Lake
John Rothrock, Square Dancer - Topeka
Beverly Hoffsett, Square Dancer - Topeka

Others attending: See attached list

Chairman Ramirez called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m.

SB 323--square dance official folk dance of Kansas

Tom Young, square dancer, appeared as a proponent of the bill. Mr. Young took the committee 100 years back in time, when friends would gather to help each other building homes or barns. A new barn would be built and a square dance would be its first usage. The pioneer spirit that promoted friendliness and helpfulness is alive and well as expressed in square dances today. (Attachment 1)

John Rothrock, Square dancer, appeared next in support of the bill. Mr. Rothrock stated the pioneers crossing the state on the various trails such as the Oregon and Santa Fe would gather in the evenings to square dance and forget their troubles. Mr. Rothrock displayed an article in "The Topeka Capital Journal" that featured square dancers and squaredancing. He spoke of squaredancing as an aerobic exercise, as an evening of square dancing provides approximately 5 miles of walking in a 2 to 3 hour period. Mr. Rothrock mentioned Dr. Thomas Miller, a Dallas physician, who supports both the mental and physical aspects of squaredancing as "incredibly helpful" as a common sense treatment for arthritis. (Attachment 2)

Beverly Hoffsett, Topeka, spoke as a proponent of the bill, stating that square dancing was brought to America in the sixteenth century as a form of folk dancing from Poland, Ireland, Germany, Russia, Austria and other foreign countries. The pioneers brought squaredancing to Kansas on the western trek of the wagon trains. She stated that there are over 100 member clubs in Kansas that belong to the Kansas Square Dance Association. It is a form of relaxation and exercise. Many clubs dance throughout the year for various charities. (Attachment 3)

One of the committee members commented that this was the same bill that Senator Doyen introduced several years ago and its time has come.

In response to the question of how this bill would benefit the group, Ms. Hoffsett deferred to Mr. Rothrock who stated that Kansas will become one of 50 states that will have this designation; the goal will be to eventually get the squaredance to be designated the national folk dance of the United States of America. This is a movement that started back in the 80s and got bogged down. It was decided to go back and start again at the grass roots level and go from there. Mr. Rothrock mentioned that President Carter and his wife squaredanced at the White House. He commented that the squaredancers will keep trying until they achieve state and national recognition of the squaredance.

In reply to another question from one of the committee, Mr. Rothrock stated that there is no paid staff and no particular individual or organization benefitting from this. He also responded that the polka has its ethnic origins in Germany. Only the square dance is an American generated dance.

In committee discussion it was stated that there are no particular steps that have to be taken. Other states have the option of passing a similar bill. Congress could pass a concurrent resolution regarding this subject. The Chairman reminded the Committee that there is still a lot of work to be done before the final bill deadline and adjourned the meeting.

The minutes of February 16, 20, 21, 22, 23 were approved as submitted March 1.
The next meeting is scheduled for March 8, 1995.

MARCH 7, 1995

S B 323

SENATOR RAMIREZ

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

I WILL NOT TRY TO NAME ALL THE OFFICES I HAVE HELD IN MY LOCAL CLUB HOWEVER I AM A PAST PRESIDENT OF THE LEAGUE OF SQUARE AND ROUND DANCE OF SOUTH CENTRAL KANSAS. (THE WICHITA AREA)

I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE YOU BACK IN TIME ABOUT 100 OR 150 YEARS. IT WAS A TIME OF NEIGHBOR HELPING NEIGHBOR , FRIEND HELPING FRIEND. IF THERE WERE BARNs TO BE BUILT OR HOMES TO BE BUILT ALL THE NEIGHBORS WOULD GATHER AND THE HOME OR BARN WOULD SOON BE FINISHED. ONE OF THE FIRST THINGS TO HAPPEN IN A NEW BARN WAS A SQUARE DANCE. YOU KNOW THE HISTORY OF THE SQUARE DANCE FROM THE BILL BEFORE YOU . HOWEVER THE SPIRIT OF THOSE EARLY KANSAS SETTLERS IS STILL ALIVE AND WELL AND IS EXPRESSED BY THE MANY SQUARE DANCERS ACROSS THE STATE OF KANSAS.

YOU CAN TALK TO ANYONE IN THE SMALLER COMMUNITIES AND THEY WILL TELL YOU : OH YES I REMEMBER LEARNING TO SQUARE DANCE IN 3RD GRADE IN MRS SMITHS CLASS OR MISS KRUGER OR MISS ANDERSON OR MRS SCHWARTZ. OR IT MAY HAVE BEEN 5TH GRADE. IN MR LYNQUIST CLASS BUT YOU CAN BE SURE ALMOST EVERY STUDENT HAS BEEN INTRODUCED TO SQUARE DANCING. AND AS ADULTS WE CARRY WITH US THE TRADITION OF FRIENDLYNESS AND HELPFULNESS STARTED IN KANSAS BY THE EARLY SETTLERS.

WE HAVE MOVED OUT OF THE BARN WHERE SOME OF OUR OLDER DANCERS STILL REMEMBER DANCING AS YOUNG PEOPLE AND INTO THE CHURCH BASEMENTS, THE SCHOOL LUNCH ROOMS , THE COMMUNITY BUILDINGS , AND THE RECREATION CENTERS ACROSS THE STATE. BUT THE SPIRIT OF NEIGHBOR HELPING NEIGHBOR , FRIEND HELPING FRIEND IS STILL ALIVE IN SQUARE DANCE CLUBS ACROSS THE STATE. THAT IS THE ISSUE WE ARE TALKING ABOUT HERE TODAY. THE FRIENDLY SQUARE DANCERS OF KANSAS IS REASON ENOUGH TO MAKE THE SQUARE DANCE THE OFFICIAL DANCE OF KANSAS

TOM YOUNG DANCER

POMONA LAKE

*Senate Governmental Organization
Attachment 1
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JOHN ROTHROCK
TOPEKA

I doubt if the cowboys on the Chisholm Trail were square dancers but history tells us that square dancing is a grassroots activity in the purest sense and no other type of American Folk Dance has such a broad appeal or represents such a blending of various folk dance traditions.

Pioneers crossing this great state via the Oregon and Santa Fe Trails from 1821 -1872 in the evenings around their campfires would gather to square dance as a way to relax and forget their problems.

Square dancing is a great American tradition and there are many historical and other reasons that square dancing deserves permanent recognition. As a traditional wholesome form of family recreation in which people of all ages can take part, square dancing is an activity that symbolizes one of the country's basic strengths; the unity of the family. Square Dancing pays no attention to arbitrary social or other distinctions- people from all walks of life equally enjoy square dancing. It is an activity in which the elderly, as well as the physically and mentally handicapped, can fully participate thereby greatly enriching their lives.

Square dancing being such an American tradition touching on all walks of life and with two Historical Trails crossing our great state, HOW CAN WE IGNORE THIS ACTIVITY and not designate the square dance as the official folk dance of the State of Kansas?

With the threat of having congress cut the funding to various art, humanity and cultural organizations, what a good year for us to recognize our Kansas culture and heritage. The Saturday, February 25, 1995 issue of **The Topeka Capital Journal** displayed square dancing as an art, a recreation, a lesson in discipline, exercise, and fun. Earlier, the U.S. Postal Service also recognized square dancing when they issued the Folk Dance Postage Stamp in 1978.

The Monday, March 6, 1995, edition of the **Topeka Capital Journal** listed Kansas as spending \$.53 per person on the arts and it is apparent additional funds will not be make available for the arts.

The designation of the square dance as the official Folk Dance of the State of Kansas is in keeping with Kansas tradition of supporting the Arts.

Square dancers and callers alike are getting school boards and even colleges to teach square dancing in physical education classes. Educational Administrators welcome an inexpensive approach to exercise of the mind and body that is fun.

Square dancing is an aerobic exercise. An evening of dancing provides approximately 5 miles of walking in a 2 to 3 hour period. Because square dancing is considered to be "Friendship Set to Music" it is much more fun than the impersonal atmosphere of a gym.

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Dr. Thomas Miller, a Dallas physician, states, "Square dancing is an effective common sense treatment for arthritis." The smooth shuffling used in square dances promotes an easy, fluid body motion that gently stretches the afflicted joints and muscles. "The slow and easy turns and dips are incredibly helpful."

"Arthritis afflicts millions of older Americans". "Anti-inflammatory drugs are useful up to a point in treating arthritis," says Dr. Miller, "but like all antibiotics they have powerful side effects. And no drug yet has been found that can completely cure arthritis."

Miller adds the mental aspects of square dancing also play an important role in easing the pain of arthritis. "Which would make you feel better---popping pills or holding your partner and gently moving and swaying?"

The Kansas City Federation, with assistance from the State of Missouri and Kansas is beginning to discuss the possibility of bidding to host the National Square Dance Convention to our area. I hope this dream becomes a reality. It makes a real impact on a community when over 20,000 dancers come into their state and community. This convention brings dancers from around the world because of our common language in our dance.

This fun loving group are probably one of the only people who pay all their own expenses to attend the convention which begins on a Wednesday and ends the following Saturday. Merchants immediately notice the lack of alcohol consumption within our dance community as these ingredients don't mix, therefore, we are a joy to entertain.

You can trace some type of folk dancing back to the sixteenth Century. Square Dancing was brought to America in the mid sixteenth Century as a form of folk dancing from Poland, Ireland, Germany, Russia, Austria and other foreign countries. It was brought to Kansas by the pioneers when they came west in wagon trains. Wherever there was a fiddle and a banjo, there were people gathered to square dance. They used this as a way to forget their problems from living on the frontier. They would clean out a barn and enjoy square dancing as "barn dancing". They would ride their horses and drive their buggies and come from miles around to enjoy an evening of square dancing. It became a tradition among the Kansas pioneers. It is still a tradition in Kansas to enjoy an evening of square dancing. Other forms of folk dancing enjoyed at a square dance are contra, line, round and clogging.

We have over 100 member clubs in Kansas that belong to the Kansas Square Dance Association with over 5000 dancers belonging to these clubs. We also have the South Central Federation in the Wichita area and the Kansas City Federation, with many more dancers belonging to these organizations. We have dancers from 5 to over 80 years old. Our members include doctors, bankers, teachers, lawyers, farmers, construction and factory workers, law enforcement people, city, county and state employees. Square dancing is a good form of relaxation and exercise. Square dancing is a form of aerobics and equivalent to over five miles of walking in a three hour square dance.

Clubs have special dances during the year and income from those dances are donated to different charities such as the heart association, Jerry's Kids, muscular dystrophy and many others.

Square dancing, as we know it today, is enjoyed in many countries around the world, and as it is an American folk dance, all calling is done in English. The people in the different countries may not be able to speak or understand english, but they can square dance to english speaking callers.

Twenty three states have already passed this bill and another twenty states have legislation to enact the bill.

Square dancers are known to be some of the friendliest people on earth. You are always welcome at any club you visit.

BEVERLY HOFFSBY

JOPEKA

Senate Governmental Organization
Attachment 3

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