

NORTHEAST GEORGIA FEDERATION OF SQUARE DANCERS

The Northeast Georgia Federation of Square Dance clubs was organized about 1968 by three clubs - Jug Tavern Squares, Winder; Lakeshore Squares, Gainesville; and Happy Squares, Athens. Since that time the federation has grown until now there are 16 square dance clubs in the affiliation. The clubs range from the smallest with 8 current members to the largest with nearly 100 members and are located in an area from Madison north to Toccoa and from Elberton westward to Lilburn. There are many devoted square dancers who participate in the federation activities.

Member clubs are entirely autonomous and operate their own club lessons, dances, charitable activities and financial affairs. The federation member clubs and federation officers are ready to assist other clubs both in and out of the affiliation in any way requested, such as organization of classes, club rules, by-laws, special events, and cooperation between clubs. Member clubs pride themselves in supporting each other or other state clubs in their activities including special guest caller dances, advanced lessons, round dancing, clogging events and charitable endeavors. The federation is not in a position to offer direct grant of funds to clubs in financial difficulties. The federation officers or others do not attempt to dictate how individual clubs are operated.

There are no Northeast Georgia Federation dues to either member clubs or individual dancers. All financial support to operate the federation is derived from the door charges at sponsored Federation dances or other events. Four large dances each year, with a Georgia or nationally known caller, round dancing, food and attendance awards are sponsored by the federation. These dances are regularly scheduled for the fifth Saturday nights except in recent years for one dance about mid January because fifth Saturday has been in December. Normally two round dances

are scheduled between square dance tips. Coffee, punch and finger food furnished by the dancers is normally available at the dances with tables open following the first tip. The admission charge for these dances is presently \$2.00 per person which enables the federation to have exceptional callers, very good halls with excellent facilities and to remain solvent financially. Most dances are held at the Gainesville Civic Center, Fort Yargo State Park and Stegeman Hall on the University of Georgia Campus because of the large crowds attending. In recent years there have been between 400 and 500 dancers present at each federation dance. At each dance two member club attendance awards are presented. One federation banner is awarded for the largest number of paid club members present and another for the highest percentage of members present. Member clubs submit paid up membership rosters prior to the dance to verify attendance at the dances.

Annually the federation sponsors a fund raising dance, crafts sale, foods sale and prizes for donations drawings event for the Scottish Rite Children's Hospital in Atlanta. This charitable endeavor begins early in the calendar year and culminates in the Scottish Rite Hospital Dance held on the first Saturday of October at the Shriners YAAREB Temple Activities Building, 400 Ponce deLeon Avenue in Decatur. All Northeast Georgia callers and many callers from Atlanta or other parts of the State participate in the calling and cueing for the dance, free of charge. Each federation club has a money raising activity during the year to raise money for the hospital. A permanent special awards banner is given to any club (N.E. Georgia or not) who contributes \$1000. at the dance. This banner states that the club is a Thousandaire Club for a particular year and displays the Scottie logo. Donations to the Scottish Rite Children's Hospital are taken at the door for admittance to the dance. In recent years more and more support has been given by callers and dancers to this worthwhile endeavor by dancers in other parts of the state. There also is a Scottie banner awarded to the club with the largest contribution.

One of the basic principles upon which the Federation was established and in an effort to expand participation in square dancing in our area, is the rule in the N.E. Ga. Federation Constitution and By-Laws that any member of a Federation Club in good standing may dance with any other Federation Club, at their regular dance with no charge at the door. Over the years, even before it was officially a part of our constitution, this practice encouraged club visitation, banner stealing and lots of very good fellowship between dancers and members of other clubs. Also we have benefited from a close relationship with all the Federation Club callers. Another rule which was passed at an executive committee meeting but never included in the Constitution and By-Laws states that if a club plans a special dance on their regular dance night, with a guest caller and extra expenses, at which everyone will be charged at the door then the club officers have the responsibility to notify all other Federation Clubs of this at least two weeks prior to the event. This enables all Federation Club members to anticipate a charge at the door upon arriving at the dance. This is usually done by letter with flyers advertising the dance enclosed. Many clubs find that the extra financial support from special dances not only help in costs to operate the club but also increases member and guest participation in square dancing activities. Some Federation Clubs schedule regular fifth club night dances with special callers, decorations, food, etc., to promote square dancing in their area. For several years fifth Saturday Nights have been reserved for Federation Dances at which nationally prominent callers are invited to call. These club and Federation activities provide more opportunities to square and round dance and therefore expand fun, fellowship and charitable activities for all dancers.

The Federation constitution provides for four officers who work toward the goals of the association. For several years husband and wife have been elected to the offices because of the multiple duties involved.

The Co-Presidents have the responsibility for overall leadership along with presiding at all dances and executive meetings. The principle duty is to arrange for a place and engage callers - cuers, and others so that the regular Federation Dances are scheduled, often callers of the caliber required for Federation Dances must be contacted and scheduled at least a year in advance. Presidents are charged with the responsibility to promote dancing in the Northeast Georgia area by active participation in all the clubs dances or other activities which means extensive club visitation. Also the presidents are the official representative to G.S.S.D.A., other Federations and the National Square Dance organization in the name of the Federation. Publicity, correspondence and other similar functions are a vital part of the responsibilities.

The Vice-Presidents have the responsibility for acting for the Federation in any capacity normally the duty of the Presidents, in their absence. Tradition indicates that the Vice-Presidents should succeed the President the next year. In addition to visiting all clubs and aiding in the promotion of Federation dances or other activities the Vice-Presidents schedule the Host Clubs who provide coffee and punch, table set up, serving and general clean up at each of the Federation Dances. Paper products and reimbursement of expenses are furnished from the Federation income. The Vice-Presidents assist in any other matters concerning operation of the Federation as needed.

The Secretaries principle duties in addition to keeping minutes of all meetings, include maintaining a current listing of all member club's officers, mailing addresses, etc. An updated club paid membership list is prepared just prior to each dance from information furnished by the club secretaries so attendance at Federation dances can be verified. Attendance award banners are given out at each dance to the club with the largest number of members present and to the club

with the highest percentage of members present. The secretaries mail out to each club revised club officers and membership lists periodically.

The Treasurers maintain the Federation financial books, issue checks to pay authorized expenses including callers fee, rental fees on places to dance, supplies and other Federation bills or expenses. Financial statements are prepared and distributed following each Federation Dance.

The Past-Presidents serve as advisors to the officers and if not a club representative is an ex-officio member of the executive committee. An executive committee made up of the Federation officers and a Club Representative from each of the member clubs (usually the club presidents or club members designated by the club Presidents) provide at periodic Executive Meetings the guidance, discussion, planning and other matters required for Federation action. This group makes general plans for activities, dances, and operation of the Federation as well as provides recommendations, resolutions or other matters upon which the entire Federation Membership must vote. All meetings are held under normal parliamentary proceedings (Robert's Rules of Order Revised).

The ultimate aim in establishing a Northeast Georgia Federation of Square Dancers was to promote, encourage and provide opportunities for Square Dancing in the area. This purpose is stated in Article II of the Constitution and By-Laws.

Purpose:

To organize square dancers in order to accomplish the following:

- A. To stimulate the interest of square dancers both old and new.
- B. To cooperate with Parks and Recreation Departments and other organizations to promote square dancing.
- C. To educate beginners in square dancing and inform the general public of our activities.
- D. To affirm in the public's mind that drinking of intoxicants at square dances is not tolerated.

- E. To engage in charitable endeavors through promotion of dances and other activities.

The Constitution states - Article IV-(d):

Election of Officers - A nominating committee, initiated by the President of the Federation, composed of the Presidents of each of the Federation clubs shall present a slate of officers for election at the last Federation dance of the calendar year. Nomination from the floor will be in order, providing that no person shall be nominated without that persons prior approval. No two officers may be members of the same club. Election shall be by a majority vote of the members present. All officers shall serve for one calendar year beginning January 1.

The Northeast Georgia Federation of Square Dancers which was put together several years ago for the purpose of promoting square dancing, stimulating interest in square dancing, advancing principles of square dancing and engaging in charitable efforts, in the northeast area of our state, can remain a very fine organization with adequate club officers support and the cooperation of every club dancer. It should be our desire that the Federation will be able to continue to accomplish these objectives.