

Reprint

Quick! I Need an Allemande Left!

By Donna Cox, Executive Assistant, Bank of America, Charlotte, North Carolina

While packing a few personal items inadvertently left behind by my boss (and dear friend) who was a recent victim of the lay-offs spurred by our economic times, strangely my thoughts turned to the healing power of square dancing.

I stood in that now-empty office and fought back tears of sadness for several dear coworkers with whom I would probably lose contact. I thought of so many other companies in so many other states also making “tough decisions” affecting hundreds of thousands of people across our nation, all of whom need Yellow Rocks, for sure.

Everyone needs a Yellow Rock on occasion. Although I love Yellow Rocks, what I needed at that moment was an Allemande Left (or two or three!) in the worst way. I needed to whoop and holler and just let-er-rip with a really big Allemande Left, knowing that the security of home was a short promenade away.

I love the crescendo to Allemande Left in a good patter call. You can feel the excitement in the buildup, just teasing you over and over until. BAM! there it is, ALLEMANDE LEFT! Allemande Left means you’re going home. Home position is where everything is proper and fitting, where there are no friends departing in tears, no family members suffering with illness, no bills to pay. Home, in your square, with friends, is where everything is just right.

I wish I could keep little instant, add-water-and stir Allemande Lefts in my pocket to use whenever I have the need. A recent TV commercial depicted a lady buying laughs, contented sighs, and such, in the form of little tokens from a store. I don’t even remember the product they were trying to advertise. In my opinion those laughs and contented sighs pale in comparison to Yellow Rocks and Allemande Lefts. Just think about a TV commercial where someone is buying Do Sa Dos, Yellow Rocks, and Allemande Lefts. Unquestionably, the viewer would know the product is square dancing with its magic power of love.

Square dancing is more than an extracurricular activity for me, it is my release. Second only to prayer, it is my chance to shake out all the bad emotions and fill up on loving friendship that can sustain you through life’s problems.

So, when you need a “pick me up that won’t let you down”, remember the magic of Allemande Lefts and be the first to square up.

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there are and were many issues facing square dancing as it grew over the years. Today there is one issue that square dancers and leaders just “can’t get their fingers around the Jell-O.” Some of the issues that have not changed much are problems of leadership, fewer volunteers, low retention rates, dress codes and poor teaching techniques. Many of these issues could not be rectified any more than schools and universities can fix similar problems. In summary, square dancing has had these issues continuously for 40 years during the period of growth and during the period of decline. Due to decreasing numbers of square dancers, they may be more prominent and pretentious today than in the past.