

RALPH MAXHIMER - AND EVE

There's a very unusual and wonderful situation in the Southern California area.

As you perhaps know, one of the largest round dance teachers' associations in the country has been active in this state for the past several years. This year that group selected as their president one of the old timers and pioneers in the round dance field, Ralph Maxhimer.

Just a few months ago our loose-knit, though enthusiastic, callers' Pow-wow was reorganized into a strong and ambitious callers' association. The almost 200 strong membership voted for Ralph Maxhimer as its president.

This is certainly a great tribute to a gentleman who has made his mark in the round dance field and in the field of square dancing as well. In addition this points strongly to the accepted feeling that square dancing and round dancing belong together.

Many of you know Ralph and Eve well. Here are some thoughts that express the beliefs that Ralph Maxhimer holds. (Os)

I BELIEVE: That Square Dancing could become
the Highest Common Denominator of
American Recreation.

What this country needs is not a good 5¢ cigar but an awareness of the many, many values of Square Dancing. Even though hundreds of thousands are now dancing we still are not reaching the multitudes who are being deprived of becoming happier people because of Square Dancing.

The above-mentioned values are multifold and will find expression in accord with the individual's needs. For the Meek, Square Dancing offers a pleasantly inconspicuous ingress to having fun while making those little old mistakes right along with the other fellow. For the Brazen, Square Dancing offers the opportunity for self-expression through cooperation and consideration of the other fellow. For just Ordinary Folks, Square Dancing establishes a social/relation vehicle which far surpasses any other co/recreational activity.

The term co/recreation is becoming increasingly important in today's trend toward the busy husband doing one thing, his wife doing another and his children still another. Far too few participant types of recreational activities are being offered and encouraged which attract the entire family and thereby give them this thing we call the Highest Common Denominator of social relations at the family level.

We emphasize participant because we the people of these United States need to participate more and more. With today's highly organized professional sports program we are fast becoming a Nation of sitters. Such a program allows a relatively few well paid professionals with above average skills to entertain thousands and thousands of us amateurs. Television, radio, the theater and other art forms also contribute to this incentive to sit, sit, sit. (If people don't stop sitting down so much they're all going to look like Osgood.) A certain amount of this passive form of recreation is fine and dandy, in fact, in some instances even educational, but it can be over-done to the point of monopolizing all of your free time. If you do not know what free time is you will never find out while here at Asilomar, believe you me.

If it were made possible for recreational agencies at the city, county, state and federal levels to approximate the above-mentioned program these United States could enjoy the epitome of social relations through Square Dancing. A potential objective for our National Square Dance Convention Board of Directors might be in such a direction. As they progress from area to area calling attention of the local agencies to the many fine virtues associated with Square Dancing, as exemplified by its excellently disciplined participants, perhaps an opportunity will occur for them to incite the enactment of some measure of legislation which would assist in promoting such a program. The federal government exists because of the states. The state exists because of the counties. The county exists because of the cities. The city exists because of the communities. There is where Square Dancing belongs - at the Community level. There, through Square Dancing, people living in the same block may become neighbors; people attending the same church may find yet another avenue of association; people having children in the same school are given the opportunity to extend intra-family relations; employers find an answer to employer/employee and employee/employee relations; service organizations recognize the opportunity to sponsor such worth-while community projects as Community Chest, March of Dimes and many, many others. The potential betterment of a community through Square Dancing is unlimited. All it needs is the foresight and guidance of interested people like yourselves.

We haven't touched upon the many other values of Square Dancing such as emotional, physical, therapeutic, spiritual, etc. All four of these may be experienced in a single contact by visiting such organizations as the Braille Institute of America, paraplegic groups, institutions for handicapped persons, or any individual less fortunate than yourself. Give of yourself, that you may receive.

Ralph Maxhimer