

'Grand Square' part of farm promotion

LANCASTER, Pa - With 35,000-40,000 people showing up for the National Square Dance Convention in California last year, there is no disputing the fact that this form of recreation is popular. And, as part of their week-long promotional effort at Park City next month from October 18 - 23, the Lancaster County Farmers' Association has chosen to feature a professional square dancing group, the Grand Squares, as Thursday evening's entertainment.

"We're not really professional" says Mrs Paul Andrews 3358 Marietta Avenue, Lancaster, the wife and official secretary of the group's caller.

"We are just a club of people who get together and dance for our own enjoyment," she says. However, to a non-square dancer, the requirements which have to be met before joining the club make the word "professional" seem accurate.

In order to join, a would-be member must take classes from September through April to learn the "language" of the calls. Then, if a person's progress has been satisfactory, he graduates in April, at which time he is eligible to become a member of the Grand Squares.

"Classes are necessary because the language is so intricate," explains Andrews.

The crowds at Park City on October 21 will get a real feel for the language when two squares of accomplished dancers perform from 7:30 - 9 p.m. Andrews plans to begin with a pattern call, (one that he makes up as he goes), and then to go into a singing call, which is done as the words of a song.

A meat cutter by profession, Andrews has been calling for 15 years. In his travels with this hobby, he has been to Delaware, New York, Massachusetts, Long Island, Staten Island, and other eastern states. He also called at two National conventions. At present, he teaches a square dancing class at the Mount Joy Vo-Tech school on Wednesday evenings and is usually busy calling on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. He teaches a round dance class, also.

Harold W. Ney, Marietta Rd, who is on the board of directors of the Lancaster County Farmers Association, was responsible for engaging the square dance group. A member of the Grand Squares for several years now, he and his wife explained the allure of this particular hobby.

"I can work a whole day on the farm, come here, and have a lot of energy," Ney explained.

Andrews thinks the nature of the dance, which requires constant attention to follow the calls, keeps a dancer's mind occupied so that he

forgets all problems and concentrates on the energy and fun he is involved in.

"It's also good, clean fellowship," adds Andrews.

Square dancing's heritage goes back to the early American farmer-the pioneer. These ancestors

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Members of the Grand Square whoop it up.

took it out West with them and used it as a way of getting rid of excess energy and as a way of having fun. And, today, it comes to us in

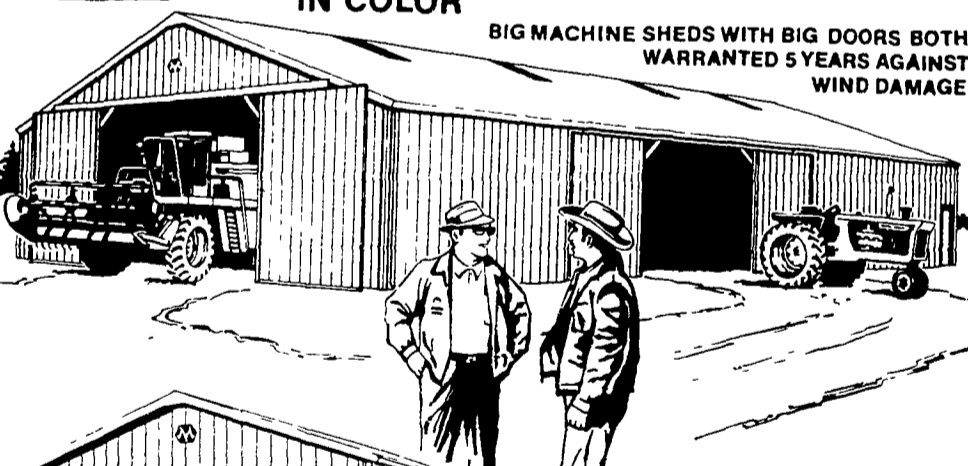
an updated version with almost any type of music, from the traditional 4-4 beats to pop songs for a background.

For a first hand view of Grand Square, come to the fountain at Park City Shopping Mall on Thursday, October 21.

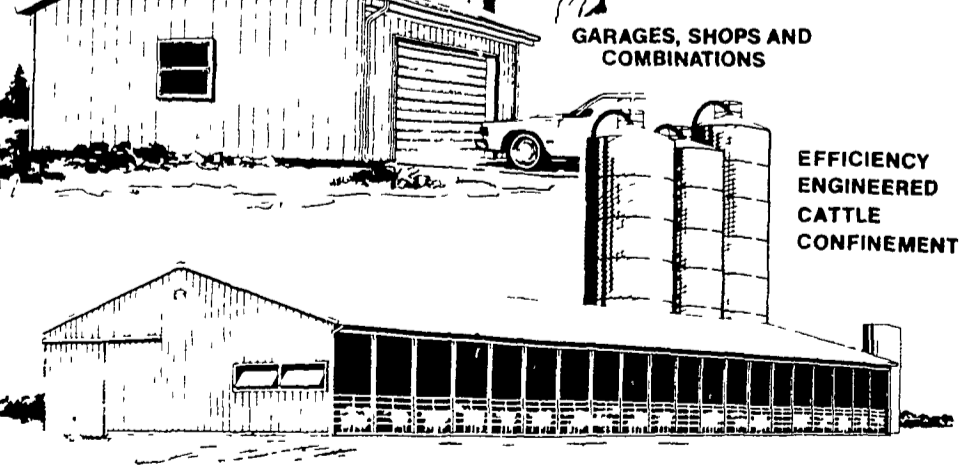


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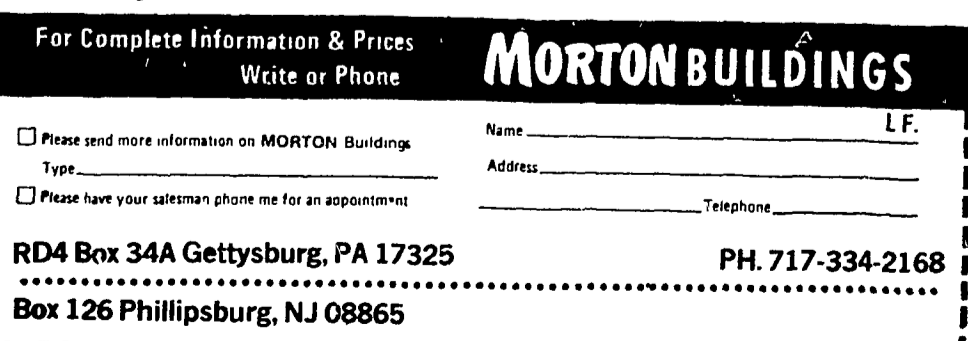
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