

CELEBRATING VASARDA'S 20TH ANNIVERSARY

On January 3, 1987, eleven enthusiastic square dance supporters (Roy Thacker, Elvie Satterfield, Deborah Lewis, Joe and Betty Parrish, Charlie and Edith Holcomb, Jerry and Garnett Reilly, and Bob and Dora Worley) met at the Reilly condo in Virginia Beach to talk about the future of square dancing in Virginia. The main purpose was to organize forces to bring a National Convention to Virginia. The preliminary meeting with the National Executive Committee was over, and the biggest hurdle was that of being unorganized.

According to the meeting minutes, the following Executive Board was established: President, Charlie and Edith Holcomb; Vice President, Joe and Betty Parrish; Secretary, Deborah Lewis; Treasurer, Elvie Satterfield. Jerry and Garnett Reilly were chosen to serve as General Chairma in pursuit of submitting a bid to Houston, Texas, in support of the proposition to host a National Convention. This convention was originally to have been held in Richmond, Virginia in 1991. With insufficient time to prepare a bid, the submission was postponed until 1992.

The newly established Executive Board named the organization the "Virginia Square and Round Dance Association" (VASARDA).

Membership would be composed of individual dancers with dues established at \$2.50 per person/per year. All dancers who joined before July would be designated as Charter Members. There were 668 Charter Members.

Virginia was divided into five distinctive regions: Region 1, Central Virginia; Region 2, Southwest Valley; Region 3, Shenandoah Valley; Region 4, Northern Virginia; Region 5, Tidewater. Three Directors from each of the five regions would compose the VASARDA Board.

After two months, Charlie Holcomb resigned as President and Roy Thacker was elected to that office.

VASARDA immediately set about establishing a prominent and easily recognizable identity. A distinctive belt buckle was designed, registered, and made exclusively available through VASARDA. A state square and round dance outfit displaying the Virginia's dogwood and cardinal emblems was officially adopted by the Board with appliquéés for the apron and shirt made available to members of the organization. The VASARDA badge, in the shape of the Virginia map and including the dogwood and cardinal, was also designed and was available to members upon joining.

During the first year, the Board met every month with sessions lasting five to six hours. The members of the Acting Board from January to November 1987 were known as "Incorporators." The original nine members of this Board were designated as "Founders." Caller Bob Worley was included in this group and was asked to serve as Advisor. The members at the Annual Meeting voted these Incorporators as official Board Members.

The Board now meets four times a year: January, April, July and October, usually on the first Saturday. While most meetings have taken place in Richmond, meetings have also been held in Region 2, Bristol; Region 3, Staunton and Region 5, Virginia Beach.

Norm Jackson was appointed to complete the research necessary to develop Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation which were based on applicable Virginia Codes. These Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation were finally completed by the first annual meeting in November, 1987.

VASARDA Policy Guidelines were developed and passed. The only changes to these documents since their adoption have been those raising the dues to \$4.00 per person and changing the fiscal year to coincide with the tax schedule.

VASARDA goals were outlined and followed by guidelines of the convention in the summer of 1987. All documents are still in use. The guidelines of the convention were re-written in 2001 by Jack and Nancye Browning.

During VASARDA's first year, Jerry and Garnett Reilly continued to prepare diligently for the National Convention bid. With cooperation from all clubs and associations, as well as city and state officials, the bid book was mailed to the NEC by March 1, 1988. The Richmond City Manager, Mayor, Convention Bureau Director and VASARDA's Convention Sales Representative, along with hundreds of dancers, traveled to Anaheim, California, to present the bid. However, the John Marshall Hotel, one of the proposed convention sites, closed without notice on May 31, 1988. The closing of the hotel eliminated seven ballrooms with wooden floors and left the bid short of the space requirements for a National Convention. As a result, Virginia lost the bid to Cincinnati, Ohio.

Another early project was to propose a bill declaring Square Dancing as the Official Folk Dance of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Roy Thacker was appointed by the Board to pursue this project. The Bill was passed with the support of dancers statewide who wrote to their representatives. Roy Thacker, Elvie Satterfield, Deborah Lewis, the Dvoraks, the Reilly's, and many more Richmond dancers, were at the State House at seven o'clock in the morning in costume, on several occasions, to perform for the Congressmen who were arriving early for work. They were also present for the sub-committee meeting. A year later, having repeated the process, they were present for the Committee meeting where the Bill was passed. The Bill passed both the House and Senate unanimously.

As a means of communication, VASARDA launched the DANCER NEWS. Readie Cooper served as the first Editor with Dave Cooper as Publisher. Subsequent editors and publishers included Charlene Ryan and Garnett and Jerry Reilly. The DANCER NEWS is published four times a year in January, April, July and October and is made available to all VASARDA members at no charge.

The Advisor, DANCER NEWS Editor and Membership Chairmen are Associate Members of the Board and do not have a vote.

Membership in VASARDA climbed to over one thousand. Starting in 1990, annual membership meetings were held in conjunction with the conventions.

The first VASARDA State Convention, themed as "Trade the Wave," was held on May 26 and 27, 1989, at the Pavilion in Virginia Beach. Don and Pat Degner, Virginia Beach, Region 5, were the Convention Directors. We had two national callers, four Virginia callers, and two Round Dance cuers on staff and were supplemented by eight VASCA callers. Attendance was 1,156 and made a profit of \$8,466.51. Joe and Betty Parrish, Virginia Beach, Region 5, served as VASARDA President at that time.

The Second State Convention, "Over The Rainbow," under the direction of Chip and Jill Hayes, Virginia Beach, Region 5, was held at the Richmond Center on May 3-5, 1990. Attendance dropped for several unavoidable reasons. Staff consisted of two National and five Virginia callers plus three Round Dancer cuers, along with the assistance of thirty-one VASCA callers. The program was expanded to include Contra, Clogging, Quadrilles, Circle Dances and Traditional Squares. Joe and Betty Parrish, Region 5, served as president. Due to unavoidable changes in date and location, attendance dropped to 800 dancers and a mere \$49.91 was made in profit.

With another change in location necessary, due to prohibitive costs, the third State Convention, "Swing Into Spring," was held at the Holiday Inn in Norfolk, on May 2-4, 1991. Bob and Betty Ruggles, Richmond,

Region 1, were Directors; Frank and Mary Spicer, Region 2, served as President. Attendance numbered at 540 dancers with a profit of \$498.68.

The fourth State Convention, "Circle Up 8 In The President's State," also required a change in location and was moved to the Virginia Beach Resort Hotel and Conference Center. Upon the resignation of the convention director (Northern Virginia, Region 4), Don and Pat Degner, Virginia Beach, Region 5, served as convention directors. The convention was held on May 7-9, 1992, and was staffed by three national callers, three Virginia callers, three cuers, and sixteen VASCA members. Frank and Mary Spicer, Region 2, served as President. There were 469 dancers in attendance, and the profit to VASARDA was \$419.

The fifth State Convention, "Follow Your Neighbor Dixie Style," was held at the Founders Inn at Virginia Beach, Region 5, May 6-9, 1993. It remained at the Founders Inn until the ninth convention. Directed by Norris and Claudette McLeod, Virginia Beach, Region 5, there were twenty-three VASCA callers and seven cuers. Bob and Ardis Morton, Region 4, served as President. There were 579 dancers in attendance and the profit to VASARDA was \$6,200.

Jerry and Garnett Reilly were the Oversight Chairmen for the first five conventions. Joe and Betty Parrish served on the committee for the fourth and fifth conventions. Thereafter, the Oversight Committee consisted of the three most recent Past Convention Directors.

The sixth State Convention, "Load The Boat To Fantasy Island," was held on May 5-7, 1994, under the direction of Becky and Hoyt Stewart, Arlington, Region 4. With thirty-four VASCA callers and fifteen round dance cuers on staff, the convention introduced an hour of live music, which was enjoyed tremendously by all dancers. Bob and Ardis Morton, Vienna, Region 4, served as President. There were 472 dancers in attendance and the profit to VASARDA was \$4,581.35.

Using the Morton's motor home with Fred Martin calling from the roof, VASARDA danced in front of the viewing stand for the inauguration of Governor George Allen. It was only 5 degrees, with some dancers wearing fur coats and hats.

The seventh State Convention, "Wheel 'n Deal For Dance Memories," held on May 11-13, 1995, at the Founders Inn was under the direction of Dave and Betty Peake, Arlington, Region 4. There were thirty-three VASCA callers and eleven cuers on staff. There were 700 dancers in attendance and the profit to VASARDA was \$7,123.24. Joe and Betty Parrish, Virginia Beach, Region 5, served as President.

The eighth State Convention, "Mix in '96 For A Teacup Chain," was held May 9-11, 1996, at the Founders Inn and was under the direction of Jack and Nancye Browning, Virginia Beach, Region 5. Twenty-two VASCA callers and nine cuers were on staff. There were 567 dancers in attendance and the profit to VASARDA was \$6,915.00. Joe and Betty Parrish, Region 5, served as President.

The ninth State Convention, "Star Through To Heaven in '97," May 8-10, 1997, was held at the Ingleside Resort in Staunton under the direction of Al and Nancy Smith, Chesapeake, Region 5. The convention was staffed by thirty-one VASCA callers, ten cuers, three contra prompters and eight line dance instructors. There were 536 dancers in attendance and the profit to VASARDA was \$5,887.23. Joe and Betty Parrish, Virginia Beach, Region 5, served as President.

The tenth State Convention, "Circulate With An Angel in '98," May 7-9, 1998, under the direction of Herman and Millie Brock, was held at the Ingleside Resort in Staunton. Tommie Faulkner displayed all of her theme skirts from each previous convention. The convention was staffed by thirty VASCA callers, eleven cuers, two contra prompters and eight line dance instructors. Ray and Shirley Sites, Shipman, Region 3, were President. There were 504 dancers in attendance and the profit to VASARDA was \$3,887.23.

The eleventh State Convention, "Cloverleaf to Colonial Memories," May 20-22, 1999, under the direction of Jim and Joyce Halfhill, Virginia Beach, Region 5, was held at the Ramada Inn, Williamsburg. There were thirty VASCA callers, ten cuers, five contra prompters and eight line dance instructors. There were 570 dancers in attendance and the profit to VASARDA was \$5,239.26. Ray and Shirley Sites, Shipman, Region 3, served as President.

"Cast Off To The Millennium," the twelfth State Convention, was held May 18-20, 2000, under the direction of Jim and Joyce Halfhill, Virginia Beach, Region 5, at the Ramada Inn, Williamsburg. There were twenty-eight VASCA callers, ten cuers, four contra prompters and seven line dance instructors. There were 520 dancers in attendance and the profit to VASARDA was \$4,496.11. Ray and Shirley Sites, Shipman, Region 3, served as President.

"Dancing Diamonds," the thirteenth State Convention, May 17-19, 2001, under the direction of Tommie Faulkner, 'the sparkling director', Newport News, Region 5, was held at the Ramada Inn, Williamsburg. There were more dancers in attendance at the opening ceremony on Thursday night than had ever attended the first night of convention. There were twenty-eight VASCA callers, ten cuers, four contra prompters and seven line dance instructors. Dave and Betty Peake, Arlington, Region 4, served as President. There were 703 dancers in attendance, the third largest attendance at a state convention since its inception in 1989. The profit to VASARDA was \$11,233.00.

The fourteenth State Convention, "Bring Back The Magic," May 16-18, 2002, under the direction of Dick and Linda Peterson, Greenbelt, MD, Region 4, was held at the Clarion Hotel, Williamsburg. There were twenty-six VASCA callers, ten cuers, two contra prompters and six line dance instructors. Tom and Peggy Sadler, Richmond, Region 1, served as President. There were 618 dancers in attendance and the profit to VASARDA was \$8,000.00.

The fifteenth State Convention, May 15-17, 2003 "Promenade To Harbor Lights," under the direction of Ray and Shirley Sites, Shipman, Region 3, was held at the Clarion Hotel, Williamsburg. There were twenty-eight VASCA callers, nine cuers, five contra prompters and eight line dance instructors. Tom and Peggy Sadler, Richmond, Region 1, served as President. There were 607 dancers in attendance and the profit to VASARDA was \$3,912.75.

The sixteenth State Convention, May 13-15, 2004, "Mardi Gras", under the direction of Jim and Joyce Halfhill, Virginia Beach, Region 5 and Al and Nancy Smith, Chesapeake, Region 5, was held at the Clarion Hotel, Williamsburg. Bob Worley, Virginia Beach, Region 5, was recognized for his 40 years of calling. The convention was staffed by twenty-six VASCA callers, eight cuers, seven contra prompters and six line dance instructors. Nancy Pittman, Suffolk, Region 5, was President. There were 607 dancers in attendance and the profit to VASARDA was \$6,437.77.

The seventeenth State Convention, "Wild Wild West," May 12-14, 2005, under the direction of Ron and Sherrie Linger, Richmond, Region 1, was held at the Clarion Hotel, Williamsburg. There were twenty-two VASCA callers, nine cuers, six contra prompters and six line dance instructors. Charlie Lee, Manassas, Region 4, was recognized for his 46 years of calling. Dave and Betty Peake, Alexandria, Region 4, served as President. There were 681 in attendance and the profit to VASARDA was \$4,383.11.

The eighteenth State Convention, "Kiki Walk To The Luau," May 18-20, 2006, under the direction of Joyce Halfhill and Marie Ingerson, Virginia Beach, Region 5, was held at the Holiday Inn, Hampton. Dave and Betty Peake, Lansdowne, Region 4, were President. There were 559 dancers in attendance and the profit to VASARDA was \$4,625.39.

The nineteenth State Convention, "Scoot Back To The 50's," May 17-19, 2007, under the direction of Ray and Shirley Sites, Shipman, Region 3, was held at the Hampton Holiday Inn. Tommie Faulkner, Newport

News, Region 5, was President. There were 531 dancers in attendance and the profit to VASARDA was \$3,680.89.

Under the leadership of Tommie Faulkner in 2006-2007, the two incentive programs for the State Convention were continued. The establishment of the Cowboy Showers Scholarship Fund was established to aid prospective callers, cuers, line instructors and contra prompters in enhancing their careers.

VASARDA's participation in the Virginia State Fair, 2006 and 2007, served to educate the general public regarding our state dance. Many enthusiastic and energetic dancers participated in this project, under the direction of Connie Cox, Wilsons, Region 1. VASARDA will continue this project in 2008, as well, with Connie Cox directing again.

One of the main goals of VASARDA for 2007-2008 was to increase our membership. With emphasis on new dancers in 2007, the VASARDA Board offered incentives for all dancers attending the Virginia State Convention for the first time. A record number of 86 first-time dancers attended. Each first-time dancer was identified by a special ribbon. A drawing was held each night with first prize being a single free admission to next year's convention and second prize being a year's membership in VASARDA. Each new attendee was entered in the drawing each day they attended. This program was very successful and VASARDA continued it at the 2008 convention.

The twentieth State Convention, "Swing Thru To The Red, White and Blue," May 15-17, 2008, under the direction of Larry and Doris Davis, New Market, Region 3, was held at the Holiday Inn, Hampton. Tommie Faulkner, Newport News, Region 5, was President. This being the twentieth state convention, Tommie again displayed all of her theme skirts for the twenty years. There was a memorabilia table with history, photo albums, etc. celebrating VASARDA's 20th anniversary.