



Foundation News

July 2026

The **Square Dance Foundation of New England, Inc.** has had a busy and productive few months. Many of our Executive Board members also served on the committees for the 67th and 68th New England Square and Round Dance Convention (NESRDC).

Planning for the 68th NESRDC presented challenges almost immediately after the 67th convention concluded. The committee was informed that the hotel contracted for the second year could no longer honor its agreement because the property had been sold and was scheduled for demolition. The search for a new venue began, and fortunately another hotel and convention center was found nearby. Although the new convention center was more than adequate, the number of available hotel rooms was limited. Despite these unexpected obstacles and the compressed planning schedule, the committee delivered a successful convention that was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone in attendance.

The Trail-Out Dance on Sunday attracted between 12 and 15 squares, providing a wonderful conclusion to the weekend. During Celebrity Hour, the Square Dance Foundation of New England held its Special Annual Drawing. Congratulations to our three lucky winners: **Hope Belanger, Debbie Tillberg, and Linda Toth.**

The Foundation held its Annual Meeting on **May 14, 2026**, with members participating both in person and via Zoom. In an effort to keep our members better informed and encourage greater participation, we have incorporated Zoom into our meetings. This allows members to stay connected with

Foundation activities without the need to travel.

During the meeting, we also discussed the Foundation's donations to the National Museum of Dance in Saratoga Springs, New York. The museum closed during the COVID-19 pandemic, and despite multiple attempts to contact museum representatives, we have received very little information. Our understanding is that the museum has since been sold, and we are working to determine what became of the items that were donated for display. We will continue to keep our members informed as additional information becomes available.

A major item of business at the Annual Meeting was the election of officers. **Sheila Moody** stepped down after many years of dedicated service as President of the Foundation. We extend our sincere appreciation for her leadership, commitment, and countless contributions to the Square Dance Foundation of New England, and we wish her continued success in her future endeavors. Sheila Moody will continue being active within the Foundation as past President.

The Foundation's newly elected officers are:

- **Presidents:** Judy & Bud Clifford
- **Vice Presidents:** Irene & Phil Alton
- **Treasurer:** David Perrault
- **Clerk:** Laura Perrault
- **Recording Secretary:** Lisa Breault

We congratulate our new officers and look forward to their leadership in the years ahead.



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Looking ahead, the **69th New England Square and Round Dance Convention** will be held in Connecticut in **April 2027**. The committee is already hard at work preparing what promises to be another outstanding convention. Their theme says it all: **"Don't Just Pass Thru – Connecticut Welcomes You!"** We wish the committee every success and encourage everyone to plan on attending. For additional information, visit www.nesrdc.org.



**Local Legend Award –
Lauren Norford**
*Cast Off 8's – Rutland,
Vermont*

As always, it is a rewarding experience to recognize deserving individuals whose dedication strengthens square dancing throughout New England. Over the past few months, we have had the privilege of honoring two outstanding people with Local Legends Awards. The first recipient is **Lauren Norford** of Cast Off 8's in Rutland, Vermont.

Lauren grew up in a square dance family. Her parents, both former championship figure skaters, turned their passion toward square and round dancing, bringing their children along for the adventure. At just 10 years old, Lauren completed square dance lessons with the Jersey Shore Promenaders under caller Glenn Cooke, followed by round dance lessons the next year. Her family danced nearly every weekend until Lauren reached her teenage years, when life led her in a different direction, and she took a 40-year break from square dancing.

During those years, Lauren attended college and graduate school, built a career in clinical social work, raised a family, and remained active in a variety of dance forms, including contra, Israeli folk, and swing dancing, as well as community singing. Those experiences eventually brought her back to square dancing—a return that has benefited not only her club but dancers throughout New England.

In 2017, Lauren returned to the activity after her friend, Bonnie Cohen, invited her to visit the Cast Off 8's. At her very first annual meeting, she asked whether the club had ever considered using social media. That simple question led to her creating the club's Facebook page under the guidance of Roy Jackson. Soon afterward, she became involved in advertising and recruiting new dancers.

Following Roy Jackson's untimely passing during the pandemic, Lauren stepped forward to preserve the club's online presence. Working with Lois Jackson, she recovered the club's website information, saved its domain name, and rebuilt the entire website using the Squarespace platform. With no previous experience in website design, Lauren taught herself web development, graphic design, and digital marketing by studying, asking questions, and collaborating with square dancers across the country. She mastered Canva and began creating attractive, modern promotional materials that present square dancing as the vibrant, welcoming activity it is today.

Lauren didn't keep that knowledge to herself. Believing strongly in paying it



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forward, she eagerly shared what she had learned with others.

In 2022, Sarah Mager invited Lauren to present at an EDSARDA event at the Westborough, Massachusetts Senior Center. There, Lauren shared practical ideas on social media, Facebook, website development, and graphic design to help New England clubs improve their marketing and outreach.

She continued that mission at the 2024 New England Square and Round Dance Convention in Portland, Maine, where she presented marketing strategies and social media techniques to club leaders. Lauren described the experience by saying, *"It was exciting to share these updated ways of presenting our hobby to new dancers."*

Lauren also created the **EDSARDA Square Dance Promoters** private Facebook group, providing club leaders with a place to exchange ideas, ask questions, and support one another. The group continues to grow and has become a valuable resource for clubs across the region. Through emails, Zoom sessions, and one-on-one encouragement, Lauren generously assists anyone looking to improve their club's outreach.

Outside of square dancing, Lauren enjoys contra and swing dancing, pickleball, hiking, reading, birding, music, and singing. Since 2007, she has been a member of *Trillium*, the hospice chorus of the Visiting Nurses Association of Vermont, bringing comfort through music to patients and families.

Lauren is happiest working behind the scenes, helping others succeed rather than seeking recognition herself. When asked for photographs, she simply laughs and says, *"I'm usually the one taking the pictures!"*

Although she may prefer to stay behind the camera, her friends throughout the square dance community know just how much she has contributed. Her creativity, generosity, and willingness to share her knowledge have helped countless clubs improve their visibility and attract new dancers.

Lauren, your dedication, innovation, and quiet leadership have made a lasting impact on square dancing throughout New England. It is our pleasure to recognize you as a **Local Legend Award** recipient. Congratulations, and thank you for everything you continue to do for our activity.



**Square Dance Foundation
of New England, Inc.**

Local Legend Award – Noreen King



*Do Si Doers – Walpole,
Massachusetts*

Our second Local Legend Award recipient is **Noreen King** of the Do Si Doers Square Dance Club in Walpole, Massachusetts.

Noreen began her square dancing journey in September 2006 alongside her husband, Mike. They started classes with the Do Si Doers on Monday evenings and, in the very same week, joined classes with Great Plain Squares on Wednesdays. Jane Carlson called



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for the Do Si Doers, who danced in the church basement, while Bob Butler called for Great Plain Squares.

Looking back, Noreen fondly recalls, *"What a great group of dancers. They were so helpful and kind."* Ron and Ellen Foster guided the Do Si Doers in those early years, while Paul Howard, president of Great Plain Squares, was always available to answer questions and offer encouragement.

Although balancing two classes while working full-time as a childcare provider for six children under the age of four was no easy task, Noreen's determination and love of dancing kept her coming back.

Away from the dance floor, Noreen is the proud mother of Patricia and Sean and grandmother to four grandchildren—three living in Massachusetts and one in Tennessee.

Noreen and Mike attended their first New England Convention with friends from the Do Si Doers. As new dancers, they were welcomed into every square by experienced members who made sure they felt included. Those early acts of kindness left a lasting impression and helped shape Noreen's own commitment to welcoming others into the activity.

Following the passing of Ron Foster, the Do Si Doers faced an uncertain future.

Membership was declining, many dancers were aging out of the activity, and the club's final class had been held in 2017. Rather than let the club fade away, Noreen, serving as Class Coordinator, joined forces with Treasurer Marie Hardiman to keep it alive.

In 2018, they simplified club operations by focusing on what mattered most—the dancing. Themes, elaborate decorations, fancy refreshments, and door prizes were set aside in favor of creating an affordable, welcoming dance experience. Dancers from neighboring clubs in Massachusetts and Rhode Island rallied behind the Do Si Doers, attending Friday dances and helping rebuild attendance.

One of the club's most memorable events was the **"Go from Red to Black" Dance** on May 18, 2018. As attendance grew throughout the evening, dancers symbolically changed from wearing red to black, celebrating the club's return to financial stability. Dancing to callers Steve Park, Bob Butler, and Harriett Clarke, the club gradually grew back to two squares.

Then came the COVID-19 pandemic, forcing the club to shut down along with the rest of the square dance world.

When dancing resumed, Marie's health no longer allowed her to continue, and Noreen assumed the responsibility of reopening the club herself. On September 17, 2021, she welcomed dancers back after the long quarantine. Soon afterward, another challenge arose when renovations to the Walpole church forced the club to find a new home.

Undeterred, Noreen, with the help of Barbara King, secured Blackburn Hall in Walpole, and the Do Si Doers resumed dancing there in October 2022.

Today, Noreen continues to be the driving force behind the club. She



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schedules the dances, arranges the hall rental, manages the finances, welcomes dancers at the door, and is always the first to arrive and the last to leave. Her tireless dedication has ensured that the Do Si Doers remain an active and welcoming club where friendships continue to grow, and new dancers always find a place on the floor.

Noreen leads not because she seeks recognition, but because she believes in preserving the activity she loves. Through perseverance, optimism, and countless hours of volunteer service, she has kept the Do Si Doers thriving during some of their most challenging years.

Noreen, your dedication, leadership, and unwavering commitment have preserved a club that means so much to so many. Your efforts have strengthened square dancing in Massachusetts and inspired dancers throughout New England.

It is our pleasure to recognize you as a recipient of the **Local Legend Award**. Congratulations, and thank you for your outstanding service to square dancing.

With the rising cost of postage, we are asking members who can receive email to consider switching from printed copies of our mailings to electronic copies.

As many of you know, the price of a postage stamp has increased again and is now **82 cents**. Currently, the SDFNE mails more than **175** printed copies with each mailing,

resulting in postage costs of **more than \$143** every time we send out information.

By choosing to receive your newsletters and updates by email, you can help the SDFNE reduce mailing expenses. The money we save on postage can instead be used to support our programs and activities.

If you are willing to switch to email delivery, please let us know and provide us with your current email address. We appreciate your support and thank you for helping us keep our costs down while staying connected with our members. Please let me know at the following email address: SDFNE.Pub@aol.com. I will also update the email address with membership.

