

# Aerie Barn Dance

Programs & Activities Department  
1623 Gateway Circle South  
Grove City, Ohio 43123  
(614) 883-2200



AERIE BARN DANCE

Featuring

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Date

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Time

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Caller

&

The Hog Hollow Hillbillies

All ladies should wear calico gowns and are requested to bring half a pound of carefully cut carpet rags each. All men folk should wear calico ties and are requested to bring thimbles.

Cheap, cunning calico conveniences that will be a constant comfort for you will be available for sale.

The Denimettes  
(They'll wow you!!)

Thrill to our own LULUBELLE singing soulful ballads.

GAZE at the rootin "tootin" rooster and GUESS  
how many kernels of corn he eats.

LAUGH - EAT TILL YOUR FULL - DANCE

BE SURE TO COME EARLY

DON'T MISS ONE CORNY MINUTE

THE AERIE BARN DANCE

Any person who sits in a corner and refuses to converse will be fined 5¢. For members (and their families, including in-laws)

**Refreshments**

The refreshment booth can be fixed up as a stall, carrying out the harvest theme with pumpkins, gourds, etc.

Or, it could be a dairy employing a few "dairy maids" in gingham dresses and white aprons for color. Use tin or enamel cups, if possible.

To eat:

Sweet milk, buttermilk, doughnuts, cookies in large crocks, cheese or egg sandwiches, cider (with a cider press for color) or Hot dogs, hamburgers, coffee or steaming corn on the cob, cookies, coffee

### Decorations

The barn dance can stress the harvest side and depend for decoration on: Autumn leaves, hay, sunflowers, cornstalks, pumpkins, gourds

At other seasons the barn or farm theme can be carried out: Plows, rakes, hoes, nail kegs, saddles, wagon wheels, scarecrows, milk pails

Soft colored electric lanterns may be used for lighting or just decoration.

An amusing booth, or stall, will add to the atmosphere.

It can be made from a large carton.

Or, draw on paper on the wall with the name of the animal over the door and perhaps a cardboard horse or cow looking out.

Chicken coops may be the real thing. Or they, too, can be made of cartons.

Large cutouts of fiddler, farm animals or dancing animals can also be used to good advantage. These can be cut out of cardboard, blotter paper or plain wrapping paper colored over with crayon.

Whatever decorations you use be sure to keep them well to the side or up high so the dancers won't bump into them.

### Money-Raising Suggestions

A barn dance offers several simple ways to raise money:

**Fines:** The fines should range from one penny to a quarter. Find ladies not wearing cotton dresses and men not wearing a cotton tie, ten cents each.

Fine any person who sits in a corner and doesn't talk to anyone, five cents.

Other fines could be levied for those men who forget to bring thimbles, step on the ladies feet while dancing, not singing during community songfest.

**Calico Corner:** Sell colorful calico things such as aprons, baby bibs, potholders, chair cushions, laundry bags, kitchen curtains, etc.

**The Hungry Rooster:** Have a rooster in a cage. Count out a number of grains of corn into a pan and let the rooster eat from it for 2 to 3 minutes. Remove the pan, count out the grains and find how many were eaten. The guests (who wish to enter the contest) have previously written down their estimates at ten cents a guess. The closest wins an inexpensive prize.

**Refreshments:** If you do charge for refreshments, beware of overdoing it. It is much better to charge a nominal amount and have people come back for seconds and thirds.

**Country Auction:** A little before closing time, the "sheriff" can announce he is foreclosing the place because the mortgage is long overdue. The only way the Aerie can realize even a meager sum, is to sell the contents of the "barn" thus, the rooster, the lantern decorations, a milk jug or whatever has been used as part of the decorations, can be auctioned off.

This can be a novel way of closing your party as well. When the auction is completed, the auctioneer can shoo the people home by telling them the barn and farm are now under new ownership.

### Entertainment Acts

The "rural schoolmaster or schoolmarm" might give a reading on some rural topic in the approved elocutionary style of yesteryear.

Some of the Auxiliary members might form a line of Denimettes. As the name implies, they would wear blue jeans or denims and do some sort of a dance routine. Dancing talent would not be necessary. An oddly balanced line - some fat, some lean, some tall or others short, attempting to achieve the famed Rockette precision would be more entertaining than an attempt at perfection.

You can't have a barn dance without a LULUBELLE. She's a flirtatious character who makes a play for the unwary male and gives out the sad ballads of love that wasn't true. (Frankie and Johnnie, I Saw You Coming in the Wrong Door Last Night, etc.) She should be dressed up in a rather extreme fashion and have a good strong voice.

A corney Grandmaw and Grandpaw skit such as the following is easy to put on:

Dressed as country folk, grandmaw and grandpaw limp into the spotlight where a toy railroad track has been placed. They talk about their farm and what they will buy in town - backscratcher, red flannels, etc. Seeing the track, they stop and exclaim that that is a new-fangled locomotive road placed there since their last trip to town. They call to the station master, seated in a chair nearby, and ask if there is a train at the hour, eight o'clock. He replies there is not. They sit down in chairs and talk several moments, and then grandmaw asks the agent if there is a train at nine o'clock. No, says the agent. After a few more minutes, grandpaw

asks about every hour until the agent is thoroughly disgusted and tells him the next train is at five fifteen in the afternoon.

The country people breathe a sigh of relief and state that they think in that case it will be safe to cross the track now.

A small organ may be obtained or a saw player may be found in your community who would come to play.

Try to line up a soft shoe or tap dance routine.

A city slicker ad a Mortimer Snerd type might exchange patter on their idea of the ideal Miss America.

### Costumes

Dressing up is half the fun of a barn dance.

The clothes worn are usually something one has around the house anyway so little if no expense is involved.

For the men:

Straw hats, overalls, jean, blue denim shirts, blue or red bandanas, corncob pieces, calico tie (a strip of cotton material will do)

Ladies fair:

Cotton dresses, sunbonnets, aprons.

Suggestions:

Think of the characters that people the countryside...the county sheriff, the schoolmarm, the strutting politician, the village spinster...Uncle Ezra...the gossip...the smart alecky salesman...the Daisy Mae type...Grandma Jenkins.

Why not be one of them??

If there's a Brother in the Aerie that wouldn't be caught dead in a barn dance getup, all is not lost. He can always come as a city slicker.

### Music

The music best suited for a barn dance is the traditional old fiddle tunes, such as "Old Joe Clark," "Cripple Creek," "Sally Goodun" and others.

In some sections, the more modern tunes are played and, in some cases, they are speeded up to sound like popular, or dance music of today.

The most satisfactory combination of instruments for square dancing is a fiddle, a guitar, a five string banjo and a piano accordion. The fiddle carries the tune as can also a good five-stringer, and the other instruments supply the basic rhythm.

Any combination of these instruments will answer the needs of the dancers but sometimes it helps to "throw" in a drum.

Frequently, our pioneers had to dance to the music of only one instrument, such as a fiddle, or even to no music at all.

Today, some of the old-time fiddlers "call" the dances as well.

Hillbilly orchestras, augmented from time to time by the "village choir" may include regular instruments, harmonicas, guitars, mandolins, accordion or piano. These orchestras rate very highly at barn dances.

As special events on the program, the "village choir" may sing old-time familiar songs such as **My Old Gal Sal, Home on the Range, In the Shade of the Old Apple Tree, A Bird in a Gilded Cage**, with special numbers contributed by the choir soloist and the Hillbilly quartet who use old-time mountain and other rural American Folk songs.

Don't forget that singing for everyone is a happy and unifying activity.

### Types of American Square Dancing

A barn dance is not necessarily confined to square dancing. However the popularity of the square dance is something to be reckoned with these days, chances are that you will include it in your program.

The program for the evening should consist of a well-balanced list of dances, simple ones at first, followed by more difficult dances as the evening progresses. New figures should be introduced; fast dances should be followed by slower ones, and so on.

If you are fortunate enough to have your group arrive more or less at the same time, teaching is much easier and you can accomplish more. But, on the whole, it is usual for dancers to come in at different times, making systematic teaching impossible. So it is a good plan to teach the more complicated dances at the beginning while the crowd is still small. Save the simpler one for later on in the evening when the group is larger and the folks are tired to concentrate on intricate figures.

However, for a gathering at which everyone arrives together, all set for action, the following plan is good:

1. Begin with simple dances, requiring few figures and few explanations, such as "You swing yours," with a simple chorus call.
2. Follow with an easy Running Set, using only the simple circle figures.
3. Introduce play-party games.
4. Teach more complicated squares.
5. Finish with a simple longway set. The Virginia Reel makes a lively climax for an evening. It should be performed just before refreshments are served.

It's a good idea to have a round dance (double dance) of two, in order to break up the larger community dances into the more intimate couple dances. In some regions it is customary to alternate a set of three squares with a set of three (more or less) round dances.

It is wise to save all modern dancing until all the square dancing is over. That however depends on your audience. If they want social dancing in between the square sets, then provide the proper music and let 'em dance.

Modern dancing needs no explanation. The following are the different types of square dances:

**Square Sets:** These are dances in which there are four couples in a set. Each couple becomes active in turn and performs the figures. The couples are numbered and placed as follows: First, or head couple stands with its back to the caller and music. Second couple is on the right of the first. Third couple faces the first and the fourth couple is on the left of the first.

**Quadrilles:** This is a formal "Drill to Music," with couples numbered differently from the square dance. The couples are numbered and arranged as follows: The first head couple stands with its back to the music, the second head couple faces the first. The third (or first side couple) stands to the right of the first head couple, while the fourth (or second side couple) stands to the left of the set.

In the traditional quadrille, the couples become active in turn which amounts to each figure being repeated four times. As each figure has its own music, frequently, with a change of tempo and mood, it is customary to wait for eight measures of music to be played at the beginning of each figure in order to "get the feel" of the music. The only exception of this rule is at the end of the last figure when a chord is played as an introduction for the dancers to begin again.

**Longway Sets:** These are sets in which the dancers form two lines, with partners generally facing each other in opposite lines. The sets are formed by having the gents step into one line, their partners into the other, in such a way that if the couples turned and faced the top or head of the room, the gents would have their ladies on the right hand side. In this type of dance the couples move up or down the set in two lines, depending on whether or not they are active. The active couples move down the set until they reach the foot of the set where they become inactive. The inactive couples move up the set until they reach the head of the line when they become active and start moving down the set again. Thus each couple in turn become active if the dance lasts long enough. It is wise to have only six or eight couples in a set, which allows each couple to have a turn. This type of dance stems directly from the country dances of England and is most popular in the New England states.

**The Running Sets:** A good Running Set lasts at least 20 minutes or more. A good caller can call all evening without repeating figures, excepting, of course the traditional, circles left, and balancein, and promenade, which are used more or less as a chorus between figures.

The formation of the Running Set is a Circle with as many couples as wish to dance, but, preferably an even number of couples. The figures are danced by all the couples forming a large circle. The circle then breaks into smaller sets, of two couples in a set. This is called "Odds off to Evens." The large circle figures are used as an introduction, as choruses, or as an ending for the dance. The "odds off to evens" figures serve as the verses. The best combination of figures includes a mixing of these two. Thus, there is a constant change, a large circle alternating with small sets of two couples, and then the large circle forming again.

**Play-Party Games:** These are games played to the singing of the participants and are performed with musical background or accompaniment. This type of recreation cannot properly be classified as dancing, but is a type of recreation which answers the need of both young and old to express their emotions in movement and song.

Play-party games are good "ice-breakers." The element of suspense, the constant changing of partners, the pure joy of movement and song are all present in this type of activity.

The play-party game is never "called." If the participants are not familiar with the figures of the game, the leader explains them before the game begins. Many of the words in the songs describe the figures, thus making it simple for beginners to perform them. There is an unlimited variety and there are many different formations. Examples are, a circle of partners in an even number, a circle of partners with extra players in the center, a circle of players where no partners are necessary, longways sets, two or four couple games, etc.

**Round Dances:** These are the **couple** dances such as the waltz, the schottische, the polka, as well as the present day "social" dances.

### Contests

Use contests sparingly, especially if you have entertainment acts scheduled.

Men's Sewing Contest:

With the carpet rags (strips of cotton material brought by the women), the men must fashion some specified article. It should, of course, be very simple. It could be just hemming some length of cloth. The men must use a thimble. The first one finished gets a prize.\*

Other contests that might be considered are the following:

Potato Peeling Contest for Women  
Wife Calling Contest for Men

Spelling Contest between the "Schoolmaster" and the "Politician"

Women or men may engage in a corn shelling contest in which each shells two ears.

Prizes\*

Eggs, butter, donuts, a jug, miniature farm animals, backscratcher, etc