

**Round Dancing – Choreographed Ballroom Dancing**  
**A brief explanation of Round Dancing**  
**By Margie & Jim Garcia**  
**(shared at their 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary party)**



**Round** because we dance with our partner and other couples in a big circle. **Choreographed** because we dance routines to music. **Ballroom** refers to all the rhythms we dance to. Beginning dancers dance Level 2 & 3 routines with basic figures. Intermediate dancers dance Level 3 & 4 dance routines with more difficult figures. Advanced dancers dance Level 5 & 6 routines with the highest degree of difficulty. Dancers belong to dance clubs led by a cuer. The cuers tells us the cues (figures) to dance during the music and we execute the figures. He/she cues the figures about one measure ahead, so we have time to react and dance to what we hear. **We have the most wonderful cuers in Colorado and the Metro area.** Our state organization is called the **Colorado Round Dance Association (CRDA)** and we coordinate a weekend featuring national (professional) cuers in October with the help of all our dancing friends. The national organization is called **International Choreographed Ballroom Dance Association (ICBDA)**. International because there is Round Dancing in other countries too.

The first **rhythms** we learned were two step, waltz, cha-cha, rumba, foxtrot, and jive. Then we picked up quick step, bolero, slow two step, and tango. We dabble in merengue, paso doble, mambo, and samba.

**Good technique** makes dancing together easier. The man leads and the lady follows, or so they tell me. You are not supposed to look at your feet when you dance. Looking at your feet does not make them move any faster or more in sync with the music. In smooth rhythms you are to keep your head left and not look at your partner, i.e., the waltz. You should keep your belly button facing your partner's belly button. Easier said than done. When you disagree with your partner, please speak in a kind and soft voice. This is called **“loving partners having a chat.”**

There are **many opportunities** to dance. You have your **lessons and party dances with your local cuers**. Generally, in a lesson you dance for an hour, have a teach on a new routine for half an hour and finish with more dancing. A lesson or party dance is 2 to 2 ½ hours long. After that, your brain just gets tired and lazy. You can go to **weekend festivals** across the country which feature national cuers. These festivals are a mix of party dancing, teaches on new dances, and reviews. We have favorite festivals we go to in New Mexico and Arizona every year. There are also **national conventions** which have a 4- or 5-day event featuring cuers from across the country with the same format. We have attended national conventions in different states across the country including Texas, California, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Nevada.

**Round dancing is not a competition. It is a hobby** (or obsession) that you can enjoy at whatever level you choose. We are dancing level 2-4 today to include as many dancers as possible. **Dancing has been a wonderful experience for us.** The music and dancing with friends are a happy place away from the cares of the world, the teaches/routines challenge your brain and body, and it is a couple activity. **You do not have to be Fred Astaire or Ginger Rogers to Round Dance, but you can feel like it.**