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March 12, 2020

My Friends:

As most people already know, the World Health Organization has declared the Coronavirus outbreak a worldwide pandemic. The United States federal government has declared this situation a public health emergency. Governor Hutchinson has also declared a public health emergency in Arkansas.

The CDC has stated the most at-risk percentage of the population are those of us over the age of 60, which includes a large part of those of us that square dance. We probably hug more and grab more hands than anyone in the state on any given night.

I love to dance; I love the fellowship and I love to visit with my friends. However, I think it is time we may want to consider taking a few weeks off from dancing. Every club in the state is free to do as it wishes, but I think we need to consider the present circumstances within our state and surrounding states. I know the Louisiana State Square Dance Convention scheduled in March and been cancelled due to health concerns.

Daryl can send out email blasts for any club that wants to take some time off, just email him of your plans and when you chose to dance again, we can send out that announcement as well.

Keep in mind the vast majority of Arkansans are not at risk of death with this virus. Those most at-risk include the elderly and those with pre-existing medical conditions. Please be thoughtful and follow these basic guidelines from the Center for Disease Control:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing nose, coughing or sneezing;
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick;
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth;
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash; and
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipes.

The Governor has asked all Arkansans to re-think and re-consider upcoming travel plans, such as Spring Break. I discussed the situation with the officers of the ASSDF and I think we also need to heed his warnings and concerns.

I hope no one gets the virus, but in case I have attached an article from the CDC, "What to do if you are sick with coronavirus disease" which is very similar in case you get the flu. This is not a time for panic. This is, however, a time for deliberate thought and action. Also, please understand that this situation is rapidly evolving.

Thank you for your consideration,

**Ted & Tonia Hofmeister**  
**ASSDF President**