

Karl Belser
5544 Drysdale Drive
San Jose, CA 95124
408-723-0315
Karl.jackie@gmail.com

Biography
18 July 2010
(350 words)

IN MEMORY OF JOSIE BAUMGARTNER

By Karl Arnold Belser



Photo by Sue & Jed Cyr

The photo (above) shows Josie Baumgartner at the graduation of the 2010 square dance class sponsored by the Committee to Promote Square Dancing (CPSD) taught by her life partner,

Roger Smith. Josie passed away peacefully at home on July 16, 2010. She had just turned 77.

Josie came to the United States from Switzerland to live with her uncle when she was 15 years old, married Walter Baumgartner, settled in Los Altos and had two children, Alice and Warren.

Josie and her husband had been square dancers until 1982 when Walter's health started to fail. After Walter's death in 1997 Josie took the Sunnyvale Singles and Bows & Beaus square dance classes. She quickly held offices in both clubs including being President of Bows & Beaus in 2000. Josie also worked on the Santa Clara Valley Square Dancers Association Jubilee, from 2001 to 2004.

Josie met square dance caller Roger Smith at Sunnyvale Singles, and they had their first date on New Year's Eve 2000. From then on they were constant companions. They danced at local clubs and attended many weekend festivals in California, Hawaii, Idaho, Utah, Oregon and Washington.

Josie and Roger decided to bring square dancing back into the schools after Roger retired in 2004. Josie organized several workshops to teach teachers how to teach square dancing. In addition to the teachers more than 3000 children learned to square dance during 2005 and 2006.

Roger, with Josie's able assistance, became the club caller for the Jokers in 2004 and has called for the Rockin' Jokers since 2005. Roger and Josie, as a team, helped build the Rockin' Jokers to become one of the largest and most successful clubs in Northern California. They also started teaching square dance classes sponsored by CPSD. These students are now dancing in many clubs in the San Jose area.

Josie has been one of the most valuable contributors to square dancing in the last decade. Her presence will be deeply missed by all.

* * *