

## Greg Kushla and Donna Poyer, Presidents, NNJSDA

**Greg Kushla** grew up in Lyndhurst, New Jersey. As a student at Rutgers University, he saw an ad in the college newspaper with the tag line: “Square dancers do it eight at a time.” Intrigued, he went to a high-low open dance at the Rutgers Promenaders club.

“The group was having so much fun and the club members were friendly, so I signed up for Mainstream lessons and graduated 14 weeks later. I enjoyed the music and movement ... and my first foray into dancing was really walking to music, so I didn’t have to worry about my feet!”

Greg joined the club in 1982 and became its treasurer. The same year, he met his future wife, Karen, and invited her to take square dance lessons. He subsequently served as president of Rutgers Promenaders. In 1988, they were elected assistant treasurers of the NNJSDA, and the following year they were treasurers. Karen also became a round dance cuer, and Greg is now an accomplished round dancer as well. “I really enjoy sharing so many things with Karen, especially dancing,” said Greg.

At Rutgers, Greg earned a BS in pharmacy and then MS and PhD degrees in pharmaceutical science. A registered pharmacist, he has worked for the pharmaceutical industry since 1990. He now has a consulting business with pharmaceutical companies across the country, specializing in clinical trial supplies and logistics as well as conducting training and system reviews. He is vice chair for his professional group’s annual conference in 2013 and will chair the national event in 2014.

Karen is an audiologist and professor at Kean University. The Kushlas’ daughter, Helene, is a college sophomore and their son, Matthew, is a high school senior. As scoutmaster for Matthew’s Boy Scout troop, Greg enjoys camping and hiking with them. He and Karen sing in their church choir, where Greg is a lector as well. He loves to cook, and is currently exploring Indian and Asian cuisines. The Kushlas share their home with three cats.

In 2011, Greg rejoined the NNJSDA Executive Committee as assistant treasurer. This year, he was elected president along with Donna Poyer. Greg’s goals for the Association are to promote dancing, fun, and fellowship.



Coincidentally, **Donna Poyer** was also raised in Lyndhurst before the family moved to Hackettstown. She graduated from West Chester University (Pennsylvania) with a degree in education and certification to teach high school biology. However, she was widowed at a young age and, instead of teaching, held many part-time jobs while raising two sons, Chris and Jeff. Since 1995, she has driven school buses.

Shortly after Donna lost her husband, a friend “dragged” her to a Kittatinny Rangers square dance class in Newton. She was hooked, and went back the following year as an angel for her nine-year-old son. “The people were awesome in accepting me as a single and my rambunctious child,” said Donna. She joined the club in 1988, and has held almost every position there.

At Kittatinny, Donna met Mike Szekula. They now live on a tree farm (firewood and timber) with 144 acres that require constant attention. Donna has four grandchildren, two dogs, three cats, a guinea hen, and many chickens. They often dog sit for friends as well, and one Thanksgiving, Donna prepared the dinner with six dogs in the kitchen. Donna and Mike have enjoyed hosting many callers at their home.

From 1991-1993, Donna served as the NNJSDA’s liaison to the Callers’ Council of New Jersey. In 1994, she was elected assistant treasurer of the Association along with Chuck Conklin. In 2000, Donna and Mike became recording secretaries for three terms. She has served on the Executive Committee continuously since then as 1st vice president (seven terms) and president (two terms). This year, Donna was elected president (again) along with Greg Kushla. As president, said Donna, “I would love to see the general square dancing population aware and willing to serve on the Board, but alas, I’m not certain how to do that.”

Donna and Mike have attended 12 National Square Dance Conventions and enjoy vacationing in those areas the week before or after the dancing. They currently serve on a committee for the 2015 National Square Dance Convention in Springfield, Massachusetts. “The best thing that ever happened was that I learned to square dance and became involved in advancing the activity at the club level and especially at the Association level,” said Donna.

*Lise Greene*