



News, Notes
'n' Nonsense:

An
International
Magazine for
Callers

NOVEMBER 2019

DATES to REMEMBER

05-08 Apr 2020	3 Day Australia National Callers Federation Conference with Randy Doherty (US), Steve Turner (Aus.), Arden Hopkin (U.S.) and Mel Wilkerson (Aus.) – Fairmont Resort Leura NSW.
10-14 Apr 2020	Australia National Square Dance Convention – Wentworth Falls, NSW, Australia
24-28 June 2021	Australia National Square Dance Convention – Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia

What's Inside This Month

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On the Inside Track

Welcome to the November 2019 issue of “Behind The Mike”.

Last month saw Sue and I, along with daughters Alessa (and husband Chris), Amerie (and partner Brendan), and grandson Ronon, head off to Singapore for a 10-day family vacation. We have wanted to get everyone together for a family holiday for some time, but time and work commitments had been against us. This time everything worked out well. We had a fabulous 10 days in Singapore. Our British Airways flights landed us mid-evening, and we were able to get to our hotel for a good night's sleep prior to starting out fresh the next day.

We stayed on Sentosa Island at the Village Resort Hotel. Super location, just a couple of minutes' walk from Imbiah Monorail station. There are 4 stations on the monorail route on Sentosa, Beach, Imbiah, Resort World and Vivo City. Everything is close to one of these stations and use is free for everyone. Mind you it is only about a 5-6-minute walk between the first 3 stations. Vivo City is a huge shopping complex located on the mainland of Singapore itself, and is the entry to the island, which is a gigantic pleasure resort. Within a five minute walking radius you have Universal Studios, S.E.A. Aquarium (largest in the world), the Maritime Experiential Museum, huge Water Park, tall ship 'Royal Albatross', casino, Madame Tussauds (museum display, boat ride, live show and 4D theatre), VR experience with 10 choices, Trick Eye Museum, huge skyway from Sentosa to mainland, and Mt Faber to Siloso Beach, indoor skydiving, luge, segways, beaches, 4D movies, 3D movies, Fort Siloso and much more. It never stopped.



This time we had season passes for Universal Studios which allowed us to come and go at our leisure over the 10 days. There was no rushing to try and see everything in one day! The rollercoasters there are among the best in the world, and each is presented within a complex that truly fits the individual theme. For the “Mummy Coaster”, you walk thru 50-foot-high statues of Egyptian gods and right in the heart of the temples in Luxor. The Battlestar Galactica ride has two duelling rollercoasters – one Human and the other Cylon for those of you that know the show, with the latter having 5 loops. Again, it was well themed with buildings. Next you are right in the centre of the action on the Transformers ride, which is not a coaster, but one of the best Simulator rides anywhere. Most flight simulators put you in some form of transport in front of a huge screen. In this one, the transport moves rapidly thru 12 screens. I have always loved good rides and attractions, and even though Universal at Singapore is smaller than its counterparts in USA and Japan, it packs a huge amount into that area. This time I rode ‘The Mummy’ 4 times, Transformers 7, Cylon 2 and Human 2. I also managed to get totally drenched on

Jurassic Park Ride -- there is always one who cops more water than anyone else – and it seems to always be me!

Universal Studios also had a special attraction from Thursday thru Sunday nights in October -- “Halloween Horror Nights”. Chris, Alessa, Brendan and I went one night. This is a special ticket and the park opens at 8pm thru 2am. There were 5 haunted houses to walk thru, as well as the regular rides. I think the way they do this in Singapore is quite unique. After being in a queue for an hour we got to the first house. It consisted of about 15 rooms, all in very dim light. Actors were dressed up (full make-up, clothes, the works) and hidden behind panels, secret doors, etc., and would jump out at the most unexpected times. Lots of screaming in every room. I could not imagine anything like this happening here in Australia. There would likely be too many concerns about heart



attacks, getting sued, etc. This was the same type of arrangement in each of the 5 houses; one with dolls, one with clowns, a snake house (shudder), haunted house, and a zombie house. As well as those specific horror houses, there were numerous other places where actors would jump out at you. The queues for each of the houses was at least an hour long and there were people everywhere. I felt really old that night. I do not think I saw a person over 30 except for Brendan! It was great fun though!

Food is available everywhere in the same areas, from local street food, to 2-star Michelin restaurants. In addition, all things in between were available including McDonalds, Subway, Starbucks, Hard Rock café, etc. One of our favourites for non-Asian fare was Slappy Cakes, a neat pancake restaurant where you buy the batter mix and create your own pancakes on a plate embedded in your table. They provide regular batter, buttermilk, chocolate, pandan (green colour) which can all be used to create pancakes of a wild (and sometimes embarrassing) designs.

Singapore itself is just an amazing place to visit, and home to one of the best Zoos in the World, and a heritage listed excellent Botanical Garden, the magnificent “Gardens By The Bay”. The Gardens has two incredible domes, a magnificent light and sound show in the park, great aerial walkway, the gardens



themselves as well as all the other unique areas. Beside the zoo are two other amazing attractions. They are the River Safari and the Night Safari. Both are simply amazing attractions.



Sue and I also had the opportunity for a sunset dinner cruise on the tall ship 'Royal Albatross'. It was a terrific 3-



hour cruise with great food (although they need lessons on how to cook lamb). We did not go in

for the optional mast climb though! Sue loved the cocktails!

We were lucky with the weather during the trip. It was always warm (between 29 and 31 degrees C). Humidity was no real problem and there was only one day when it was uncomfortable, which was after some rain.

That was the day when Chris and Alessa joined Sue and I for a tour inside the Merlion (Singapore's emblem – half lion, half fish), an 80-foot statue just near Imbiah station. We could see it from our hotel window. When we went up the first level, there were no problems as we were in an air-conditioned lift. Then we had to climb. It was hot, humid, sticky, and as we climbed, it got hotter, more humid and even stickier; but it was worth it for a fantastic view.



Sue and I had a week in Singapore last year, and we had no problems going back again for a week as there is just so much to see and do. I am always amazed at aspects of life that are noticeable there, but we never really notice here.

There is no litter anywhere, no smart alec kids swearing continuously, no drunks, no chewing gum, and no problems with kids and alcohol although alcohol is freely available even at the 7-11 and other shops (in Universal Studios street vendors!). Courtesy is shown everywhere and there were no "bag ladies".

Cheers

Barry

Event and Activities Updates

What's happening in Australia for Callers?



Australian Callers Federation

<http://www.aussiecallers.org.au>



2020 ACF Caller Conference

Leura, NSW - April 6th till 9th

'Looking Forward, Looking Back'

Australian Callers Federation



Welcome to this month's update for the 2020 ACF Caller Conference. We are excited to be bringing you this event and look forward to welcoming callers from across Australia and beyond. Now is the time to get in and register for the conference (if you haven't already) - forms are available from;

www.acfcallerconference.com

In the past few months we have presented a full schedule for the conference and some additional venue information. All this information is available on our website. This month, I want to address some of the questions & comments some people have asked or made about the conference. Perhaps these are similar to a concern you may have?



I've been to these sorts of things before and never learn anything, how do I know I'm going to get something out of this?

The committee have been working vigorously on presenting a conference that will provide maximum learning opportunities for everyone. We have carefully selected a line-up of presenters that are highly regarded for their knowledge and presentation skills. This includes one of the world's best credentialed vocal coaches - something we haven't seen at a conference of this type for a long time.

We have also put a great deal of effort into the program - looking at what has worked elsewhere and blending it into a format that we believe will maximize the educational and participation aspect for every attendee.



It should also be noted that as a Caller Conference, the sole aim is not only education purposes but also networking, socialising and interacting and building professional and personal relationships. Through the post-conference dinner cruise, meal breaks, the Sunday night get-together dance and spare time most nights, there are lots of fantastic opportunities to mix & socialize with callers from across Australia and beyond. The Fairmont Resort is ideal for this, hosting many lounges & bars, a billiards room, nearby golf course and more.



Whilst our prime goal is to learn new skills – the aspect of socializing and sharing ideas is also mightily important. There is much more to this conference then you may have realized!

Usually the sessions at these events are either way over my head, or well below my level of knowledge. So, what's the point in attending?

We've all been at seminars where either the topics have been too advanced or too easy. To help counter this, we are simultaneously using three different rooms so callers can be split into groups more relevant to their personal calling experience. Each topic is being presented 3 times - once for each group, and every presentation should be tailored specifically to be relatively close to your personal level of knowledge and understanding.

Is this post conference dinner cruise going to be worth the cost?



We certainly believe so or we would not have booked it for the conference. The cost of the evening not only includes a scrumptious meal, but also a full evening cruise along the Nepean River. You will rarely see a meal of this quality and evening cruise combined at such a reasonable price. You don't need to take our word for the quality - jump online and check out the reviews. Its star ratings and level of reviews for 'excellent' are among the

best you'll see for any tourist attraction/restaurant.

The cost of everything seems expensive....

Whilst not cheap, we believe that the conference presents excellent value. Room costs are comparable with many “average”-level hotels/motels for this time of year, but the negotiated conference comparable price is for a high-end resort! You will not see rooms of this quality in such a great location at these prices very often. Conference costs are also quite reasonable considering that you’re getting - a delicious lunch & morning/afternoon teas each day, along with world class caller education & socializing opportunities. The ACF presents a conference of this nature only once every 4 years – giving everyone plenty of time to save those pennies in the time between.

We are very confident that the quality of what you get will more than justify the expenses. In addition, many state Caller and Square Dance associations are offering subsidies to members which can help make attending more affordable. We encourage you to contact your local association to see if there may be a subsidy available to you.

None of my friends are going so I won’t have anyone to socialize with....

This is the beauty of events like this is that it provides the opportunity to connect with callers from across Australia & beyond. It is also one of those rare occasions presented to all callers to meet and interact with callers at all levels and from a myriad of locations to build your own personal calling network of personnel and resources. One of the best aspects of square dancing and square dance calling is the friendships & connections you make. Coming to a conference is one of the best ways to maximize this. Not only are these conferences a way of opening eyes to new or different perspectives of Calling and dancing, they are also a great way of expanding opportunities for exposure for all callers, new and experienced.

I hope that I’ve been able to address many of the concerns some people had which may have been making them think twice about attending. If you have any questions or concerns that haven’t been addressed here then please contact me or Barry, we’ll be glad to assist wherever possible.



Jaden Frigo

Barry Wonson – bjwonson@gmail.com

Jaden Frigo – jadenfrigo@gmail.com

BOOK EARLY

Don’t forget - get your registrations in ASAP and book your room at the Fairmont. This is an event not to be missed!

Jaden Frigo (publicity)

Behind the Mike – Caller Resources

BTM Website Update

The BTM website is still up and running, with some additions since last issue.

Jaden has advised that the most recent issues should be available by the time you receive this issue. Some of the sound archives have been updated, however this has turned out to be not as easy as first thought...it will take some time to get them all up.

Here is the direct link: <https://www.behindthemikewebsite.com/>

Cheers - Barry

Sound Archive – Caller Material Available From SARDANSW

Educational Programs

- 2015 SARDA NSW Training Day at Blaxland (quality varies)
- 2016 SARDA NSW Weekend at Corrimal RSL Club
- 2016 SARDA NSW Weekend at Port Macquarie
- 2016 SARDA NSW State Convention Caller Sessions (Jaden Frigo AND Gary Petersen)
- 2018 SARDA NSW Caller Weekend at Corrimal RSL -Caller clinics + dance
- 2016 Red Barons/SARDANSW October Caller Weekend at Port Kembla with Steve Turner
- 2016 SARDANSW Caller weekend with Mel Wilkerson, Gary Carpenter, Chris Froggatt, Barry Wonson, David Todd

Dance Recordings

- SPECIAL DANCE with BRONC WISE and JET ROBERTS
- 1977 NSW Square Dance Society Cabaret with BARRY WONSON (scary voice back then)
- 1980 Willoughby Weekend with KEN BOWER (plus Barry Wonson, Peter Humphries and David Smythe)
- 1988 Weekend with WADE DRIVER (plus Barry Wonson, Peter Humphries & Brian Hotchkies)
- 2014 RED BARONS Weekend with KEVIN KELLY & BARRY WONSON
- 1988 Weekend with WADE DRIVER Weekend Part 2
- 1986 Red Barons Special with Scott Smith & Jim Mayo
- 1990 Red Barons Special with Jack Borgstrom
- 1980 Red Barons Special with Ernie Nation
- 1988 Red Barons Special with Robert Bjork, Ingvar Petterson
- 1992 Red Barons Special with Peter Humphries
- 1990 Red Barons Special with Mike Sikorski
- 1980's Advanced Teach Weekend with BARRY WONSON
- 1985 Pacific Northwest Teen Festival Mystery caller DAVE STEVENS

- 1988 Pacific Northwest Teen Festival Mystery Caller MIKE SIKORSKI
- 1984 Tumbi Umbi Dance
- 1995 Gympie Gold Rush (only part of the weekend)
- 2017 Barry Wonson 50 Years Calling – special weekend with Kevin Kelly
- 1978 Red Barons Dance with Barry & Guests

These recordings and other materials are held within our archives. The dance material and caller education weekends will be available on the BTM website very soon. If you would like these on a USB flash drive, please send me a note to bjwonson@gmail.com.

I still have a large number of recordings to transfer across to the computer. I am adding more files each month; however, it all takes time!



Some of our music available on A&S Records:

- **AS 115 - I HAVE A DREAM**
<https://www.asrecordshop.com/index.php?action=listingview&listingID=2444>
- **AS 114 – THE CARNIVAL IS OVER**
<https://www.asrecordshop.com/index.php?action=listingview&listingID=2445>
- **AS 112 – RIP RIP WOODCHIP**
<https://www.asrecordshop.com/index.php?action=listingview&listingID=2448>
- **AS 119 – THE MAGIC IS THERE**
<https://www.asrecordshop.com/index.php?action=listingview&listingID=2450>
- **AS 123 – GEISHA GIRL**
<https://www.asrecordshop.com/index.php?action=listingview&listingID=2464>
- **AS 125 – HOGAN, HILTS & THE DUKE Hoedown / Ripper**
<https://www.asrecordshop.com/index.php?action=listingview&listingID=2474>
- **AS 126 – COLONEL BISMARCK Hoedown**
<https://www.asrecordshop.com/index.php?action=listingview&listingID=2475>
- **AS 136 - IF I ONLY HAD A BRAIN**
<https://www.asrecordshop.com/index.php?action=listingview&listingID=2494>
- **AS 137- GUNG HO Hoedown #1**
<https://www.asrecordshop.com/index.php?action=listingview&listingID=2495>
- **AS 138 – A MAN NAMED ARMSTRONG**
<https://www.asrecordshop.com/index.php?action=listingview&listingID=2496>

- **AS 139 – AND YOU SMILED**
<https://www.asrecordshop.com/index.php?action=listingview&listingID=2497>
- **AS 141 – GUNG HO Hoedown #2**
<https://www.asrecordshop.com/index.php?action=listingview&listingID=2500>
- **AS 142 – DESERT WIND**
<https://www.asrecordshop.com/index.php?action=listingview&listingID=2501>
- **AS 143 – LOOKING FORWARD, LOOKING BACK**
<https://www.asrecordshop.com/index.php?action=listingview&listingID=2502>

The next ones I am working on are:

- **A THOUSAND FEET:** This is a great song written by John Williamson. It should make a great singing call.
- **SCHLAGER SMOOTH HD-** a great piece of music with a more gently European feel to it
- **SCHLAGER BOUNCE HD** – a peppier modern sound.



I would ask that all our subscribers have a listen to these tracks. The small returns from sales of these pieces of music is the only method we have of covering some of the many costs involved in producing BTM each month.

Our square dance music industry has dropped in sales drastically over the years, from the time when a big selling singing call would sell over a thousand copies – to the current situation where now a big selling record may sell 20 copies. Music costs money to produce. Please remember that most callers and record producers are doing this for the love of the activity. The returns are very small and over 90% of music done costs both the producers and callers money. They are paying to produce the music for your benefit, and normally they are doing so at a loss. Please support our Square Dance music industry.

In addition well as the music noted above on A&S Records, I have also been busy with some vocals for Tracy Brown at <http://www.squaredancemusic.com/>

The music for these is not new, however each has been unavailable for some years. Tracy now owns the rights to the music from a large number of SD record labels and is regularly updating vocals to reflect a more modern approach. I have heard some callers who have discounted some of our older square dance music as 'too out of date' or 'just too old'. I firmly believe that:

1. if the music has a good clean sound that has been recorded well, and
2. is a melody that dancers recognise and like,

then it has an equal place along with our newer music. Our aim in any square dance program is the provision of variety; and the musical aspect of that variety is extremely important. A good mixture of ballads, evergreens, pop, country, singalongs, up-tempo danceable music is where we can create an interesting and varied program.

Check these out (all with calls by Barry):

TRRCD 1119 FIREBALL MAIL

www.squaredancemusic.com/index.php?action=listingview&listingID=1078

TRRCD 1122 YOU CALL EVERYBODY DARLIN'

www.squaredancemusic.com/index.php?action=listingview&listingID=1079

GRCD 12802 SALLY G/RUBBER DOLLY

www.squaredancemusic.com/index.php?action=listingview&listingID=378

GRCD 12803 KANAWA/OLD JOE CLARK

www.squaredancemusic.com/index.php?action=listingview&listingID=379

GRCD 12804 SUGAR FOOT WILD/ GTRAIN

www.squaredancemusic.com/index.php?action=listingview&listingID=380

GRCD 12806 BEAVER CREEK/JIGSAW

www.squaredancemusic.com/index.php?action=listingview&listingID=382

GRCD 12807 CLEARTRACK SPECIAL/CROSSHATCH

www.squaredancemusic.com/index.php?action=listingview&listingID=383

STMP3-1005 MOUNTAIN DEW (Called by Barry Wonson & Brian Hotchkies)

<http://www.squaredancemusic.com/index.php?action=listingview&listingID=1137>

CBCMP3-01 WAYLON, WILLIE & ME (called by Mel Wilkerson)

<http://www.squaredancemusic.com/index.php?action=listingview&listingID=929>

MSMP3-01 BANJO SAM (called by Barry Wonson)

<http://www.squaredancemusic.com/index.php?action=listingview&listingID=1132>

OGRMP3 109 CHRISTMAS TIME'S A-COMIN'

www.squaredancemusic.com/index.php?action=listingview&listingID=1105

TRRMP3 117 CRUISIN' DOWN THE RIVER

www.squaredancemusic.com/index.php?action=listingview&listingID=1150

GRCD 12803 KANAWA/OLD JOE CLARK

www.squaredancemusic.com/index.php?action=listingview&listingID=379

7CMP3-34 FEELIN' MIGHTY FINE

www.squaredancemusic.com/index.php?action=listingview&listingID=1187

More Singing Calls coming soon from Barry on Tracy's labels:

- UNTO US THIS HOLY NIGHT;
- WALK RIGHT IN;
- OH CAROL
- OMAR'S HOEDOWN

Coming soon from Mel:

- BACK IN BABY'S ARMS
- ONE NIGHT STANDS
- LOOKING FOR LOVE
- SAME OLD SIDE ROAD
- HOLDING THE BAG



One thing I learned as a square dance Sight Caller is how to improvise... The good thing about playing a virtually unknown contemporary piece of music is that no one realizes when I got lost for half an hour while in the middle of the performance.

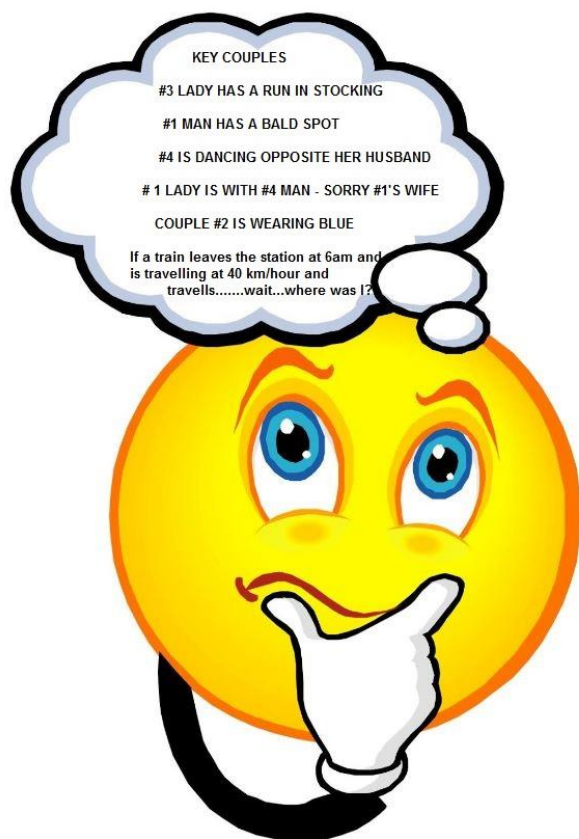
Memory is the Key. Now where was that lock?

By Mel Wilkerson

When Callers teach Callers, one of the things that new callers mainly stress about, and one of the things that too often gets too much time, is “sight resolution”. Today, there are as many resolution techniques and memorising methodologies and systems for manipulating dancers, as there are callers.

One thing that is never stressed enough however; is when we say things like, “choose a key couple” or “select key couples” to remember for your resolution technique, we neglect to give ideas or hints on how to remember them. This article is not about remembering techniques; it is about remembering who to use the techniques on.

Memorization Techniques



The most difficult aspect of resolving a square is neither technique nor

sequencing. It is simply trying to remember who the 4 key dancers chosen at the start are. Many long-time callers still today state that it is one of the most difficult aspects in sight calling. We all have that story of calling a dance everyone showed up wearing the same outfits. This article will hopefully identify a few things that can help with that age-old problem – the memory.

The caller preparation: Callers prepare for the dance (the good ones do anyway), and in learning and preparing they memorise such things as:

- Definitions
- Timing
- Body flow
- Sequencing
- Modules
- Music
- Lyrics
- Resolution techniques
- And 8,427,613 (8,427,614 if you call A2 or higher) other things related to calling and delivery which is just too many to put into a bullet list.

After all your preparation and practice, you get up on the stage and the first thing to do is, identify who is with whom, and memorise who is where, and usually in more than one square. **No stress here.** Here are a few things that may help with that task.

Arrive early and Greet people coming into the hall.

- People we associate with each other, most often dance together.

- The first tip is usually danced with the person you arrived with.
- Some couples wearing matching clothing. Identify them early and note if they are dancing together in the same square as partners.
- The clothing is unique within the square. One day you will get a square where four couples are matched pairs in four different colours. *(It hasn't happened to me yet, but after only 35 or so years so I am still hopeful).*
- More squares make for a better choice of easy-to-remember key couples.
- Our sight square has strong dancers that we can count on. If you know the dancers, it makes the choice of a sight square easier.

As with all things, when there are things that make a task simpler, there are also things that conspire against you to make it harder. Some of these include:

- Squares we can see easily have weak dancers. We tend to focus on them or get distracted by them especially if there is a problem
- Dancers are not dancing their biological gender - boys dancing as girls and girls dancing as boys.
- Dancers have nothing identifiable in common with their partner - this is usually the problem associated with casual clothing and a hall full of strangers to the caller.
- Dancers with something identifiable in common are not partners. Matched partners arrive at the hall and dance in the same square but not with the one they came with. If you don't pay attention the tendency is to keep putting them together.
- Dancers who danced together last tip are now dancing with different

partners. If you select key strong dancers each time, there is a tendency to keep them in your mind. Rotate your selection of key couples each tip if possible.

- Everyone is wearing a club uniform and looks exactly the same. We have all been there. It is especially difficult if you are a guest caller at that club.
- Poor Lighting in the hall or distracting lights, coloured lights, etc. They distract and sometimes seemingly change the colours of clothing somewhat depending on where on the floor they are.

All of this begs the question on how to we get past this. In addition to hints above that can help, look for anything that helps you stick the vision of who is with whom in your mind. This is your mind, so you do not have to be tactful, nor do you have to share how you matched people up. A caller friend of mine once said that she called at a nudist colony and the only clothing was



the shoes. She matched the lady with bad varicose veins to the man with the really hairy back. *(You thought I was going to say something else, didn't you? She alluded; but we all know what she meant. Do what*

you have to do to work for you.)

MAKE ASSOCIATIONS THAT WORK FOR YOU EACH TIP

You can be "*politically incorrect*". If the square is difficult to memorize, use anything that will help. It is in your mind so who's going to know other than you? Sometimes the most irregular things between dancers will create or make an association that you can't forget -- that really well-endowed lady with the

man that walks like a stork for example. The hard part is trying to forget it for the next tip as those two may not be together again. If that is what it takes for you to remember them however, then use it to your advantage.

Sound Memory

If you have a good auditory memory, perhaps it may be better to vocalise (to yourself) whatever association you've made. Some callers will use "verbal mnemonics" like giving their dancers nick names like Mountain Stork to remember the key couple above.



Others say all four dancers' names in order. If not names, you could use physical characteristics, dress, or a mixture of all of these. Chant to yourself the verbal association until you hear it as a familiar phrase. When I greet people at the door and select key people that I want to remember I use the rule of three.

A person comes to the door that I feel that I might want to remember, and I introduce myself. "Hi, I'm Mel", and I hold out my hand for a handshake. This is usually responded to with a handshake and a reciprocal introduction, "John".

At that time, I invoke the rule of 3. I repeat the name 3 times in conversation. "John. Pleased to meet you John. I will try to make sure you have a good time tonight John" or something like that. Eye contact and a handshake of that duration is not unusual and nor is the repetition of the name. It does however cement John's name in my head for a while. I May not do it with everyone, but I

will greet everyone and try to call them by name when I can.

There is nothing wrong with writing it down.

Many callers claim that they never write down any key couple information. Other callers, and some I know that are internationally famous, tell me that they **ALWAYS** write down "key couple information" or even information on the whole square, or even on multiple squares. If you watch some YouTube videos of many top callers, you will often see them making a note before they start calling, usually as the squares are forming.

If you remember John and he is in the square with someone you know, that is a good place to start. This is a decision, and a choice, that each caller will have to make as you are the only one that knows how good or how bad your own memory is.



Some callers have noted that they do not have any trouble remembering at the beginning of the evening but later they get tired and have a harder time remembering key couples, especially when dancers keep changing partners.

Regardless of what you do, a good guideline to follow is that, "It is better to write the information down and never use it, than to need it and not have

it". Whatever you choose, the best method is the one that works for you.

Just as a cautionary note however;

- If you use politically incorrect mental or verbal mnemonics, and write them down, be sure to destroy your notes before leaving the stage. Trust me – not doing so can become embarrassing.

A pro's strategy from veteran caller Mike DeSisto, an internationally recognised caller from Washington USA (by Rich Reel)

One day the dancers were already squared up. I watched Mike step up to the stage, put a record on and immediately start calling. After the tip I pulled him aside and asked him "How did you memorize the couples so quickly?"

His answer: **He doesn't.** What he does is this:

Mike starts calling memorized material.

At first, he calls whole memorized sequences and watches the floor to see which squares look like ones he can depend on. For example:

- HEADS SQUARE THRU 4, TOUCH 1/4, SCOOT BACK, BOYS RUN, SQUARE THRU 3, ALLEMANDE LEFT, RIGHT AND LEFT GRAND, PROMENADE HOME

Next he'll call a series of memorized modules. For example, the caller may choose a series of known and practiced modules to establish the static square, a corner box, a partner line and promenade pairing in the resolution. With such a sequence(s), done twice, once for heads and once for sides, the caller can see who is in the side position while the heads are moving. In addition, what the correct sequence is supposed to be for the dancers when in a corner box and a partner line becomes evident,

and it also reinforces the partner pairing relationships on the promenade. A simple combination of modules such as (SS-CB-PL-Resolve) will do this. For example:

- **(SS-CB)** Heads Pass Thru, Separate Around 1 To A Line, Pass Thru, Ends Cross Fold (CB) - **Check**
- **(CB-PL)** Swing Thru, Spin the Top, Single Hinge, All 8 Circulate, Single Hinge, Girls Trade, Recycle, Right & Left Thru (**PL**) - **Check**
- **(PL-Resolve)** Pass Thru, Tag The Line, Face Right, Centres only Scoot Back, All 1/2 Tag, Everybody Scoot Back, Right and Left Grand, Promenade (**SS**) - **Check**

At each point when everyone should be in the correct sequence, he'll look at a square and start memorizing.

He'll then call another module or so and look at the same square again. When he feels confident with his ability to recall the order of couples in that square, he may start looking at another. When the dancers have danced enough, he'll resolve (since he is calling memorized modules, he always knows the sequence for resolve.)

This process continues until he feels he can trust his memory and the pilot squares he's chosen. Only then does he move into sight calling. This process is completely invisible to the dancers (and before he let me in on his secret, invisible to me!) Now I observe many professional callers using similar techniques.

Acknowledgement: The basis of this article is from writings by Rich Reel in much larger selection of material on selecting Key couples for resolution. Full information and more articles by Rich Reel can be found at www.all8.com.

Humour – Reflecting on Male Caller Banter

Have you ever wondered why in the past that so many callers were men?

- Was it because men were more adept at choreography than women?
 - **Nope.** That has been proven time and time again.
- Was it because men are better performers and presenters?
 - **Nope.** Most superstars and performers, singers and actors are women
- Was it because Men are smarter than women?
 - **Nope.** My wife is much smarter than me. Find a man that doesn't acknowledge that.
- Was it because Men are better conversationalists?
 - **Nope.** My grandfather was a man of few words. One day he talked and talked. Turns out he accidentally put in grandmas' false teeth instead of his own.

So, what is the reason? Simply put, it is because most callers are Dads; and dads have an unfair advantage with "caller banter". We present these of course, all in the sake of professional development from Behind the Mike of men on stage. Male Caller Banter – commonly referred to by our kids as "Dad Jokes. Here are a few well-presented caller banters from our professionals. (*Well, they may not have actually said it, but we will blame them anyway – LOL*)

1. The shovel was a ground-breaking invention. – *Jaden Frigo*
2. Sorry I am late to the dance. My wife asked me to put the Cat out before we left. I didn't know it was on fire. – *Chris Froggatt*
3. Don't worry about this movement; five out four people admit that they're bad with fractions. – *Steve Turner*
4. At a Halloween dance "I am dressed as a skeleton tonight because I have no body to dance with. – *Brian Crawford*
5. Dosado to a wave in that context is like an elephant that doesn't matter? It is just irrelephant. – *Barry Wonson*
6. I bought a new square dance song about Velcro. I won't call it because it was a total rip-off. – *Jeff Seidel*
7. We were going to have the after party at that new restaurant on the moon. We changed our mind – it had Great food, but no atmosphere. – *Mike Davey*
8. I was going to use the choreography on this piece of paper <rips it up>, but decided against it, it is just "tearable". – *Mel Wilkerson*
9. I just watched a program about Canadian beavers. It was the best dam program I've ever seen. – *Paul Adams*
10. I would like to introduce this next caller at the harvest dance. I forgot his name, but I will just call him scarecrow because he is outstanding in his field. Please welcome --
.....*Attributed to almost every male caller at a harvest ball*

Straight Talk – Dancers, Dare to be Presumptuous

By Bobby Anderson Sparta, Tennessee

Square dancers who are presumptuous enough to air complaints about their callers to their callers run the risk of inheriting the ire of those callers.

For everyone knows that on the dance floor the caller always has the last word.

A wise old caller once said to me. “If they ain’t dancin’ -- I ain’t callin’.”

Reverse the thought to “I ain’t calling if they ain’t dancing” and you have the same end. **“AIN’T DANCIN’”** which consists of being broken down by:

- Callers who constantly call above the floor ability. (*These callers often have choreography so intricate and devious that although the dancers know the caller may be right, they cannot succeed without a slide rule and calculator. They eventually stop and wait at home to try again. That caller sees the dancers struggling but just keeps on going hoping they will eventually get it. They call to show off their knowledge and their ego lets them forget the dancers*)
- Callers that try to “Out-call a calling partner” (*These callers intentionally up-stage other callers with whom they may share an evening or event or even do a guest tip. They try to steal the spotlight or worse, setting up the other caller for failure trying to test them thinking it is fun – trust me – **IT IS NOT!**, and the dancers don’t like it either*)



- Callers that workshop the dancers to a woeful “whoa.” (*These callers are the ones that will work a workshop to death and seem to have the attitude of “I know this works, so we are going to go through it until you get it; even if it takes me all night”. It may eventually come to pass that the dancers get through the material, but they leave the floor mentally exhausted and physically drained and generally are in the “ain’t dancing” category for the next tip.*)

Case in point. One night, I drove to a special dance which was an



extraordinary number of miles away to hear two top-flight callers. Both Callers were favourites, and friends of mine.

Through the first couple of tips of Mainstream and Plus dancing, the affair was a thing of beauty. The dancers flowed with fluid movement. Laughter and an occasional shriek of delight emitted from happy dancers on the floor.

Then it happened. One caller decided to workshop an experimental call. The fact is; he overworked the call and he over worked the dancers leaving an unhappy, frustrated group grumbling at the end of the tip.

They had come for a fun dance, so their complaints weren't too vocal at the

moment. Then came the second caller, and not to be outdone, he then workshopped his "favourite new toy" choreography. More grumbling followed.

Seemingly, the first caller was taken aback by the second caller's efforts, and in his next tip, came up with one of those "**Trust Me**" tips. On and on into the night these two callers battled with each other with unique movements. They were having fun which satisfied their egos, but left the dancers cold.

Two by two the dancers drifted away or sat out. **The point is, they didn't dance.** Those who did were part of a majority on the floor standing in inactive squares waiting impatiently for the next Left Allemande so they could try it again.

I suppose what I am trying to say is that, I am being that presumptuous person by telling callers, and others, what we as dancers want, **and** what we don't want.

It is the dancers who "pay the fiddler."

- **First.** When a dance is advertised to be a "fun dance" then let it be just that - a "**FUN DANCE**". (*You cannot have fun dancing if you are standing at home waiting or sitting to the side watching -- regardless of how much fun the callers are having*). Callers should call what is advertised. That is what the dancers came for. One or two workshop tips will be tolerated if they are not drawn out to long.



- **Next.** More dancers are turned off by the "**Trust Me**" phrase which callers

throw out than by any other words emitted from the caller's mouth.



(*This phrase usually means the caller saying, "I am a professional and know the definitions. I have broken this movement into abstracts of proportional conventions that will bend them to the point of cracking but not breaking. If you do exactly what I say, do not think about it or try to understand what you are supposed to do, you may be successful – because I am better than you - look at me and see how clever I am. You are up now, and it is too late to sit down."*)

- **Third.** Most dancers aren't interested in just how high a level a caller can call. They are concerned about their own level of dancing and seeing how high they can get at their own level and still have fun. They are prepared, and the caller has an opportunity to give them fun and success. It is not a contest. **Showing off to a group of dancers with the old "I can call something you can't dance to" routine doesn't earn the caller any brownie points.** (*Many callers express they can break down a floor at any level with just basic calls. Dancers would rather have a caller that will can call an interesting and fun dance for dancers at every level just using basic calls*)



"Success is where preparation and opportunity meet.
Failure is where they meet, but can't stand each other."

- **Finally.** Dancers are turned off completely by "private contests" between callers who attempt to turn their calling into a private tournament just for self-satisfaction. When two (or more) callers share the stage and friendly "one-upmanship" becomes a focus of the callers, their fun on stage often has serious repercussions. *(Unfortunately, it is almost always at the expense of the dancers).*



For a good dance, it takes three things

- a good floor:
- a good understanding, and
- good enthusiastic dancers

Today, when we struggle to maintain numbers in our clubs, we find ourselves losing more young inexperienced dancers because of the attitude of the caller than for any other reason. Even experienced dancers are turned off but manage to survive. More often than not, the young graduates don't.

If callers aren't wise enough to see this in the number of idle squares on the floor, then they should be told about it in

a diplomatic way. After all, if we as dancers don't tell them, who will? Dancers – Be Presumptuous and let the callers know. It is your activity too.

We hope you enjoyed these thoughts and this straight talk from a dancer's perspective. It clearly says what many dancers are afraid to do: speak up and talk to your caller if you perceive a problem.

Honest, open feedback is one of the best compliments that we can receive from our dancers. It helps us grow and improve our skills. It is easy to be caught up in the glamour of the spotlight, technicalities of choreography, or the awe of wanting to impress, especially when trying to be as good as the "big names". Too often, we get caught up in the hype and forget why we are there. The Big Names got there because they call to the dancers and not to themselves. They may not be the best at this, or the greatest at that, but they work hard to make everyone feel special and feel like they are working, succeeding, and, more importantly, having fun doing it. They intentionally make other callers look better when sharing the stage and take a step back and give the spotlight to their calling partners. They complement and support the choreography being used rather than show off and up-stage.

Hopefully everyone identified with the issues presented in this article in one way or another. Hopefully all callers encourage their dancers to give good honest feedback, good and bad. The dancers enjoy being part of the process too you know.

*This article is today as valid as when it was published 37 years ago in American Square Dance Magazine February 1982. It was one of the first articles that Kim Lindner (my first Mentor) made me read when I started calling. I will always thank him for that sentiment that he instilled – **the dancers come first.** - Mel*

Thoughts, Experiences and Inspiration from Our Readers!



IN-DEPTH : Just Let Them Dance -A Deeper Look

an article inspired by Deborah Carroll-Jones & presented by Mel Wilkerson

This article was presented in the 2019 October release of "Around the Square". It was inadvertently missed in Behind the Mike in June 2019, but as it has generated a lot of feedback, and, in particular, an entire commentary by renowned caller Cal Campbell, the article is being presented in its entirety here, followed by the comments by Cal. - Barry

Deborah Carroll-Jones is a well-known, respected and experienced full-time caller, recording artist and Accredited Caller Coach

On a Facebook Callers page for Newbie Callers, Deborah made a very bold and blatant statement which, in my opinion was long overdue. It dealt with the subject matter of Calling and dancing as opposed to teaching and always walking them through what to do. It provoked several comments and a little bit of discussion, most of which voiced support for the position she presented. I am paraphrasing her post and some of the comments below:

Deborah's initial post: There have been some interesting posts regarding better teaching. I have another subject that I truly believe needs to be addressed:

When do you STOP TEACHING and just start CALLING???

I am so sick of stop-and-go "dancing." If students never get the chance to feel the wind in their face, they think that it is normal, proper and that they need to stop after nearly every call to see where they are! They move way too slowly!

THIS IS THE FAULT OF THE TEACHER. Deborah stated the reason for this is that the caller is "teaching", and not calling. She went on to say that the callers who are doing this are creating these "stop and go" drills rather than dancing. Although there are massive amounts of prompt teaching rather than calling, she gave two simple examples to clearly make the point as follows:

1. Stop saying "step to a wave"!!!!

- If you taught it correctly and have explained the facing couple rule, the

dancers should know that it is an automatic move on their part to create the wave momentarily in order to perform the ocean wave call,

2. Stop saying “Turn that Girl”!!!

- If you have taught a “Courtesy Turn” correctly, then have properly taught that Courtesy Turn is an automatic part of the Chain Calls (other than Spin Chain Thru), as well as Right and Left Thru, etc., the dancers should be able to automatically employ the Courtesy Turn without the caller having to tell them to “turn that girl”.
 - Deborah also noted the old caller argument of using filler words to gauge timing. She commented: “If you are going to say, “But I use that for my timing purposes”, “I am begging you to stop. It is annoying”. This simply means that when you, as a new caller were learning to call, often there were filler prompts to get you to meter the music with call timing and your words and the associated filler was a “baby step” to ensure your timing delivery. It was a short term learning process (thankfully not used much anymore) to help you get the call out to the dancers, so they didn’t have to stop moving. If you are using directional prompts like “Turn that girl” as a delivery habit, then you are timing the calls and the dance for yourself and not for the dancers.

If we do not expect the learners to carry some responsibility in this journey, then we are NOT doing our job as instructors.

I have a responsibility to teach and they have a responsibility to learn it. If I am constantly spoon-feeding them, they won’t ever develop beyond the baby-stage. I, for one, do not want to be carrying around a bunch of 200 pound babies.

There is an understanding, at least in my club that I am the Mom. But there is also a saying by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe that reads,

“There are only two lasting bequests we can hope to give our children. One of these is roots, the other, wings”.

I want to give my students their roots in the accurate and solid teaching part of learning to square dance. But at some point, I need to give them their wings. And that means Stop Teaching and Start Calling. Only that way can they truly experience the magic of square dancing. Otherwise I have failed them. **Let them dance.**

Mel’s note: Deborah raises many great points in this post, not the least of which is - there comes a time when you have to let go and stop holding the dancers back – which is what spoon feeding, and always directing their actions on the floor, does. Deborah correctly points out that if you do your job as a caller, they will do their job as a dancer. It is about trust Think of it as micromanagement – If you were hired by a factory to tighten nuts and bolts, and the boss trained you how to do your job properly, how would you feel If the boss, constantly came down to the factory floor and grabbed a wrench, checked, loosened and re-tightened every nut and bolt again. The

boss has to trust that you know your job and can do it. You must trust that the boss believes in you to do your job and that if something new comes along, he will show you, – Otherwise, what was the point of teaching you in the first place??

What I really liked about Deborah's post is the expanse of topic matters that "let them dance" applies to. It was so much more than just prompt coaching and "directional overcalling". A few public comments that came out by some other very well-known and respected callers were as follows: (Note: some of these comments have been edited for grammar and association context but the content is the same)

Comment by Kip Garvey - This issue became blatantly apparent to me when I returned to calling after 12 years off. I found if I wanted to keep the floor moving, I had to 'slow down' and let the dancers 'discover' where they were. A not-so-little voice in my head was screaming 'WT..'?

The lack of smooth dancing stuck out like a sore thumb. I understand new dancers need the extra time, but not experienced dancers at open weekend dances and club hoedowns. I immediately jumped on to YouTube and discovered, much to my dismay, that this appears to be the way things are today across the country. You don't see this in Europe, but it is very prevalent across the States.

Mike Luna Commented: Teach and Walk through the Basics program and let them dance for a year. Then teach the Mainstream program and let them dance

for a year. Then teach all positions Basics and Mainstream programs and let them dance for a year. That is when they will be ready to learn the Plus program; because you need to know all positions Basics and Mainstream before learning Plus. Then they are ready to learn the Plus then let them dance for a year then teach all positions Plus and let them dance for a year. Now you have a strong dancing club that has been dancing with you for 5 years. And you probably added many other dancers throughout those years who have been square dancing for years. When you let them dance, your club will grow.

Mel's Comment – *Mike has articulated one of the most common statements amongst callers and dancers. The essence is "What is the hurry? – What happened to the journey rather than the destination? We as callers need to slow down and teach each level at a better pace to let the dancers dance and enjoy the level then give the option to move on, if they want to. This does not directly state the "stop babying the dancers by dancing it for them with directions," as indicated by Deborah, but it does re-enforce the necessity of teach them, properly, use the material and let them dance it comfortably. Let them learn and dance and enjoy. The caller's job is giving them the means to do that.*

Johnny Preston commented: that Age (of the dancers) must be taken into consideration and that the entire current paradigm of square dancing is now flawed. We need a much more predictable and routine product to present to new people. Taken to its

extent, square dancing can be as difficult, if not more so than a game of chess. That is fine for chess players. He also noted that Mainstream has 68 calls with an almost innumerable combination of sequences available and has to have some controls put on it at the beginning.

Mel's Comment: Johnny is correct that the age of the dancers has increased – and the complexity of the dance has become out of control. In my opinion, this is not the fault of the dancers, but that of the callers. Yes, dancers coerce other dancers to “come to Plus” but it was we as callers that created the mechanism for that to happen. Johnny notes that at Mainstream with 68 calls there are innumerable combinations. Dancers are not chess players. – The thing is that they do not have to be. If the chess master teaches the game and then gives them time to learn and play and enjoy the game, they continue to play chess and teach their children and friends the enjoyment of the game. However, the chess master that teaches the pupil every strategy, every gambit, then stands over the new player every time telling him/her what piece to move in order to win the game is more likely to lose that pupil because they have never learned to play for themselves. It is more important to lose a game and find out why to grow as a player than it is to move your pieces on the board at the direction of the Chess master, and never lose but also never learn. (Now if you haven't already, go back and take the words Chess Master and substitute Caller, and pupil and substitute Square

dancer). He is right. There is a paradigm shift needed and although it may not have been his intent, I choose to interpret it as “it is time to stop calling for the ego of the callers and start calling for the dancers, and the activity again:

I commented on Deborah's post as follows: The whole essence is - **give them time to dance.** Dancers must be taught and learn that is true. But they must also be given time to dance what they have learned and enjoy it and gain confidence and have fun with it if they are going to remain and if square dancing is going to survive. There is no rush to get there first and no prize for getting there first ... other than making it harder for advancement because you are not ready. Telling a dancer what to do each time you call a movement is not getting them ready. STOP IT. Prompt when you have to. Teach when you need to, but only then. Otherwise **LET THEM DANCE.**

- Circle Left, Right and Left Thru, Courtesy Turn etc. are individual movements.
- Teach them, use them and let them dance them in combinations to build confidence and have fun.
- Do not dance it for them with your words.
- Basic is a level, learn it, dance it, enjoy it -movement by movement.
- Repeat the same process of teach, learn and dance to each movement and each, and every, level.

A good caller can fill an evening with fun and variety with only about 10-15 movements. On a very first night open

introduction, you can get them dancing and fill an evening with less than 10 movements, have them moving and doing the commands without talking them through what to do on each command. More importantly they are enjoying it, and you can build on that enjoyment and confidence. You can use the movements this way and that (innumerable combinations as Johnny Preston noted) and you as a caller can have fun with them and let them have fun – but only if you let them dance and be dancers not students for the entire time.

As Mike Luna noted, (paraphrased) you can take a full year of 41 x three hour nights and teach basic and mainstream (if you push it), which will give them lots of time to dance. But you can only **“LET THEM DANCE”** if you take the time to teach them properly in the first place and trust them to learn. You can build the dancing foundation if your caller does the work needed to actually “teach and call” (two separate things) rather than just get them to a level quickly by telling them what to do each time.

Doing that means that for the Caller there are more moves to create variety rather than use what you have and do the good old-fashioned calling groundwork of “calling” for the dancers instead of for the Caller’s ego and level ability status.

Dancers are chess players ([sorry Johnny, but the analogy fits here](#)). They are the chess players that someone, somewhere and somehow has made interested in the game. They are the

chess players that want to play and enjoy the game with friends and family and strangers for the pure enjoyment of the game. They do not want to be Grand Masters, or even teachers, but are happy to share their knowledge with friend and family and help them learn. They even know where you can get help to learn to play the game if you like it.

What dancers are not, however: They are not chess players that want to have the Grand Master standing over them directing their every move to the smallest detail. They want to play, enjoy and share the game, not just be an automaton for the Grand Master’s ego to say I can take a new chess pupil (Square dancer) and win every game (get them to the next level). That pupil is not playing chess, the grand master is. Likewise, that dancer is not dancing – The caller is dancing for them.

Deborah used a quote by Goethe in her post. I would like to add a similar quote by Goethe.

“If you treat an individual as he is, he will remain how he is. But if you treat him as if he were what he ought to be and could be, he will become what he ought to be and could be.”

I still remember when I came back from military service in Germany. I was following the CALLERLAB approved program of teaching Basic and Mainstream in a year, and then dancing the program for at least two years before even thinking about Plus. Most of the dancers never even thought about “moving to Plus”. They were having fun

at Mainstream and that other stuff was just too serious.

Back then, Mid 1980s and 1990s, the new dancer class was 41 nights 3.5 hours a night 7PM to 10:30. I had a small student class of 2-1/2 squares of new dancers when I started, but later the numbers increased in the next year, they brought friends to join in and try it out and they stayed with them as well as danced on the Mainstream Night.

When I came back to Canada I was told, as noted by Kip Garvey when he returned after a 12 year hiatus, that I teach them too fast. Dancers can learn Basic in a year, if you push it, and then in the second year, learn the Mainstream program and then in the third year dance full Mainstream. They need time to "Dance and not just always learn."

"Sigh"... Back then, most clubs had a new dancer class, a learning Mainstream class and a full Mainstream class on separate nights...only a few others had a Plus club and there were only two Advanced clubs in the whole area. The halls were full, and the dancers danced.

Today as noted by many callers, some who even boast that they can do this with their new dancer classes, we have a new dancer class every year – "Basic to Plus in less than a year" -- but we also split the evening with Basic and Plus and Advanced star tips so that we can keep the Advanced dancers. It is virtually not stop teaching and talk through from the first night but that is ok, because you only have 4-5 new dancers and the rest can pull them through – (does this sound familiar?)

But also, don't forget, the dancers maximize their time, because often now-a-days, the patter is 15 minutes of "stop and go" at each level followed by a singing call, except at Advanced and about half the Plus groups. This way, everyone should get at least one tip in an evening.

We have all heard seen or experienced the caller mentality of:

"BAH. I won't stop saying "Step to a Wave!!!!!" or "turn that girl." I can talk them through every movement like spin the top, - "Half by the right, girls go three and the boys move up" - It helps the dancers learn and get to Plus faster." We all have bad habits. The problem is that this caller description is not a bad habit. It is a caller ego problem that does the dancers no favors. This caller is calling for him/herself and sees him/herself as a "Chess Grand Master". The problem is inherent in that the dancers cannot think for themselves, and dance for themselves.

In doing research for this document I trolled the internet, You Tube and such to get a better idea of Deborah's comment. I also had a recent post regarding a response I made to Glenn Anthony Wilson regarding the use of prompt words and filler words. I realized that it is not always the caller teaching the dancers, but also the callers teaching the callers, myself included, that have "teaching and instruction" habits that sometimes lack clarity.

I have discussed this with the caller who was new and has no problem with me sharing the critique on filler words but

would rather go unnamed. He read Deborah's post, and in our discussion, he said, "That is me. I do that – it is how I learned". The following two sequences were taken from a "full Plus dance" and the video of the dancers was as Kip noted in general reference to what it was like when he returned after 12 years, and as Deborah stated, "Pretty stop and go and slow with the dancers waiting for the full directive commands." It needs no further clarification, but I am sure many of you will find this familiar. Two of the patter sequences were as follows – word for word on the video.

- **HEADS**, Right hand in, **SQUARE THRU FOUR** hands go all the way around to face the corner, **DOSADO**, step to an ocean wave, **SWING THRU**, half by the right, half by the left, **SPIN THE TOP**, half by the right, the girls go three and the boys move up, **do the RIGHT AND LEFT THRU**, pull her by and turn that girl, lines of four, **SQUARE THRU THREE** hands only and get ready with the left hand, **ALLEMANDE LEFT**, come back to your partner **RIGHT AND LEFT GRAND...**
- **HEADS** do the **RIGHT AND LEFT THRU** and turn that girl, same heads, **PASS THE OCEAN**, **EXTEND**, straight ahead to a wave, **SWING THRU** half right, half left, **GIRL FOLD** behind the boy, **PEEL THE TOP** – boy go out girls cast left $\frac{3}{4}$ and the boy move up to the end, **do the RIGHT AND LEFT THRU** and turn that girl, **SQUARE THRU 3** to the corner, **ALEMANDE LEFT**.

I will note specifically here, that the caller that was doing this was a newer caller and said he was very nervous. That is completely understandable. When asked about it he said, he was taught to use the filler words and directions for his timing, and to make sure that he knew what the dancers were doing in his mind. He was also taught that prompting the dancers through movements ensures their success and makes it easier to call.

All those things he was taught are correct. What he was NOT taught was that, the talk through timing practice was "caller practice" not "caller performance", and that prompt calling, or directional prompting is a tool to be used when necessary but to be weaned off as soon as it is no longer needed. In this case, the dancers did not need the prompts or the timing help. The caller had developed this as a habit style because he was never taught the difference. The reason this example stuck with me is that we talk about dancers not being "let to dance", but I want to add onto that thought, caller not being taught and then "Let to call".

- This was a newer caller, calling at an open "Plus dance". He had been calling for three years and was at one calling workshop. His experience was:
- After the first 6 months or so he did a guest tip (two singing calls) After a year, he did his first patter
- At about a year and half, after a caller workshop, he usually gets to call one tip a month (that is when his club dances)

- He has now been calling for three years.

The reality of this is best explained by making a dancer do the same.

- The dancer has been visiting the club for 6 months but hasn't danced other than an occasional fun mixer
- After 6 months as a visitor, the new dancer was pulled into a beginner tip because they were a dancer short.
- This happened a few more times and the new dancer picked up a few movements and started to grasp simple basics. The caller always made sure the new dancer was prompted to where they needed to be.
- In the summer a bunch of friends got together on a weekend and pushed the new dancer through the Basic, Mainstream and Plus program movements as they understood them
- A month later the new dancer went to the first club "Plus dance" and danced. – The caller made it easy for them because he prompted the new dancer through every movement to that they could succeed.
- The new dancer has now been dancing full Plus with the club for two years. They have attended (16 plus nights in total)

That dancer does NOT have a foundation of dancing nor have they been let to dance. Yet there they are on the Plus floor, and the caller is making it easier so they can succeed.

Likewise, that new caller has in reality only called about 16 single tips by

himself – with the help of the club caller and there he is calling a "full Plus" tip.

Teach them correctly and then LET THEM DANCE. If you have done your job properly, then they will enjoy it so much more and grow in confidence

Teach the new callers correctly and then LET THEM CALL. If you have done your job properly, they will enjoy it so much more and grow in confidence.

[Deborah Carroll-Jones](#), your Facebook post was excellent, and I thank you for inspiring this article, albeit a little expanded from your likely initial intent.

In conclusion, I would like to leave you with the following thought: As teachers we all sometimes feel like parents to our students. Some will use the skills we taught and grow; some will use the skills we taught and just stay and use them for the sheer enjoyment. Others may take the skills we taught and be inspired to learn how to teach others. Others may chalk it up to an experience and go on to learn different skills and take a different path. The choice is theirs, not yours. You can, however, be almost guaranteed that if you teach the skills and do not allow them to develop, grow and enjoyed with confidence, most will choose the different path and other skills.

“There are only two lasting bequests we can hope to give our children. One of these is roots, the other, wings”.

Reader Comments – Just Let Them Dance

From Cal Campbell

“1. Stop saying “step to a wave”!!!!”

Cal says — CALLERLAB lists “Step to a Wave” as an official “Basic”. If CALLERLAB is the rule book we are supposed to follow, then the caller must create the formation before calling some “basics”. As example is Trade. Here is the definition:

Trade (Family)

Starting formation: Any wave, line or column. If the caller instructs the Head Couples to Square Thru Four, the end point is an Eight Chain Thru Formation. The caller could say Partner Trade, but the caller should not say Centers Trade because an Ocean Wave does not exist until the caller instructs the dancers to Step to a Wave.

“2. Stop saying “Turn that Girl”!!!”

Cal says — One of the major problems in the present way of training callers to call is that many newer callers, maybe most newer callers, do not “time” calls to fit the music. I have asked new and experienced callers to tell me the number of steps CALLERLAB recommends for a Courtesy Turn and few can give an accurate answer. They tell me they were told to “eyeball” the dancers and deliver the next “call” just as the dancers are finishing the previous call.

If you take the above advice, then the caller must judge an average time to deliver the next call because the present average floor of dancers have never been told how many steps it should take to dance a Courtesy Turn. So, some dancers take the correct number of

steps. Some of them take more steps. Some of them run to get to the end point of the call. If the caller does not know the recommended number of steps, who do they need to watch.

I disagree with Deborah. It may annoy her, but it does not annoy the dancers. As soon as they hear any command, the rest is just noise. One of the things I miss about the present way of calling is the rhyming patter callers used to use.

I strongly object to her referring to any tool that helps callers use good timing, as a “baby stage” of square dancing. I believe this type of comment is degrading to both callers and dancers.

Kip Garvey’s comments are right on.

I do a lot of calling for beginner dance parties. The first two dance routines, I use, emphasize moving to the beat of the music. These routines also have the dancers dancing to the phrase of the music. By halfway through the first dance, 90% of brand new dancers can do both. If you teach timing early it’s natural for dancers to use good timing.

Mike Luna comments about teaching time.

Jack Murtha was a famous caller from the past. He was also a schoolteacher. At a CALLERLAB Convention he made a presentation about the number or repetitions needed for the average new dancer to learn each basic. It takes a minimum of 16 reps for each “basic”, but that’s not the end of the task. It takes 16 reps for each formation where the “basic” is used.

You can easily demonstrate this by calling a Right & Left Thru from facing couples, an eight chain thru formation,

facing lines of four and an ocean wave. Each change in formation will cause some dancers problems no matter how carefully the instructor attempts to explain the definition of Right & Left Thru.

On the comment, “What’s the hurry”?

In the U.S., the pressure is originating from the officers of the square dance clubs. I quit teaching Mainstream square dancing in Colorado when the clubs would only give me 20 (2 hour) lessons to teach Mainstream. They had no problems finding another caller who would do it the “club’s” way. The current number of lessons is now down to 15. The skill level of new dancers was low then and it’s getting lower.

The following is a quote from the discussion. “A good caller can fill an evening with fun and variety with only about 10-15 movements. On a very first night open introduction, you can get them dancing and fill an evening with less than 10 movements, have them moving and doing the commands without talking them through what to do on each command.”

A really good caller can provide two hours of good entertainment with 5-7 basics. The CALLERLAB Committee for Community and Traditional Dance has been running seminars to show callers how to do this for over 17 years. I routinely do two hour beginner dance parties with only five “basics”. I wrote a booklet on how to do 45 minute school programs using only four “basics”.

I loved the Stop-n-Go quote from the video. I have never listened to one quite that bad. What I do see a lot is want-to-be sight callers that have to see the

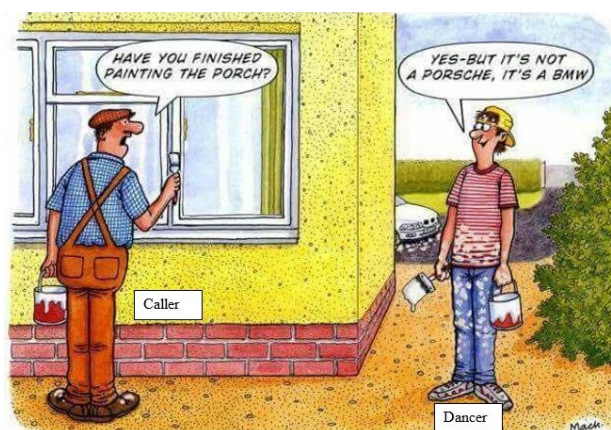
destination FA before they decide what they want to call next. Jim Mayo points out that as high as 80% of the present callers have no idea what the result formation and arrangement will be when they pick a “basic” to call.

Overall the article was very interesting. About forty years ago I decided I needed to become a “sight” caller. Up to then, I had relied on memory and modules. At the time I was taping every dance and listening to them to analyze whether I felt the choreography I was calling was as good as what had been calling before by using memory and modules.

I could write several articles about this experience, but my conclusion at the end of a four year trial, was that I could resolve sets very quickly. I could keep the dancers moving smoothly. However, I found that the quality of the choreography was far short of what I could present with memory or modules.

I’m largely retired from calling. I also had a minor stroke that affected my speech. I am now back to the point where I can prompt, but fast patter will take more time yet. Keep up your efforts.

Calvin Campbell



The Power of Good Enunciation



Mainstream Focus of the Month – Nov 2019

WALK AND DODGE.

<p>SINGING CALL</p> <p>HEADS SQUARE THRU 4, TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$, WALK AND DODGE, PARTNER TRADE, MEN WALK – LADIES DODGE, MEN RUN, RIGHT AND LEFT THRU, SLIDE THRU, SWING CORNER, PROMENADE</p>	<p>SINGING CALL</p> <p>HEADS “LEFT” SQUARE THRU 4 LEFT TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$, WALK AND DODGE, EVERYBODY WHEEL AROUND, DIXIE STYLE TO A WAVE, (<i>Centres Start</i>) SWING THRU, CHAIN DOWN THE LINE, SLIDE THRU SWING CORNER, PROMENADE</p>
<p>CB-CB</p> <p>TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$, SPLIT CIRCULATE, SCOOT BACK, WALK AND DODGE, PARTNER TRADE, SQUARE THRU BUT – - ON THE THIRD HAND – - SLIDE THRU</p>	<p>PL-PL (GIMMICKY BUT EASY)</p> <p>MAN WALK – LADIES DODGE SINGLE HINGE, LADIES TRADE, “LEFT” TAG THE LINE *LADIES DODGE RIGHT – MAN WALK PARTNER TRADE <i>*Directional prompt of walk and dodge to a line facing out</i></p>
<p>PL-CB</p> <p>PASS THE OCEAN, MEN CIRCULATE, LADIES WALK AND DODGE, 1 BY 3 – WALK AND DODGE, ENDS $\frac{1}{2}$ CIRCULATE AND SLIDE THRU</p>	<p>PL-PL</p> <p>MAN WALK – LADY DODGE EVERYBODY WALK AND DOGE LADIES RUN RIGHT (<i>OW</i>), - BALANCE SPIN THE TOP, MEN RUN RIGHT, *AS TWO LINES OF 4 – WHEEL AND DEAL <i>*This wheel and deal is as couples in a two-face line</i></p>

<p>CB-PL</p> <p>MEN WALK – LADIES DODGE ALL 8 CIRCULATE, LADY RUN RIGHT, SPIN THE TOP, VERY CENTRE BOYS TRADE, ALL HINGE, WALK AND DODGE, CENTRES SLIDE THRU OTHERS WHEEL AROUND AND LEAD TO THE LEFT, VEER RIGHT, BEND THE LINE</p>	<p>PL-CB</p> <p>PASS THE OCEAN, LADIES ONLY WALK AND DODGE, ALL HINGE, WALK AND DODGE, PARTNER TRADE, PASS THRU, WHEEL AND DEAL *LEFT SQUARE THRU 3 (R-H Free) *Any number of options are useable here for a “Square Thru 3” equivalent to the CB</p>
<p>CB-RESOLVE</p> <p>TOUCH ¼, WALK AND DODGE, MEN TRADE, LEFT SWING THRU, CENTRES ONLY WALK AND DODGE CENTRES RUN NEW CENTRES WALK AND DODGE, ENDS PASS THRU, BEND THE LINE, SQUARE THRU 2, RIGHT & LEFT GRAND</p>	<p>PL-RESOLVE</p> <p>PASS THE OCEAN, LADIES WALK AND DODGE, LADIES RUN MEN WALK AND DODGE, MEN RUN PASS THRU, WHEEL AND DEAL ZOOM CENTRES SWING THRU, EXTEND, STEP THRU, RIGHT & LEFT GRAND</p>
<p>CB-RESOLVE</p> <p>RIGHT AND LEFT THRU, ½ SASHAY PASS THE OCEAN HINGE CENTRE FOUR WALK AND DODGE LADIES PASS THRU, EVERYBODY TRADE, MEN ZOOM, CENTRE FOUR WALK AND DODGE, SQUARE THRU 3, TRADE BY, ALLEMANDE LEFT</p>	<p>PL- RESOLVE (gimmicky but easy)</p> <p>CENTRE FOUR ONLY FWD AND BACK, SAME FOUR SPIN THE TOP, ENDS ONLY TOUCH 1/4 JUST THE OUTSIDE 6 ONLY -- WALK AND DODGE (around the outside), IN THE WAVE RECYCLE, ALL TRADE BY PASS TO THE CENTRE SQUARE THRU 3, ALLEMANDE LEFT</p>

This month, we present to you a number of “extended application” uses of the movement **Walk and Dodge**. Many were submitted by new or newer callers, during exercises, and caller training sessions. Some are noted as “a little gimmicky” but are still well within the realm of the definition and relatively easy to dance.

We receive several positive comments from individual Callers and Associations regarding our Focus of the month finding the items very useful as workshop building blocks in their areas. We at BTM believe that without a solid foundation of the fundamentals at Basic and Mainstream, dancers are not fully prepared to advance to the next administrative list level of dancing. It is the old adage of quantity does not necessarily equate to quality or skill. A caller may be able to present a lot of higher level material without really understanding the mechanics of it, and similarly a dancer may be able to dance many higher level movements, but will falter and often fail when faced with extended application variants, of lower “administrative list level” movements.

There are great callers out there and a plethora of information available. Today many callers sight call extended applications and variant material easily. but have significant difficulty with using that material in singing calls. This is why we present a table of extended material on a wide range of movements in both module and singing call form.

We hope that these figures may help to expand your calling references and to generate your own ideas on how to further expand your and your dancer’s awareness of position, formation and capability. As with all material, use it selectively and wisely. Look at the material, digest what is in it, and if you choose to use it, ensure the theme is reflected in your patter and singing calls in order to prepare the dancers for success and enjoyment.

(P.S. All submissions are welcome). If there is something that you would like us to specifically look, ideas to expand on or even specific choreography that is focused and you would like to see in the BTM Focus of the Month, send it to us. You will get a response, and/or, you may even find your material published as a separate article. E-mail our editor at bjwonson@gmail.com or to Mel Wilkerson at wilkerso@bigpond.net.au

What is the Focus movement of the month?

The answer is simply, we present some material for callers to play with and focus on, that may assist in improving their choreographic repertoire and help to develop dancer skills and abilities. We include extended applications without getting too technically challenging or setting unreasonable expectations.

The focus movement of the Month is in keeping with that approach in that we will take a movement and present some fix point modules (from a corner box, or partner line for example) for use. It is our hope that this limited presentation of a focus movement idea will assist callers in generating, and hopefully sharing their own ideas on how to use that movement with variety and interest.

Out in left Field? Sometimes the focus of the month may seem fixated on a specific use of a movement for instance circle to a line with the inside couple half sashayed, or left hand recycles. Other times it may a standard use application but getting there differently so that the movement itself is not stagnated or so common from one position that it becomes anticipated. We try to give a format that allows the use of the movement from a variety of positions and also in singing calls.

Square Dancing – Social Aspects

By Dan Martin – Printed ASD 1982

Square dancing is an activity that combines many elements. Square dancing is enjoyed not only for the choreography, the challenge and the physical experience, but also for the interrelationships encountered on the dance floor, and the opportunity to share in a successful team effort achievement. These are social aspects of the dance because dancers do not perform alone, or with only one partner as in a disco or ballroom setting.

Square dancing with others in a set of eight, and the changing of that set every 15-20 minutes, requires that square dancing be a social experience. Because square dancing is by design, and by practice, a people-related activity, its social aspects must rank high in importance. But the social interaction available to square dancers takes place under many different conditions and in many different settings, not just on the dance floor.



Interaction of a square dancer with one or more other square dancers can take place at any times and at any places where they meet. Most of these close friendships would not even have been

formed if it were not for square dancing. Interactions of square dancers with non-square dancers in a square dance setting may take place at a charity benefit, art festival, hobby fair, exhibition, or in any public place where the square dancer is dressed for dancing and/or in any place where friends share interests.

The interaction of a square dancer with the general public may take place at times listed above, but also when being observed but not in direct contact, i.e. as performers on TV or at half-time of a sports contest.

In all cases, the common denominator for square dancing is people. All square dance affairs, its performance, its integrity and its future depend on the actions, interactions, and general conduct of the dancers. Square dancing is its people, so the activity has strong and important social implications.

A LEGACY study (*Note: this study was 30 years ago but the message is still valid today*) confirmed that the vast majority of dancers were affected by one or more types of social contacts for the initial exposure, and final successful persuasion, that led them into becoming square dancers. The vast majority continue to be square dancers because of the social opportunities that are offered as an integral part of the activity.

If we can project the responses of these dancers to the whole of square dancing, and I believe we can, then we can show that over 82% of square dancers became initially involved as a result of social contacts. The **three top-rated reasons for continuing to dance are**

all social. This leads us to the conclusion that: **The primary important element in square dancing and in recruitment/retention is the social factor.**

LEGACY V was programmed to lift out four of the more important elements of square dancing for in-depth discussion and development. Each was examined because it had universal application in square dancing and was considered vital to its sustained health and growth. The four were

1. Leadership,
2. Recruitment and Retention,
3. Social Aspects and
4. Auxiliary Programs.

Concerning Social Aspects, we should focus exclusively on the important ingredient of “people”. The emphasis is on the interaction of people with people, for which many opportunities are found in all phases of the square dance activity, and beyond just the friendships, the pleasure of being together, working and dancing together. Social areas of the dance activity include trips, banner raids, decorations, newsletters, refreshments, kitchen activities and so much more.

Do these social experiences have value to the participants and to the total square dance program?

If we reach agreement that the interaction of people has a highly important role in the square dance activity, perhaps we can go beyond that and agree on some specific social action that may be used to enhance, strengthen and advance the whole program.

I would like to share a personal belief, and some examples, that tends to confirm the validity of that belief. I

believe that the social element of square dancing is so important to the program that it may possibly be the most important aspect of the total activity.

Looking first at social courtesies and actions as we encounter them on the dance floor, my experience tells me that even though we all recognize the importance of knowing the calls, practicing our floor performance, and improving our ability to respond, the social aspects of the dance far exceed the physical and mental factors.

The very nature of how the dance is entered into, choreographed, performed and ended reflects a very important incorporated factor of close personal relationships.

- Have you ever noticed how much more fun a well-attended dance is than one having only one or two squares?

Given two hypothetical dances, same great Caller, same fine round dance Cues, maybe even scheduled in the same hall by the same friendly club on the same regular dance night, maybe even in the same season of the year. Everything is the same — **almost**. Everything except the size of the crowd. **What is the difference in the dance activity?**

Invariably, the larger dance was the one of greater enjoyment, and the smaller dance seemed slow. Your floor performance was fine, you danced as well as ever, but the dance seemed to drag, and deteriorated into an event when you tired easily and perhaps left early. Another night or two like that and you may not return. Frequent similar experiences could cause you to seek another recreation. Compound the experience and clubs fail. Compound

club failures and we have a troubled square dance program.

Some interesting questions for discussion at Club, Association or Federation meetings might be:

- How important do you think the social aspects of square dancing are to the participants and to the activity?
- Does sociability serve more than to merely fit into the program because we need eight people to fill a square?
- What parts of the social aspect are good and need to be retained and enhanced?
- What parts are problems and what can be done to resolve them?

- What has been your experience, good or bad, with trips, raids, banner-stealing, newsletters and communications?
- Do these enhance the sociability of square dancing?

The square dance movement seems to be breaking away from the refreshment break. Is the break a viable means to help improve the sociability at dances? Discuss the reasons for discontinuing and for continuing. What might we suggest replacing the refreshment break to achieve the same purposes?

Dancers bring in dancers and dancers keep dancers dancing and socially happy.

=====



Barney, a retired square dance caller in his 90's, now lived in the Old Callers Home.

For a Special Birthday Gift, his protégés, dancers, and many callers he taught over the years wanted to give him a special gift.

Knowing Barney was a true Larrikin with a twisted sense of humour, the group decided that they would send a stripper to the "old Caller's Home" to entertain him for his Birthday. She rings the bell to his room, and getting no answer comes inside. She

sees Barney sleeping peacefully on the bed, so she gently shakes him awake and informs him that she has been sent as a special birthday gift, to provide her services.

Barney asks her, "What do you do?" She says, "I can provide you "Sup-er Sex".

"He says, "Look, lady, I'm 98 years old, I'll take the Soup!"

Reverse Engineering Resolutions - Revisited

By Mel Wilkerson

This article was presented over a year ago in BTM but has been recently asked for by several callers in the US, Canada and Europe. The original was based on comments by a great caller, Johnny Preston, who briefly talked about Reverse Engineering resolution modules. What Johnny was saying was, rather than start from a static square and work your way to a solution using a focus movement or sequence, he often prepares modules by looking at what he wants to focus on, and putting it near the end of a sequence to end with an Allemande Left, or Right And Left Grand. From there he just works backwards to a known location like a corner box, a partner line or another known point of reference (dancer formation).

For the record, in case there are any technical engineers out there, reverse engineering for this context means working from the finish point (Allemande Left, Right & Left Grand or Home) to the start point (where I was when I started this resolution module). In other words, work the figure backwards.

The idea is essentially trying not to put dancers somewhere where you have to stop and think too hard about how to get them out of what you got them into. Plan your work and work your plan.

Ideally, the resolutions you use are prepared, practiced and set up by you. Over time, and with a lot of practice, a number of resolutions from different set ups with different focus movements will have been committed to your memory (or reference cards) that you can pull out and use when you need them.

That little segue (seg-way) is what brings me full circle to the reverse-engineering your module gets out. How is that done?

The idea of reverse engineering a module is relatively simple. Start at the end you want. Work backwards to the desired recognisable start point you desire. That could be a Corner Box, partner line, or a static square or any formation you are comfortable working with such as LRB (lead right box).

The movement selected for this article was “**CENTRES ONLY WALK AND DODGE**”. I know that my end state for walk and dodge is generally back to back couples, so that is what I will use. (Gender is not important here – yet)

To keep this simple, I will only look at reverse engineering to a Right and Left Grand from a Partner Line (PL) or a Corner Box (CB). When developing your own module gets out you can set them up from any known F.A.S.R. state that you are comfortable with.

The method I use is working backwards. I do not initially select a corner box or partner line but only the end state, in this case a Right and Left Grand as the last movement.



Right and left grand – for me, one of the easiest formations is when everyone is half sashayed, in a Trade By position and opposite from their original home. The Right and Left Grand takes me to home.

Important – Write down your steps as you go

1. I put my dancers into that formation
 - I don't care or know how they got there only that that is where I want them to be at the end of this.
2. Now what can I call to get them there what are the options.
 - Pass Thru
 - Square Thru 2 (half sashayed)
 - Square Thru 4 half sashayed
 - Veer Right or Left (from a two-faced line) with the dancers half sashayed
3. I choose Square Thru 2 – I now move my dancers backward from the trade by to the square thru 2 position, (facing lines half sashayed)
 - Please note **I AM NOT WORRYING ABOUT FASR NAMES OR ANYTHING ELSE AT THIS MOMENT.** I only want to move the dancers from one location to get to this location
4. I now repeat the process working my checkers and dancers backward to set up my centres walk and dodge.
 - This means I want to have the centre dancers facing out which is where they would be after a walk and dodge
 - Bend the line would get me there
5. Because I want to keep this pretty standard at the moment, a Centres Walk and Dodge would get me to this

location. I have to choose is, who is walking and who is dodging.

- Boys walk – girls dodge right, or
 - Girls walk - boys dodge left
6. I must pick one, so I pick girls walk boys dodge (centres walk and dodge). I have no reason for this choice other than I had to pick one. I now move my dancers back to where they would be before the lines facing out by having the girls walk backwards and the boys moving sideways.
 7. This gives me a three in one line with one girl looking in and three dancers looking out, girls together and boys together.
 8. What could I have done to get here?
 - A cast off $\frac{3}{4}$ from inverted lines (centres in a mini-wave)
 - Ends pass thru
 - Others/?
 9. Let's keep it simple and say Ends Pass Thru. I move my end dancers backward so that they are now facing. I have three in one lines again centres in a mini wave. What could I have called to get me here?
 - Centres run
 - Outsides separate and hook on the end
 - Pass thru, separate around two and hook on the end
 - Others?
 10. I choose centres run. If I move them backwards, I now have a three-in-one line with the centre dancers looking out. I already know that I am focused on centres walk and dodge and this where a "centres walk and dodge" would put me so I will do it again. Again, I have two options

boys walk girls dodge, or girls walk boys dodge. Because I had Girls Walk - Boys Dodge last time, I will do a Boys Walk - Girls Dodge this time (Centres Walk and Dodge)

11. I move the boys backward and the girls over and note that takes me to a left-hand wave.
12. At this point I have done Centres Walk and Dodge twice in my routine once for the boys and once for the girls as walkers....I do not want to make it too long because my routine backwards right now is as follows

- Right and Left Grand
- Square Thru 2
- Bend the Line
- Ends Pass Thru
- Centres Walk and Dodge
- Centres Run
- Centres Walk and Dodge (left hand waves)

What I want to do now is find a fast way to either a Partner Line or a Corner Box.

13. Left Swing Thru is always a good option from left hand waves and it does set up good flow for the Centres Walk and Dodge so let's do that. I want to start thinking about pairing up couples now to get to parallel boxes or lines. What is easiest – side couples are on the outside of the same line boy looking in heads are not matched. Centres are in a mini-wave with the boys looking in. I choose to pair up the dancers in the line, so I am going to have the Boys Trade. – this puts me in lines facing out, side couples paired

14. There are a number of ways I could have got here.

- Facing lines Pass Thru
- From GBGB waves boys facing in - Boys Run
- From left hand BGBG – Girls Run
- Tag the Line – Face Out
- Half sashayed boxes – Star Thru

**** However – from here, I recognise this set up from many modules as - “from a corner box – Touch ¼, Walk and Dodge”**

15. Because my focus is Walk and Dodge, I am going to choose that one. I now have a routine working backwards that goes – from a Right and Left Grand to a Corner Box as follows:

- “ **UN**” Right and left Grand
- “ **UN**” Square thru 2
- “ **UN**” Bend the line
- “ **UN**” Ends pass thru
- “ **UN**” Centres Walk and Dodge
- “ **UN**” Centres Run
- “ **UN**” Centres Walk and Dodge (left hand waves)
- “ **UN**” Left Swing Thru
 - “ **UN**” Boys Trade
 - “ **UN**” Walk and Dodge,
 - “ **UN**” Touch ¼ (CB)

In proper sequence it looks like:

- (CB-RLG) Touch 1/4, Walk and Dodge, Boys Trade, Left Swing Thru, Centres Walk and Dodge, Centres Run, Ends Pass Thru, New Centres -- Walk and Dodge, Bend the Line, Square Thru 2, Right and Left Grand

THE FINAL STEP: CHECK YOUR WORK. Check it for flow.

I have now looked at the sequence and it works but there is a choppy stop and go part in the middle. “Centres Walk and Dodge, Centres Run, ends pass thru, New Centres Walk and Dodge” . If I move the ends pass thru after the second walk and dodge, it not only flows better but helps with the flow of the bend the line. I check it and find it dances much better.

I have now reverse engineered a module CB-RLG with a focus of centres walk and dodge with both boys and girls as walkers. My sequence written out for a cue card might look something like this.

- **(CB-RLG)** TOUCH 1/4,
WALK AND DODGE,
BOYS TRADE,
LEFT SWING THRU,
CENTRES WALK AND DODGE (boy
walk/girl dodge),
CENTRES RUN,
NEW **CENTRES WALK AND DODGE**
(Girl walk/Boy Dodge),
ENDS PASS THRU,
BEND THE LINE,
SQUARE THRU 2,
RIGHT & LEFT GRAND

This process works the same for lines as well as boxes. Take the end state and work backwards. Ensure you know what the movements do and how to work them backwards (**UN-Square Thru**, and **UN-Walk and Dodge** etc.).

If I were to do the same to get to a Partner Line start the process is repeated. My focus is again on “Centres Walk and Dodge” and I want to end with a Right & Left Grand.

To change it up a bit, this time I want to start my Right & Left Grand from ocean waves - boys in the middle. I also know that I had a little trouble with the three-in-

one lines from the first try so I will keep it a little simpler this time.

I consider what movements do, specifically my focus movement and movements that will help me with the dancers’ comfort. (Facing line movements for example). Other things to consider are things that normalise the square. Some examples of considerations are:

1. Centres Walk and Dodge gets me to centre couples back to back
2. After a Walk and Dodge with the centres from a wave, a Centres or Ends Run brings me back to lines facing in or out.
3. A Cast Off $\frac{3}{4}$ from a “GBGB” wave all paired in sequence gives me a Right and Left Grand. This is often used, and it is what I want to use.
4. Same sex pairings facing opposite sex is fixed with Star Thru or Slide Thru to easily normalise
5. Circulates/Split Circulates are good for pairing up dancers with their partners.

I go through the same process as I did with the first one (this time I will just run it backwards without all the details and you will see what I mean.

1. My end point is a right and left grand from a wave, so I start there.
 - Right and Left Grand
2. I know a cast off $\frac{3}{4}$ to a right and left grand is well used and comfortable for the dancers, so I use that.
 - Cast Off $\frac{3}{4}$
3. I know pairings are easily established through circulates and although I am already paired, it is something dancers also know, and it sets up a cast off $\frac{3}{4}$ well –

- All 8 Circulate
- I know I want the BGBG wave set up and a pass the ocean will get me there to this wave, so I choose that ,
 - Pass the Ocean
 - I know that Boys Run or Girls Run gets me to lines facing in or out. I am in lines facing in with boys on outside so that must be a Boys Run called to get me there.
 - Boys Run
 - I have my centre dancers (boys) back to back. This is the end position of my focus moment Walk and Dodge.
 - Walk and Dodge
 - I am in lines facing in, so I have my outside dancers (Girls) run again. This puts them into the back-to-back position and gives me variety for the Centres Walk and Dodge – one for boys once for girls.
 - Girls Run
 - Girls are in the centre back-to-back, so I do the Walk and Dodge again.
 - Girls Walk and Dodge
 - Everyone is paired in a wave with their partner. A partner line Pass the Ocean does that.
 - Pass the Ocean
 - I am in facing lines and everyone paired but out of sequence – a right and left thru fixes that
 - Right and Left Thru
 - I am in partner lines.
- My reverse sequence is as follows
- “UN” Right and left grand,
 - “UN” Cast off $\frac{3}{4}$
 - “UN” All 8 circulate

- “UN” Pas the ocean
- “UN” Boys run
- “UN” Centres (Boys) walk and dodge
- “UN” Girls run
- “UN” Centres (girls) walk and dodge
- “UN” Pass the ocean
- “UN” Right and left thru (PL)

I review the flow the other way around and have the following sequence.

- (PL-RLG) Pass the Ocean, Girls Walk and Dodge, Girls Run, Boys Walk and Dodge, Boys Run, Pass the Ocean, All 8 Circulate, Cast off $\frac{3}{4}$, Right and Left Grand

I review it again and note that the only thing partially difficult in this whole sequence is the second Pass the Ocean. I make a note to caution the dancers the first time I use this with a prompt such as “boy girl in the middle”, or “don’t fix it”

My full sequence now looks like this in my cue card for practice.

- **(PL-RLG) PASS THE OCEAN,**
CENTRES (Girls) -
WALK AND DODGE,
 GIRLS RUN,
CENTRES (Boys) -
WALK AND DODGE, BOYS RUN,
 PASS THE OCEAN (**boy/girl in**
centre), ALL 8 CIRCULATE,
 CAST OFF $\frac{3}{4}$,
 RIGHT AND LEFT GRAND

Well, that is a long way step by step of explaining reverse engineering when it comes to calling. It is a long and time-consuming process, but it is definitely worth learning. Not only will it help you understand your individual movements better, it will help you build and develop your resolution repertoire with specific focus movements.

Good luck and happy calling

The Calling evidence – Dancers are Judge and Jury

Collated articles from ASD 2009 – Comments by Edna Johnson

The following is a slightly reformatted Editorial from American Square dance Magazine October 2009 by Bill Boyd. It was chosen primarily because of the comments that followed and were printed in November 2009 to the editorial. It is an “exercise in reality” that callers should not only read and understand what other callers and experts say to better their craft, but more importantly listen and understand what their target audience, the dancers say about the topics.

Can we ever all agree on what transpires at a square dance event?

Probably not, I say this because with thousands of callers around the world there are bound to be differences of opinions. This is not necessarily a bad thing. If every caller at every level called the same way every time, we could almost guarantee that in a few years there would be no need for callers. The dancers could put on a record (ok, CD; ok MP-3, so technology is changing) and dance the routine with no one calling. With our great diversity, we create interesting choreography for the dancers to enjoy.

Let's start with basics. All of our calls have a definition. As a caller we choose what to teach and what to call:

- Some callers take those definitions apart and with a single call create 5, 6, 7 or more creative movements from one call. I have heard more than one caller say, I would rather teach a few calls (Basic or Mainstream) and teach them from many positions, so that my dancers understand the definitions and concepts behind the calls

- Some of our callers are content to use the call from only one or two starting positions. - Other callers teach more calls from fewer positions.

I am not here to comment on either method. This is diversity. A caller has the responsibility to "read" the floor in order to determine things like:

- do my dancers like puzzles?
- do my dancers just want a basic hoedown?
- what can I teach the dancers to allow them to have fun?

If a caller is visiting a club, calling a festival or convention, he must have the ability to:

- understand the dancers, in order to
- create an interesting dance, which is called
- at the level of the floor, and
- makes sure his audience has a great time.

A caller can complicate simple choreography from Basics (*extended applications*), or by contrast, may simplify Plus choreography so anyone can dance. Even with diversity maybe we can agree, dancers want to have fun. Dancers want to be able to dance the calls by the definition, even if only from a standard position.

What do you want to teach, and what do your dancers want to learn? How can you, as a caller, make sure that it is fun and interesting for everyone on the floor?

This editorial (slightly edited) was commented very profoundly by Edna M

Johnson giving a dancer's perspective and thoughts on the matter. Her wisdom is well worth the read.

What you call is the evidence – can they dance it is the judge, the jury and sometimes the executioner.

WHAT THE DANCERS THINK ABOUT THAT SHOW BOAT CALLER



We kind of stoped paying attention and weren't really listening after the last tip. So based on the small number of empty chairs this tip.....we find the caller.....

Reprinted excerpt from American Square Dance November 2009

I have been square dancing for about 54/55 years. I thought I would comment on "Visiting or Guest Callers for Clubs or Weekends". Many times, a Caller comes in a square dance club and "shows off" trying to give the dancers "something different" and ends up watching the floor break down. This also happens at MANY weekend dances.

Dancers PAY (sometimes too much) to come and dance to this new Caller, or Callers, only to find themselves "not being able to dance". They blame themselves, but really;

IT IS THE CALLER/CALLER'S FAULT,

and

**USUALLY, BECAUSE HE/SHE IS
'SHOWING OFF ON WHAT HE/SHE
CAN CALL!**

I have even seen dancers leave because "it is too hard for us!" Some have travelled many miles to be able to 'square dance to a new or different Caller'. What a shame!

I remember, back when, Dale, my first husband, would go to call at a new Club for him, or at a big Festival. He would ALWAYS, start his first tip by feeling out the floor. He would see "how far up the dancers could dance"; and when he saw them 'starting to break down', (not actually breaking but just having that little difficulty) he would stop and not go any higher up but rather Call to the level they could dance. After all, they are the ones who paid him to come and Call! RIGHT?

I strongly think that all Callers should do this at any new Club or Festival where they are going to be calling. I am sure that many dancers out there won't agree with me (possibly those who are very strong dancers), but this is what I believe. I wish we would see more Callers doing just that -- Calling to the floor of dancers that is 'paying them to be there. **CALLING TO THEM!**' and not just saying calls at them while they stand and listen.

The square dancers came to have fun and to square dance! My husband, Bob, and I regularly dance up through the C2, but are 'cutting back' because of illness's, etc. However; we still go to our Mainstream/Plus Club here in Hot Springs Village, Arkansas, and plan on going until we can't anymore. Mainstream/Plus Clubs are the 'backbone' of square dancing and no matter what level you dance', one should never forget this.

Edna M. Johnson

Remembering the Fallen - A square Dance

By Roger McGough (b. 1937)

A Square Dance



In Flanders fields in Northern France
They're all doing a brand new dance
It makes you happy and out of breath
And it's called the Dance of Death

Everybody stands in line
Everybody's feeling fine
We're all going to hop
1 - 2 - 3 and over the top

It's the dance designed to thrill
It's the mustard gas quadrille
A dance for men - girls have no say in it
For your partner is a bayonet

See how the dancers sway and run
To the rhythm of the gun
Swing your partner dos-y-doed
All around the shells explode

Honour your partner form a square
Smell the burning in the air
Over the barbed wire kicking high
Men like shirts hung out to dry

If you fall that's no disgrace
Someone else will take your place
'Old soldiers never die. . .'
. . .Only young ones

In Flanders fields where mortars blaze
They're all going the latest craze
Khaki dancers out of breath
Doing the glorious Dance of Death
Doing the glorious (*clap, clap*) Dance of Death.



Mainstream Get-Outs

By Barry Wonson



In any caller's toolbox, it is necessary to have a bunch of simple get-outs. Get-outs usually have several possible resolves:

- 1) To a Right & Left Grand (**RLG**)
- 2) To a Promenade
- 3) To an 'At Home' situation

Most get-outs we use start with a recognisable arrangement (Corner Box, Partner Line, etc.) and take the dancers to a specific resolution state.

The modules below are all aimed at taking the dancers directly into a **RLG**. *They are taken from my files. Some are from "Figuring" and some researched from excellent sources - Barry.*

- **(CB)** SWING THRU, LADIES CIRCULATE, MEN TRADE, MEN RUN, MEN FOLD, **RLG**
- **(CB)** SPIN CHAIN THRU, LADIES CIRCULATE TWICE, **RLG**.
- **(CB)** PASS TO THE CENTRE, CENTRES DO SA DO TO A WAVE, RECYCLE, TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$, WALK & DODGE, PARTNER TRADE, PASS THRU, Others BOX THE GNAT, Others SEPARATE & all - **RLG**.
(note this is a two couple drill practice
- rotate heads and sides on the outsides for the CB)
- **(CB)** TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$, LADIES RUN, PASS THE OCEAN, MEN TRADE, MEN RUN, $\frac{1}{2}$ TAG, FACE RIGHT, PASS THRU, **RLG**.
- **(CB)** SWING THRU, MEN TRADE, ALL 8 CIRCULATE **2- $\frac{1}{2}$** , BOX THE GNAT, **WRONG WAY RLG**
- **(CB)** SWING THRU, MEN TRADE, EXTEND, **RLG**.
- **(CB)** PASS THRU, TRADE BY, SWING THRU, MEN TRADE, ALL 8 CIRCULATE **1- $\frac{1}{2}$** , **RLG**.
- **(CB)** SLIDE THRU, ENDS TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$ & LADIES RUN, CENTRES TURN THRU, CLOVERLEAF, **RLG**.
- **(CB)** SWING THRU, LADIES CIRCULATE, SINGLE HINGE, CENTRES TRADE, SPLIT CIRCULATE, **RLG**.
- **(CB)** TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$, LADIES RUN, PASS THRU, ENDS FOLD, SWING THRU, LADIES TRADE, ALL PASS THRU, **RLG**.
- **(CB)** (Heads active in centre):
CIRCLE TO A LINE,
PASS THE OCEAN, SPIN THE TOP,
HEAD LADIES CAST OFF $\frac{3}{4}$ **AND --**
U TURN BACK, In the 3 Hand wave -
RIGHT SPIN THE TOP,
SIDE LADIES SLIDE APART **AND --**
STEP AHEAD TO A WAVE,
CENTRES RUN, BEND THE LINE,
PASS THRU, ALL $\frac{1}{2}$ SASHAY **1- $\frac{1}{2}$** ,
LEADERS TURN BACK, **RLG**.
- **(CB)** (Heads Active in centre)
DO SA DO **1- $\frac{3}{4}$** (**L-H Wave**),
MEN TRADE, LADIES CIRCULATE,

- LEFT SWING THRU,
MEN CROSS RUN, MEN TRADE,
LADIES CIRCULATE, SWING THRU,
SIDE MEN CROSS RUN (**around 2**),
HEAD LADIES RUN RIGHT,
JUST THE END LADIES CHAIN,
ALL TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$, LADIES RUN,
SQUARE THRU, BUT ON 3RD HAND -
- **RLG**.
- **(PL)** SQUARE THRU $\frac{3}{4}$,
JUST THE CENTRES CLOVERLEAF,
OTHERS FACE OUT, **RLG**.
 - **(PL)** FLUTTERWHEEL,
SPIN THE TOP, **RLG**.
 - **(PL)** RIGHT & LEFT THRU,
ENDS SLIDE THRU,
CENTRES PASS THRU **AND --**
CLOVERLEAF, **NEW CENTRES --**
U TURN BACK & **RLG**.
 - **(PL)** RIGHT & LEFT THRU,
JUST THE CENTRES PASS THRU,
ALL SINGLE HINGE, ENDS FOLD,
CENTRES LEFT SQUARE THRU 3,
RLG.
 - **(PL)** PASS THE OCEAN,
SWING THRU, MEN RUN, $\frac{1}{2}$ TAG,
FACE RIGHT, **RLG**.
 - **(PL)** RIGHT & LEFT THRU,
FLUTTERWHEEL, CENTRE 4 ONLY--
SPIN THE TOP, ALL BOX THE GNAT,
RLG.
 - **(PL)** SLIDE THRU,
RIGHT & LEFT THRU, $\frac{1}{2}$ SASHAY,
PASS TO THE CENTRE,
CENTRES LEFT SQUARE THRU 3,
RLG.
 - **(PL)** SLIDE THRU,
PASS TO THE CENTRE,
RIGHT & LEFT THRU, $\frac{1}{2}$ SASHAY,
MEN WALK - LADIES DODGE,
WALK & DODGE, **WRONG WAY**
GRAND.
 - **(PL)** PASS THRU, TAG THE LINE,
FACE OUT, ENDS FOLD, **RLG**.
 - **(PL)** PASS THRU, MEN RUN,
SPIN CHAIN THRU,
ENDS CIRCULATE, LADIES RUN,
LEFT TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$, LADIES --
U TURN BACK, **RLG**.
 - **(PL)** RIGHT & LEFT THRU,
FLUTTERWHEEL,
PASS THE OCEAN, SWING THRU,
RLG.
 - **(PL)** LEFT TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$,
ALL 8 CIRCULATE, MEN RUN,
RLG.
 - **(PL)** $\frac{1}{2}$ SASHAY, PASS THRU,
TAG THE LINE, **ENDS ONLY --**
ALLEMANDE LEFT, ALL **RLG**.
 - **(PL)** PASS THE OCEAN,
RECYCLE, SWING THRU,
ALL EIGHT CIRCULATE TWICE,
SWING THRU, SINGLE HINGE,
SPLIT CIRCULATE,
HINGE AGAIN...WRONG WAY **RLG**.
 - **(PL)** RIGHT & LEFT THRU,
PASS THE OCEAN, SWING THRU,
MEN RUN, FERRIS WHEEL,
CENTRS RIGHT & LEFT THRU,
ALL $\frac{1}{2}$ SASHAY,
DOUBLE PASS THRU,
CLOVERLEAF,
CENTRES LEFT TURN THRU --
WITH A FULL TURN, RLG.

Getting There Is Less Than Half The Fun

By Mel Wilkerson

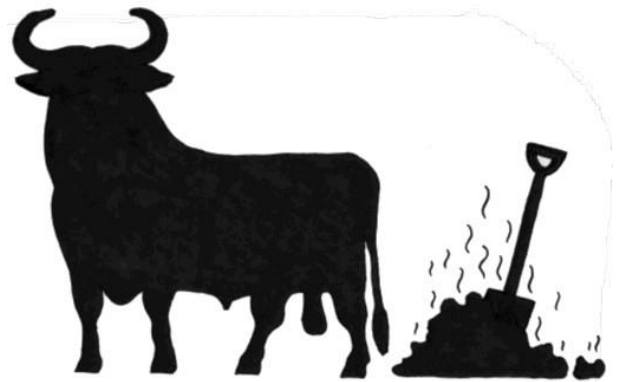
We have sought the destination so hard that we forgot to enjoy the journey. Lately there has been a large amount of discussion on what is now being referred to as “Destination Levels”. There was recently a discussion regarding A1 not being accepted as a “level” but a halfway point of Advanced Dancing. This makes it seem like it is a lesser capability, or “not quite good enough”.

I would like to state for the record, before you read this article, that my own opinion may be somewhat biased as I do not Call or dance A2. I never really had the desire or interest as I still have a lot of fun at basic mainstream and plus. I only started to call A1 because where I was from, many events and festivals hired only three callers and the levels in the halls were Mainstream, Plus and Advanced. Simple economics meant that if I could not call Advanced, I would not get hired to call. At that time, A1 and A2 were separate levels but the Advance hall was A1 at open dances so that everyone could dance “Advanced”

First let me say that Callerlab, that august body that administers the standards for Square dancing around the world, does not have Levels. That is a conception of dancers and callers that are selling the myth of quantity over quality. There has over the years been a perception that if you are a “Mainstream Level” dancer, then you are a better dancer than a Basic level dancer. Likewise, “Plus Level” is better than Mainstream, A1 is better than Plus, A2 is better and more advanced than A1, Challenge level is better than all of the

preceding dancer “levels” and even that is broken down into more letters and numbers. I cannot say for sure, but I do not think that Callerlab ever has developed a list or criteria that tries to state that any dancer is better than any other dancer, nor that any program means that its dancers are better than those of another program.

I cannot speak for all callers nor for Callerlab but my opinion is that, saying, “I am a plus level dancer because it is more fun”, or that, “I dance advanced and therefore I am a better dancer” falls into the realm of: (see picture as I am too



polite to express this in words)

What are they, if not levels? The short answer is that they are administrative management programs. Programs are administrative standards that state what movements are going to be danced at an advertised event. They are designed for Callers to provide a known selection of material, so that Dancers can decide to attend with the knowledge that if they Dance Mainstream and the advertised dance is mainstream, then they will be able to dance.

That means that:

- someone somewhere sat down and decided that dancers need to dance, socialise and have fun.
- Callers need to have a standardised list to coordinate what is being used so that the maximum number of people can dance without having to continuously teach.
- Dances can be taught a program, go anywhere that program is advertised, and be assured that they could dance

Somehow, these programs, which used to fill halls because they were well used, well supported, well taught and well called; became the tool and target of both dancer and caller egos. The next level (**oops program**) was considered higher because it had more movements on it which meant more fun. Callers started workshoping the next level (**oops there I go again**) movements because it was easier than developing material for using the current program movements with extended applications.

Invariably this led to dancers dancing many of the next program movements while still not having a solid foundation of the current program. Eventually:

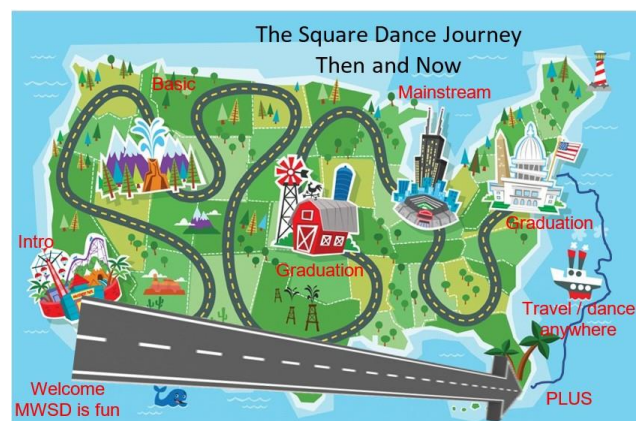
- Basic and Mainstream became blurred into a “DeFacto” program by itself.
- Mainstream dancers danced a lot of Plus movements at club level and were rushed through workshops to get them to Plus.
- Foundations of dancing and calling were set aside for the Rush up the program lists.
- More movements became equated with “status” and dancing a next level program became a “Level of Attainment”.
- Callers began to “self-egoise”. The claim of being able to teach basic and mainstream in a few months and

graduating plus “Level” dancers within a year was target goal.

- Dancers bought into the hype of “more is better” and the next “level” is more fun. They began to rush “up” before they were ready. *“We will push you through, don’t worry”.*
- Many Callers found that it was much less preparation and practice, and easier to call a whole lot of movements simply (variety through numbers), rather than using fewer movements with flow and innovation.
- The Next “Level” became a status symbol, and thus eventually a Destination.

The simplest analogy is found in driving. We are so focused on getting from point A to Point B that we do not enjoy the drive anymore. How many historical towns, lovely villages, parks, rivers and streams etc are now never visited because the By-Pass highway was built to get you there faster.

The Square Dance Journey is the same. We no longer stop and enjoy the journey, nor do we savour the stops and enjoy the visits. Today we come in and start to learn and never stop until there is no “higher Level” in the area. The dancers take the bypass today, but it is the



callers that are driving the bus.

DANCE PROGRAMS ARE NOT LEVELS OF ATTAINMENT, nor are they

an indication of quality of wither the callers or the dancers. They are only an administrative reference list for the callers to stick to when calling a dance with an advertised program. As such, each program has a simple set of criteria which seem to have been ignored over the last several years. You will not likely find this written anywhere but it is common sense:

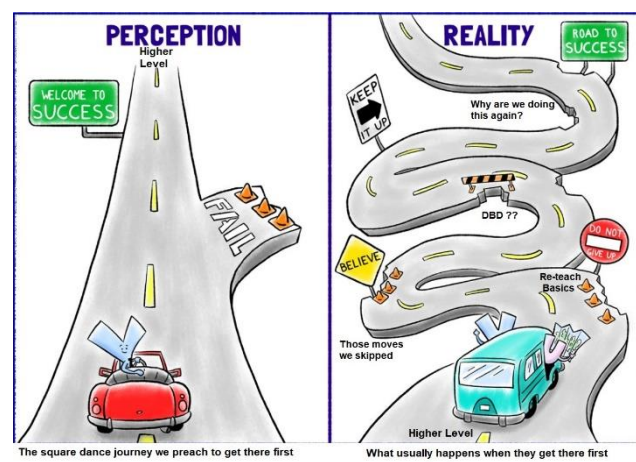
- Each program starts with Circle left.
- Each program is designed to stand by itself as a fully danceable fun program.
- Each program is designed to functionally provide the building blocks for the next program “**IF**” the dancers are ready and choose to proceed to learn more movements
- Each program is simply the previous program(s) + more movements.
- Callers must be able to call a full program dance for each program up to the program at which they provide calling for. That means that callers must be able to call:
 - Basic (48 Movements)
 - Mainstream (Basic program + 19 Movements)
 - Plus (Basic Program + Mainstream Program + 28 Movements)
 - A1 (Basic program + Mainstream program + Plus Program + 41 movements)
 - A2 (Basic program + Mainstream program + Plus Program + A1 program + 26 Movements)
 - C1 ----- (everything before it plus another 75 movements)

The following (paraphrased) quotes were taken from a much longer series of discussion on the “destination level” idea – most of which were negative. I will present a few here so you can get an

idea of the general sentiment of quantity versus quality that has become our activity standard over the years.

I will start with one that I think was the best and the one that generated a long discussion of callers and dancers. It read, *“One of the problems I've seen/heard, is that we don't provide dancing opportunities for those who have not "attained" the “Plus level”, and so we lose dancers. Are we not creating a greater problem by not working A1 as a "destination"? 40+ calls above Plus are a pretty big chunk to digest. If I'm wrong, please enlighten me....”*

Although this comment was specifically regarding trying to get A1 as a “destination Level” it clearly capsulises where the problem lies. Perception of Level=quality, and the fact that dancers have no place to dance what they know until they reach a “destination”. The journey has been forgotten.



Another summed it up as: *“Probably it is for the same reason that Basic is no longer a “Destination Level”. There is too much of “rather than use the program to its potential and let people dance, let’s throw more and more movements with les dancing and give a false impression of ability and capability to both the callers and the dancers”.*

My understanding of “destination Level” means the level (program) of Square

Dancing where people can finally JUST DANCE and not be in workshops all the time. I would hope dancers could just dance long before they are taught A1. No one should be learning A1 until they have danced Plus for at least a few years.

Most callers want to combine the lists, but it may be time callers ask and listen to what the dancers want rather than what they want to call.

One of the sadder to hear comments made was, “Destination Level” is just a matter of consensus of local clubs in an area and what they put on as advertised dances. In the local area it is hard to find anyone doing Mainstream, except as a “class level”. Given the local rush to Challenge, it is just not worth trying to cater to people who along the way

To me, this entire discussion was essentially about the perception of “levels”. The original content, how and why they have become what they are today (including the social aspects), and where and how we would like it to move. Levels significantly impact the activity and deserve thoughtful, insightful and intentional consideration. They should not be a simple reflection of popularity. We have all seen where that has led.

A final worthy comment on this topic was expressed as: In my opinion, lack of formation awareness starts right at the beginning. Dancers dance higher levels faster because they cannot enjoy dancing lower levels because they are too difficult. This is from a lack of proper teaching and not getting time to dance. We need to teach better right from the start. I am open minded enough to learn from other callers when something is done that is helpful for my dancers but why to most callers think that their way of doing it is the only way for it to be done. We need some old callers back that took

their time to teach the dancers slower, call to the dancers better, and dance more to remember.

This is not an article about the past and people saying Basic was a level that had full halls. Mainstream was a level that had full halls....and so forth. That was then and this is now. However there are lessons that can be learned from when we took our time to teach Basic, Dance and enjoy Basic, teach Mainstream, dance and enjoy Mainstream and know that you could go anywhere in the world and dance Mainstream without hesitation and with variety, challenge, success and the socialisation of commonality.

Alas, we wanted more and more and somewhere the message of dancing and having fun with what you have, and using it fully, got lost to be replaced by "rush to....". Dance programs became “levels and somehow equated as a Status symbol for both callers and dancers.



Fewer dancers would dance lower levels and over time, many higher-level dancers couldn't because they “learned the Plus Level” but never learned the Basic and Mainstream programs on which the Plus Program is built.

The other downside was that as over 82% of dancers come in because they are recruited by friends, these “higher level dancers” recruit their friends into dancing with and getting them up there faster. It is non-stop destination focus and class with little stopping until you get there. There are few stops along the trip and if you do need a break, there is a restroom in the back of the bus. For those that do manage to get through it and get to the “destination”, as they got older so too do their friends and with many more “high level new dancers” and very few dancers dancing basic and mainstream, our once thriving town will continue to become a ghost town next to the highway by-pass.

It is not just the Dancers.

Today many callers start at A2 and C1 because that is where the market is in their area. A significant number of these have never called Basic, Mainstream or possibly even Plus. Although there may be the individual exceptional caller, I know of at least three that claim that within 1-2 years of learning to square dance, they started calling for their A2 and Challenge group because they needed a caller.



Callers often state that there is too much teaching and it takes too long to get the dancers dancing. Unfortunately, there is a large proportion of these

“complainants” that found their solution by taking in new dancers and teaching two classes a year to support their club of “Basic to Plus club level” in 12 weeks.

I could go on, but all this is old news and I have rambled and vented enough. I thank all the callers and dancers that participated in the discussions over the last weeks, and those that sent e-mails and messages voicing their opinions on this topic. I hope that I have effectively captured your sentiments.

This space is intentionally left blank to give time to think and ponder.

Are we doing our dancers a justice?



“Be your own”

By Al Stevens

This is a Viewpoint article from the 1988 Notes for European Callers.

Only a small portion of caller training can be covered by reading books or attending schools and seminars. The best teacher is actual experience – learning by doing. However; this is not always easy to accomplish, and one’s self-criticism is perhaps the most difficult responsibility a caller must face.

One caller told me that he had figured out that for every night of actual calling before “live” dancers, he averaged 5-6 hours in preparation. This homework, of course, include working on choreography, planning programs, checking out equipment, practicing with new music, and reading textbooks and notes put out by callers’ note services and magazines.

The conscientious caller spends almost an equal amount of time in evaluating past performances as he does in planning for future ones. He asks himself questions such as:

How did I come across to the dancers?

Was my teaching adequate in presenting the workshops movements to the club?

What the fact that I was tired evident to the dancers in the way that I called, instructed and handled myself in front of the microphone?

It is not a bad idea to give yourself an evaluation of this type after each performance. Only by analysing what you have done are you in a position to make a personal self-analysis that will improve your performance into the future. So many of the ingredients that go into the making of a successful caller will never be found in books, nor will they

be more than touched upon in caller schools. These are the ability ratings and personality traits that differ with the individual.

What one does derive by reading a textbook and attending a school are the techniques and general information gleaned from the personal experience of the authors and instructors. Because we are all different with our own personality and ability, we need to apply our own characteristics to our calling, realising that we have our own shortcomings as well as our own attributes. A caller that tries to be like someone else will find it a difficult, if not impossible row to hoe. On the other hand, a caller who at the end of a performance can say, I did the best job



I possibly could have done” is doing muck. While you cannot be Wade Driver, Bob Fisk or Frank Lane etc., you can be you. You can learn by observation and get pointers that will help you progress as a caller, and then strive to develop into your own best self.

Round Dance Graduation – to the tune of “MY WAY”

By Rosella Bosley, Baltimore Maryland

I came across this poem in a copy of the old New England Dancer magazine probably over 30 years ago. It is one of the cleverest (and most accurate creations ever!)

The beauty of it is that it can also be made to apply to Square Dancing with a few small alterations (that I have added at the end for you to fit in).

And now, the time has come –
The time to face that final curtain.
My friends, you know it all,
Of this I'm certain.
You've tried, You've cursed and cried,
And might I say: You took a big chance?
But more, much more than this –
You learned to Round Dance.

You said “I'll never learn –
I'll waste my time, and all my money”
But then as weeks went by
You learned to laugh 'cause it was funny!
To see – it wasn't you that made mistakes,
You weren't the dummy!
Oh, no!, Oh, no – not you!
You blamed your honey!

(*) You've waltzed, and two-stepped too,
And cha-cha-cha'd around the dance floor.
The jitterbug, it came to you –
What Honey wears her pettipants for!
She spins, and twirls and whirls –
And makes you feel like Arthur Murray
But more, much more than this, -
You didn't hurry!

(**) It seems ten years ago,
When first you learned to do “Left
Footers”,

You fought her for the lead,
Now she goes where you want to put her!
To think, you've done all this
And tell her now, (not in a shy way) –
“I'll lead – you follow me –
Well do it my way!”

You've been a joy – to teach and know,
You Practiced well – just as we showed
you,
But now, the time has come –
To have some fun – just like we told you.
The world, is wider now –
And we can tell, in just a small glance,
You're glad – and so are we –
You learned to Round Dance!

The following 2 stanzas can be inserted in place of those marked () for square dance graduation or fun nights. All that is needed is to then replace the very last line of the poem with: -
“You learned to Square Dance!” -- Barry*

(*) We've swung, and Ferris Wheeled,
And Promenaded round the dance floor.
The Wheel and Deal, it came to you –
Tho' it was hell, that you went through!
We Trade, and Walk and Dodge,
And Circulate, like Arthur Murray,
But more, much more than this –
We didn't hurry!

(**) It seems, ten years ago,
When first we heard a caller's words –
We listened to what he said
Now we go just where he tells us!
To think, we've done all this –
She tells me now, (not in a shy way) –
“I'll lead – you follow me –
We'll do it my way!”

Calling A Guest Tip

Notes from the Alabama Callers Association

New callers get recognised as someone learning to call and often are asked to do a "Guest Tip". Here are some key points that all new (and experienced) callers should remember.

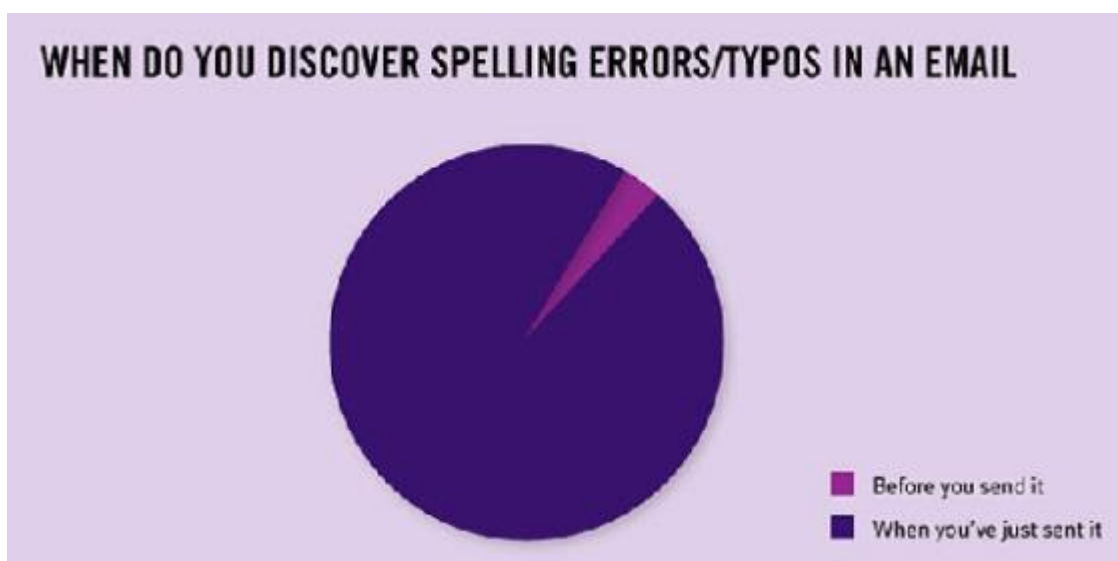
The Host caller is doing you a favour. Do not come in with your music and mic hand as if expecting to call. Be inconspicuous or maybe even leave them in the car.

Accept that sometimes you will not be asked to call. Some examples are:

- The caller himself is a guest caller. In this case he has been asked to call the dance and is expected to do so. He may ask the club that hired him if he can ask you, but do not feel badly if the answer is no. The dance is his responsibility and he alone is being paid to call the dance.
- There are several callers present. If there are only two of you, he may ask one of you to do patter and the other to do a singing call but if there are three or more callers there, none of you will probably be asked to call. Again, the dance is his responsibility.

When asked to call a guest tip be guided by the following ground rules:

- Pick your best hoe-down and singing call. Do not always do the same one. Use a rousing sing call unless you are a very gifted singer who can mesmerize the floor with your voice.
- Do not use the cue sheet or read the computer screen. If you can't do the singing call without it, then don't accept the offer to call.
- Memorize what you are going to do and make sure that the figures are easily accomplished...Do not change the figure.
- Keep your patter short. There is nothing more irritating to most callers than to have a guest caller on and on.
- Make sure that you are using material that people can dance in their sleep. They will never forget you if you call material that keeps them broken down and they will always love you if you always get your corner. They will not think highly of you if you constantly are missing your corner as that shows degrees of lack of preparation





From Barry Wonson

This month some general Plus modules that utilise some calls from less common and half-sashayed positions (Spin Chain the Gears, Relay the Deucey, Crossfire, Spin Chain & Exchange the Gears, Coordinate, etc.). Check what the setups are before you call these.

- **(SS)** HEADS TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$,
LADIES PASS THRU,
CENTRES PASS THRU &
CHASE RIGHT, COORDINATE,
COUPLES CIRCULATE,
WHEEL & DEAL, SLIDE THRU **(PL)**
- **(SS)** HEADS PASS THE OCEAN,
SWING THRU,
PING PONG CIRCULATE,
RECYCLE, PASS THRU,
SLIDE THRU,
ENDS CIRCULATE 1- $\frac{1}{2}$,
CENTERS U-TURN BACK &
SPIN THE TOP, **EACH SIDE --**
LADIES TRADE,
GRAND SWING THRU, MEN RUN,
CROSSFIRE, SPLIT CIRCULATE,
WALK & DODGE, U-TURN BACK,
SLIDE THRU: **(CB - exact)**
- **(SS)** HEAD LADIES CHAIN,
HEADS STAR THRU, PASS THRU,
SWING THRU, TRADE THE WAVE,
ALL 8 CIRCULATE,
LADIES TRADE, LADIES RUN,
BEND THE LINE, PASS THRU,
CROSSFIRE*, **(centres in a wave)**
CENTERS RECYCLE,
SQUARE THRU 3,
OTHERS $\frac{1}{2}$ SASHAY,
ALL PASS THE OCEAN,

ORIGINAL SIDE LADIES CAST $\frac{3}{4}$ &
U TURN BACK,

ORIGINAL SIDES --

DIAMOND CIRCULATE,
IN THE 3 HAND WAVE --
"RIGHT" SPIN THE TOP,
CENTRE MEN SLIDE APART &
JOIN THE WAVES, ALL RECYCLE
(CB – rotated $\frac{1}{4}$ left)

- **(SS)** HEADS STAR THRU,
DOUBLE PASS THRU,
CENTRES IN, CENTRES RUN,
NEW CENTRES TRADE,
ALL TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$,
CENTRES WALK & DODGE, **SAME**
FOUR PARTNER TRADE & --
LEFT TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$, SIDE LADIES RUN
& SIDES FACE RIGHT &
JOIN THE WAVE,
SPIN CHAIN & EXCHANGE THE
GEARS, EXPLODE **AND ---**
MEN LOAD THE BOAT --
WHILE LADIES TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$ **AND**
WALK & DODGE, ALL TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$,
MEN RUN,
COUPLES CIRCULATE 1 & $\frac{1}{2}$,
BEND THE LINE: **HOME**
- **(SS)** HEADS TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$,
LADIES TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$, ALL **(carefully)--**
SPLIT CIRCULATE, **EACH BOX --**
WALK & DODGE, ALL 8 CIRCULATE,
MEN SLIDE THRU, **HEADS --**
PASS THE OCEAN, **ALL -**
FLIP THE DIAMOND,
SPLIT CIRCULATE, MEN RUN,
FERRIS WHEEL, **CENTRES -**
SWEEP $\frac{1}{4}$: **HOME**
- **(SS)** HEADS TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$ & SPREAD,
SIDES PASS THE OCEAN,
DIAMOND CIRCULATE,
FLIP THE DIAMOND,
EXPLODE THE WAVE,
CHASE RIGHT,
RELAY THE DEUCY,
LADIES FOLD, PEEL THE TOP,

- GAND SWING THRU,
SINGLE HINGE, COORDINATE,
 $\frac{1}{2}$ TAG, FACE RIGHT, TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$,
FOLLOW YOUR NEIGHBOUR,
ALLEMANDE LEFT,
RIGHT & LEFT GRAND: **HOME**
- **(SS)** HEADS PASS THE OCEAN,
SWING THRU, EXTEND,
SPIN CHAIN & EXCHANGE THE
GEARS, LINEAR CYCLE,
PASS THRU, CHASE RIGHT,
MEN TRADE,
FOLLOW YOUR NEIGHBOUR,
ENDS FOLD, PEEL THE TOP,
GRAND LEFT SWING THRU,
ALL LEFT HINGE, COORDINATE,
CROSSFIRE, SCOOTBACK,
MEN WALK & DODGE **then**
CHASE LEFT, ALL 8 CIRCULATE,
MEN RUN, ZOOM,
CENTRES BOX THE GNAT,
SQUARE THRU 3,
OTHERS $\frac{1}{2}$ SASHAY: **(CB)**
- **(CB) (exact)**: SWING THRU,
FOLLOW YOUR NEIGHBOUR,
LEFT SWING THRU,
SPLIT CIRCULATE,
MEN WALK & DODGE,
HEADS TRADE, **CENTRES --**
FOLLOW YOUR NEIGHBOUR,
OTHERS TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$, **CENTRES --**
TRADE THE WAVE, **OUTER 6 --**
CIRCULATE, **SIDE MEN --**
CAST OFF $\frac{3}{4}$, **LADIES --**
WALK & DODGE, **MEN --**
FLIP THE DIAMOND **AND MEN --**
WHEEL & DEAL, SWING THRU,
LADIES U TURN BACK,
PING PONG CIRCULATE, EXTEND,
SINGLE HINGE & WEAWE THE
RING; **HOME**
- **(CB)**: TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$,
FOLLOW YOUR NEIGHBOUR,
EXTEND, **CENTRES --**
EXPLODE THE WAVE **AND**,
- CLOVERLEAF, SQUARE THRU 3,
TRADE BY: **(CB)**
- **(CB)**: PASS THRU, CHASE RIGHT,
CENTRE MEN RUN, **CENTRES --**
CHASE RIGHT, ALL 4 MEN RUN,
CENTRES PASS THRU : **(CB)**
- **(CB)**: FAN THE TOP,
RIGHT & LEFT THRU, $\frac{1}{2}$ SASHAY,
PASS THRU, **CENTRES --**
CALIFORNIA TWIRL, ENDS RUN,
ALL PASS THRU, **LADIES --**
U TURN BACK, BEND THE LINE,
STAR THRU, **CENTRES --**
PASS THRU: **(CB)**
- **(CB)**: SPIN CHAIN THRU,
SINGLE HINGE, ACEY DEUCY,
CENTRE MEN RUN RIGHT,
OTHERS DIAGONALLY --
WALK & DODGE,
ALL PARTNER TRADE: **(PL)**
- **(CB)**: SWING THRU,
SPIN CHAIN THE GEARS,
EXPLODE THE WAVE,
CHASE RIGHT, WALK & DODGE,
BEND THE LINE, **ENDS --**
LOAD THE BOAT,
CENTRES SLIDE THRU: **(CB rotated 180 degrees)**
- **(CB)**: TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$, CENTRES
TRADE, RELAY THE DEUCY,
SPIN CHAIN & EXCHANGE THE
GEARS, **SPLIT CIRCULATE 1- $\frac{1}{2}$** ,
CENTRES SWING THRU,
FLIP THE DIAMOND, MEN RUN,
STAR THRU, PASS THRU,
TRADE BY, SLIDE THRU,
PASS THRU, WHEEL & DEAL,
ZOOM, **CENTRES --**
SQUARE THRU 3: **(CB rotated 1/2**

We are always looking for choreography,
ideas, etc. If there is any special call,
set-up, formation sequence that you
would like to see featured here, just
send me a message....Barry

Experience

By Barry Wonson

In the past year or so, there has been some discussion in various circles on various aspects of experience. In one particular discussion, a comment was made regarding a number of new callers and their level of experience. I have always found the very concept of 'experience' to be an interesting one in that it can have different meanings to different people.



The general understanding is that experience is gained by:

- a) By doing things
- b) By direct personal participation
- c) By actual knowledge, or contact
- d) By accumulating knowledge thru practical application
- e) By observation of practice over a period of time
- f) By training
- g) The accumulation of knowledge, skills, opinions and practice resulting from all the above

Experience can thus be defined as:

1. **Knowledge or skill in a particular activity. which has been gained**

by doing that job or activity for a long time.

2. **Familiarity with a skill or field of knowledge acquired over months or years of actual practice and which, presumably, has resulted in superior understanding or mastery.**
3. **Capability related to an activity where an individual, through participation and involvement has gained, knowledge, opinions and skills.**

THE BASIC FACTS

Experience, as a general concept, comprises knowledge of, or skills of something or some event gained through involvement or exposure to that event. In other words, activity that one has performed.

1. The best way to learn is by experience – by the physical act of involvement (by doing things)
2. Knowledge and skills increase as a function of experience.
3. Knowledge and increased ability are the primary results of experience.
4. Experience can also be seen as the practical application of knowledge gained.

From the above comments it can be seen, that as square Dance Callers our experience can only be gained by the physical aspect of putting our knowledge to use in the very process of calling. We gain knowledge through education sessions, the mentoring process, discussion with other callers,

but that can only be turned into experience via the physical aspect of



actually doing the job of calling to dancers.

The more we call, the greater our general and overall experience. But here is a problem that comes when defining what we have done. For example, if we take "Caller A" who is 50 years old and has been calling one night a week for 20 years. We could say that he has had 20 years calling experience, making him seen as a veteran caller with loads of experience and knowledge.

In contrast, "Caller B" who is 30 years old has only been calling for 10 years but has been calling 4 nights a week. In terms of experience, as defined above, he would actually have 40 years' experience. Unfortunately, Caller B would be regarded by many other callers as the 'new kid on the block' with 'lots of potential because of his youth'.

The actual reality is that he has really double the experience level of Caller A (if not more), as in comparison he has been calling twice as much.

Does the shorter time make a difference? Does his age make a

difference? Not in the reality of the situation of defining what 'experience' is and what it means. I would argue that he would have actually gained far more knowledge, as well as experience, by the very factor of calling so often. The axiom "The more we do, the more we are able to learn from what we do" applies and thus we are able to change and improve our performance in a far shorter time frame.

Age only has relevance to 'life experience' -- not to calling experience.

I really dislike seeing younger callers put down by some who have been involved in the activity for a far longer period. In many ways, the concept of 'experience' is often used as a replacement for 'involvement', yet one does not necessarily equate with the other.

Have a thought towards our younger and newer callers. Look at what they are doing; what their involvement in our activity actually entails. I know of quite a few younger callers whose involvement *far outweighs other, older callers, who have been involved as callers for far longer.*

Author Aldous Huxley noted that:

***"Experience is
not what happens to a man,
but what a man does
with what happens to him".***

(The definitions noted above come from various essays on this topic. There is a huge amount of on-line material available on this subject – Barry)

experience

Modern Square dance – What is traditional?

By Shaun Werkele

In the proliferation and growth of Modern Western Square Dancing, starting in the late 1940's, there was a point at which everything changed dramatically. Many have named this change the "Chicken Plucker Revolution" and the growth in the activity was phenomenally huge. At one point there were at least 6 million square dancers around the world and countless people were regularly exposed to square dance at parties, seeing it on television or in the media.

Normalise and Standardise. Square dance callers realized nationally, that choreographic sequences which were used at square dance parties (one-night stands) could, and should, be expanded to include variations and creative and different approaches.

Evolution. Over time, it became apparent that major changes in choreography, musical content, and calling styles were progressing, and with this, came new groups that bred a more sophisticated way of enjoying this popular dance form.

Training. Even the need for "Square Dance Caller Training" became quite apparent by this time. Square dancing needed to become more stabilized and standardized, and so it did. Dancing programs were established and variations in formations and traffic patterns and methods of calling a square dance came to light.

Collaboration and Coordination. During, and likely because of this period of extreme growth, Square Dance Callers began to exchange ideas, share choreography, and improvise new figures. Spontaneity was intermingled

with memorized sets of commands that ultimately led to more intermingling. These eventually became known as building block modules.

Sophistication. Dancers moved more simultaneously. The entire square interacting and flowing through movements rather than men, women or couples moving independently. Square dance had made tremendous strides in less than 30 years' time!

Music. Musically, the songs evolved right along with all other forms of music as everything in our society progressed and grew. This was a much simpler time when the days seemed to be much more carefree and endless. Square dancing was a great fit for this period in the American culture, where people, honestly, just got together to enjoy one another in company in a friendly social setting without discussing political viewpoints.

It's about people. More than anything else, Square Dancing has always been about people dancing and socializing in an atmosphere of friendship, fun and music. Within America, a unique social dance grew from the root of centuries-old European folk and formal dances to evolve into the truly international activity enjoyed around the world. Square Dance has grown and developed over time in order to fit the needs of the dancers. The changes within this dance art form tell a fascinating story with a rich heritage which also directs the light to a bright future if we are smart enough to see it for what it really is.

It is all based upon people enjoying the company of others.

Basic Principles of Sound Equipment (Part 1)

From notes by Paul Bristow

DEFINITION OF SOUND

Sound is a pressure wave, requiring a medium through which to travel i.e. Air; to observe this imagine throwing a stone, into a pool of water; this will create a series of concentric waves. This displays how sound waves emanate from a sound source. Now consider a cross section of the surface of the water along which the wave travels it would appear as shown in the picture to the right:

This is a sound wave, in which the amplitude (a) will determine the volume of sound (i.e. how loud it is). The distance (shown as "one cycle") relates to the frequency of the wave form i.e. how many complete waves occur per second; this will determine the "musical" note which is produced.

Four Elements of a "Sound System"

Our Sound Systems today essentially comprise four items: (1) Microphone (2) Music Generating Device (Lap-Top, Turntable or other) (3) Amplifier and (4) Loudspeakers.

(1) MICROPHONE

This comprises an "element" suspended within a casing which can vibrate in sympathy with the frequency of the sound wave. As the element vibrates it

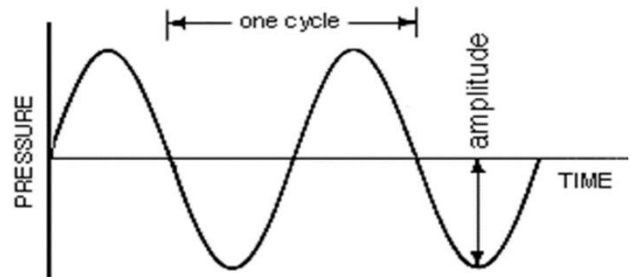


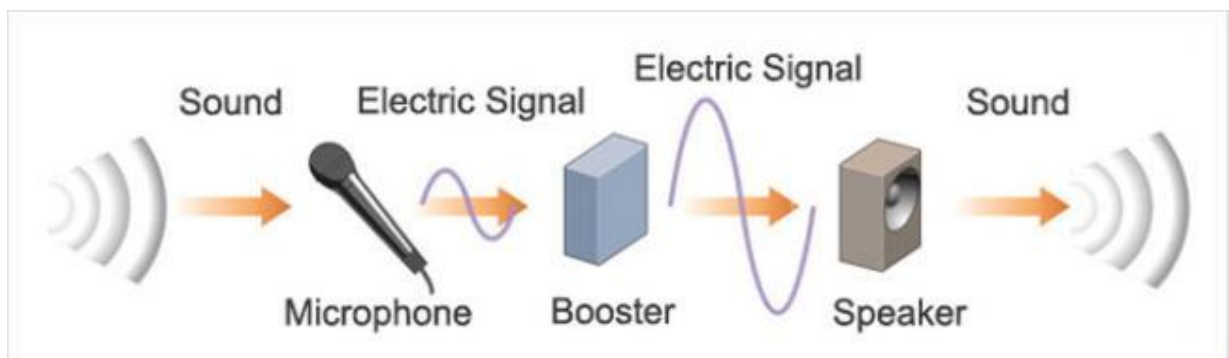
Figure (1) - a Sinusoidal Wave Form

produces an alternating (vibrating) electrical signal which vibrates in a similar fashion to the sound wave form. The accuracy, with which the microphone reproduces the sound waves as an electrical signal, will depend upon the quality and characteristics of the microphone. This signal passes along the connecting wire to the amplifier.

It should be noted that the more pure (or - if you prefer "cleaner") the vocal signal is, the better the quality of sound it will produce; i.e. if you use your voice correctly, it will sound a lot better.

(2) MUSIC GENERATING DEVICE

At present the most common device used to generate music is the Lap-Top computer (or Note-Book), this provides a library of music in the form of MP3s and - with the software that is installed on the Lap-Top - can also make available the lyrics (to be read from the computer screen), as well as the functionality that



allows the Caller to adjust the Tempo and/or the pitch (key) of the music. Other Digital music devices can be used: e.g. CD players and Mini Disc players that may be able to offer Tempo adjustment. There are still a number of Callers who rely upon analogue systems such as using Vinyl Records (played upon a turntable), or Audio Cassette tapes played upon Audio Cassette players.

All these devices provide an electrical signal which “vibrates” in a similar fashion to the sound wave form produced by the music; this signal passes along the connecting wire to the amplifier.

(3) **AMPLIFIER**

The purpose of the amplifier is to take the relatively low powered input signals (from the microphone or the music generating device) and amplify it to the extent necessary to drive the loudspeaker elements, in order to reproduce a much louder - but essentially accurate and faithful - version of the input signals.

The amplifier is divided into two sections:

1. The Pre-amplifier receives the input signal and provides the facility to the user to vary both the volume and tone of the signal by affecting the amplitude and frequency. It may also adjust the strength of the signal before passing it through, via any internal mixer, to the power amplifier.
2. The Power Amplifier significantly increases the strength of the signal but does not alter the quality in any way; the loudspeakers are connected to the output stage of the main amplifier.

(4) **LOUDSPEAKERS**

Physically a loudspeaker comprises an element - not unlike the microphone element in reverse - which converts an

electrical signal to a mechanical signal which vibrates a paper/plastic (or resin-impregnated cloth cone) in the same fashion as the original input signals. Loudspeaker cabinets may comprise a single loudspeaker unit or a number of loudspeaker units to provide and distribute the output sound wave, complete with the various tone enhancements (from the Pre-Amplifier or computer software), at a level that is significantly louder than the original input but which is a faithful and true reproduction.

IMPEDANCE (*note – this concerns, speakers, microphones and other connected equipment*)

It is very important to have a simple understanding of Impedance; in very basic terms this is the resistance to electrical flow which occurs when a signal drives (or is driven by) an element or other circuitry. There are two places where a Caller will encounter the need to understand this subject - Inputs and Outputs:

INPUT (1): (Microphones): The size of the electrical signal from the microphone must match the input stage of the amplifier; if it is too large it will distort and may cause damage, if it is too small it will not be enough to make the pre-amplifier work effectively. Hilton amplifiers require a high impedance microphone signal to be able to work correctly; as most microphones are low impedance, Hilton installs a low-to-high transformer in their microphone chord, thus - when you plug a microphone into a Hilton - you should find that the best setting for the microphone control will be somewhere in between the “twenty to” and “ten to” position (if you think of a clock face, you will be able see where these are). If you need to turn the volume control up beyond

the “twelve-o’clock” position, there is a good chance that the microphone signal will distort; in this situation you may need to use an “in-line low-to-high transformer”.

INPUT (2): (Music Generating Devices): Hilton Amplifiers (as well as some of the more recently produced Turntable/Amplifier units) have input sockets to which digital devices can be connected and used without any difficulty; the MA150 and MA220 amplifiers have an input level control attenuator. However, when you are using the majority of the older Hilton Turntable/Amplifiers (those with the larger head shell on the tone-arm), it will be necessary to boost the output signal of a digital music device, either by a purpose-built signal booster (e.g. the Hilton Audio Products unit), a small pre-amplifier, or by using a low-to-high impedance line transformer

OUTPUT: The output stage of an amplifier is designed to expect a certain impedance. If it is too high the resulting sound will be reduced - you may have to turn the volume controls above the “best” range to get a reasonable output. If it is too low the amplifier will “run-away”, this will cause the amplifier to get very hot; it may “overload” thus blowing a fuse or activating a heat-sensitive cut-out; in addition to this there will be some (quite probably a great deal) of distortion. It is foolish and dangerous to allow an amplifier to overload itself by connecting too low an impedance; although modern circuitry tends to be designed to prevent damage, eventually expensive damage, to the output stage of the amplifier, will occur. To safely connect loudspeakers to the output stage of the amplifier, you will need a simple understanding of the concept behind SERIES and PARALLEL connection.

SERIES AND PARALLEL: Correct connection of speakers to the amplifier is essential to produce the most efficient output and to prevent damage to the amplifier. Hilton devices have two speaker connections and you might assume that you can simply just “plug-in” two speakers... The fact is that you cannot make this assumption, unless you have an understanding of Series and Parallel and know what the impedance of the two speakers are. The two connections, on the back of a Hilton, are connected in Parallel, this means that - if you connect two speakers - you will end up with a total impedance that is lower than either of the two units (if you connect two 4 ohm units, you will end up with 2 ohms); a Hilton **MUST** have at least 4 ohms connected to it. The safest way to connect an extra speaker, is to use the “Series Y” connector that you get with your Hilton - if you connect two units together, in Series - you can just add the impedances together (if you connect two 4 ohm units, you will end up with 8 ohms); you will have to increase the volume slightly - but a Hilton will work very efficiently with 8 ohms connected to it.

LEADS (PATCH CHORDS) - FOR CONNECTION: Connecting equipment to a standard Square Dance amplifier, or turntable - i.e. a Hilton or similar unit - is achieved by using a short lead (or chord). There are four different types of connector, in common use for this purpose, these are:

1. RCA or Phono Plugs
2. ¼ inch Mono Jack Plugs
3. 3.5mm Mono Jack Plugs
4. 3.5mm Stereo Jack Plugs

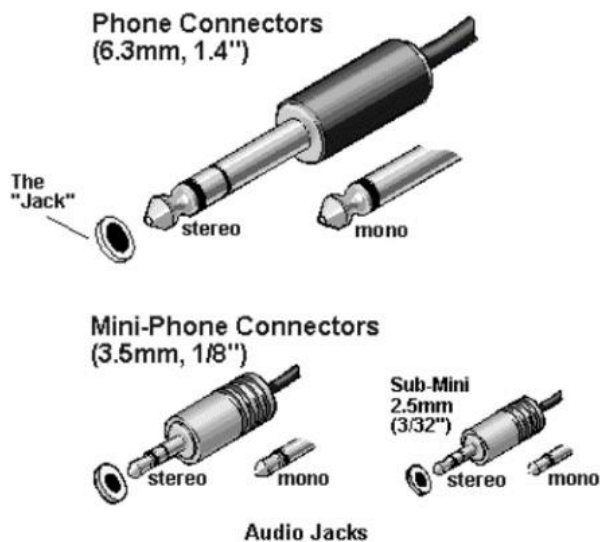
To cover all eventualities, you will need several leads, using these connectors (shown below):

1. RCA or PHONO PLUG:



These are used for microphone reset controls and some digital / recording inputs and some digital / recording outputs used in pairs for stereo connections

2. JACK PLUG (which comes in 3 types)



Phone and mini-phone sockets are the traditional audio jacks. Jacks are sockets, not plugs, and audio jacks are not much more than a hole in the case.

- **1/4" JACK PLUG** - used for loudspeaker and microphone connections and some digital connections

- **3.5mm MONO (STEREO) JACK PLUG and the 2.5 mm sub mini** - used for music remotes and extensions loudspeaker and microphone connections in cassettes and some digital connections

SCREENED LEADS: All input leads and most output leads (except Speaker leads), carry very small sensitive electronic signals and require the use of screened cable, this prevents extraneous sounds (hum and buzz) and noise (hiss) being picked up and amplified. Always use the best leads, not the "cheap and cheerful" type; it is worth spending a little more on studio-quality leads to enjoy the advantage of a better connection and a better fitting plug. Adaptors that allow one size (or type) of connector to convert to another can be useful - but - once again, make sure that you use good quality units for this purpose.

LOUDSPEAKER LEADS: The leads that are used to connect between the amplifier and loudspeakers do not need to be screened but you must be careful not to use leads that are too thin; the thicker the better!

TURNTABLE AND OTHER EQUIPMENT: The cartridge of the turntable comprises a small stylus connected to a cartridge which translates the mechanical vibrations caused by the shape of the indentations in the grooves on the record to an electronic signal for amplification. Any other sound source e.g. tape player etc. will also, effectively, provide an electronic signal, which needs to be amplified to be heard.

MONITORS: Many modern sound systems include a monitor output, which enables Callers to "monitor" either music, voice or both; some require a separate monitor amplifier and loudspeaker, while

some have a built-in monitor amplifier that can be attached to a loudspeaker. Although there are situations where a monitor will be necessary, in order to allow the Caller to hear the music (and - on occasions - the voice), I would suggest it is always better to use the main output of the sound system as your reference.

CARE OF YOUR SOUND SYSTEM:

Ensure all the volume controls are turned down before switching on the amplifier. NEVER switch on the amplifier unless the loudspeakers are connected. Regularly inspect the leads and connections and repair or replace any suspect items. In particular, check for "intermittent" faults - these usually result from cables that are breaking (or becoming disconnected); if you encounter these type of problems, early repairs will save a lot of embarrassment!

Make sure your insurance cover is adequate - should the need arise. Do not be afraid to be very firm with people who offer to "help" set-up or take-down your equipment, if you are not happy that they know what to do, thank them for the offer - but - firmly and politely refuse.

POOR SOUND SITUATIONS: Getting the best from your sound system and overcoming problems in poor sound situations requires experience which can only be gained from experimentation. Do not simply set the controls to the same positions every time you use your set, be aware of the effect of careful use of the tone, volume and speed controls to enhance certain recordings.

CONNECTING AMPLIFIERS:

Connection of amplifiers and turntable/amplifiers may be possible, you can "slave" one amplifier to another - but - be absolutely certain that you know what you are doing; when in doubt don't be too

embarrassed to ask someone - a little more experienced - if they know the answer.

SPEAKER PLACEMENT: As you will realise, all halls are different and the way sound travels, is reflected, absorbed and altered will depend upon the acoustics of the hall. Acoustic conditions in a hall can be changed by wall hangings, heavy curtains and by the number of dancers that are present; so, sounding an empty hall may lead to some erroneous conclusions.

The most common speaker system in use is the single column "phased array" - most often the popular "Yak Stack" unit, which comprises a number of loudspeaker elements arranged in a vertical stack, this produces a directional sound that is unlikely to reflect from the floor or ceiling, with a limited frequency response, that is particularly beneficial to reproducing the characteristics of the human voice.

This type of speaker should be placed fairly high i.e. above the heads of the nearest Dancers and tilted slightly to avoid reflection off the back wall and off the ceiling of the hall, in effect you will be using the Dancers' bodies to absorb sound and reduce echo.

The other popular unit is the single (or dual) speaker assembly, used either as a single sound source or as one of a pair of units. These have a much better frequency response but are less directional. This type of speaker will perform very well in halls that have a good acoustic characteristic - but may encounter problems when used in halls that are prone to echoes as a negative acoustic factor.

Placement of speakers in a hall is very difficult but a few simple rules exist.

1. Place all speakers along one wall unless you alter the wiring to reverse the phase or use a delay circuit to prevent destructive sound wave interference.
2. Column speakers in square halls are best located centre stage, as are single speakers; dual speakers should be placed - one on the left and one on the right.
3. In long rectangular halls, requiring more than two speakers, a number of speakers along a long wall with stage centre will probably work best.

None of the rules above will work in every hall, very few are perfect; the best answer may still leave much to be desired - don't be afraid to experiment to find an adequate solution. Do not change the arrangement of the speakers after each tip. Remember people's ears sometimes take a while to become adjusted.

FEEDBACK: Avoid acoustic feedback. If a microphone is too close to the loudspeaker it can give rise to a very unpleasant howling noise. You can overcome this by moving the loudspeaker(s), although it can also be controlled by reducing the volume or turning down the "Treble" control on the microphone. N.B. if anyone that is not familiar with microphone technique borrows your microphone - to make announcements, draw the raffle tickets etc., it is wisest that you stay close to the amplifier controls, in case they "wander"

into the field of the loudspeaker and cause a feedback howl.

USING TREBLE CONTROLS OR A "BASS ROLL-OFF" SWITCH:

Sometimes, "Poor Sound" situations can be resolved by increasing the "Treble" on the microphone input. Some microphones feature a "Bass Roll-Off" switch e.g. the Electro Voice N/D 967, the AKG 1200e and the Toa F1.

USING YOUR VOICE, CORRECTLY: At the end of the day it does sometimes occur that - the only way to resolve bad sound - is to improve or alter the primary input: i.e. your voice. In this situation good vocal techniques, especially projection, enunciation and diction offer the only solution.

In the December issue we will follow on with a second article from Paul on this subject.



Rewarding The Team

By Calvin Campbell

Dancers enjoy doing a square dance routine correctly both as an individual and as part of a “team” of eight dancers. There is “individual success,” and there is “team success”. The individual dancer can judge his/her own success. Did he/she get from point A to point B correctly? Did he/she have to cheat or cut a corner to get there?

Knowing when the dance routine is finished, and the “team” has succeeded is sometimes tricky in today’s modern western square dance environment. Callers often do not provide any signals to the dancers that tell them they have succeeded in executing part of a patter tip correctly.

So, dancers look for “success” of the “team” at three points:

1. When they hear the words “Swing” or “Left Allemande,” and the expected person is there.
2. When they are told, “You’re Home,” and everyone has their original partner and is at home, or
3. When they hear, “Promenade,” and they have their original partner to Promenade.

At any of these points, most dancers look around to see how well the other dancers in the set did. Did all of them dance each “basic” correctly? Do they have their original partner? Did “the team” succeed? They don’t know until everyone is back at their home position. Then they can finally cheer.

How frequently should the caller reward the “team” for their efforts? In my opinion, the dancers need to be

rewarded many times during the patter portion of the tip. This relates to how long should a caller continue a dance routine before resolving the set and returning the dancers to home position. (Static Square)

First, as the caller, you may recognize that the set is resolved at several points in a dance routine, but the dancers will not realize that the set is resolved. One of the most common examples of this is to Setup a Corner Box or a Partner Line.

The set is resolved, but the dancer usually does not recognize that the set is resolved. From the caller’s viewpoint, the fun is just starting.

From a Corner Box or Partner Line, the caller has many options. Here are just a few.

- The caller can insert a Facing Couple Zero.
- The caller could move the active dancers across the street.
- The set could be Inverted and Rotated, or flip-flopped, etc.
- Then the caller could choose to “Get Out” to a Left Allemande or Right & Left Grand or You’re Home, etc.

The choice depends on the caller, their plan, and how well the dancers are succeeding.

The temptation, for many callers, is to stick in several Zeros of some kind. Some callers will use a combination of all the above. Some dancers will enjoy this approach. Many other dancers will get frustrated with the length of the dance routine.

While the caller is calling, the dancers are wondering whether the whole set is dancing what is being called. If people continue to move around, they surmise it's going OK, but they don't know if everyone in the set is doing OK.

The average square dance "Basic" takes 4-5 steps to complete. If the caller is calling smoothly, that takes about 2.5 seconds. If the caller is a stop-n-go caller, it can take much longer. If the caller is explaining to one or two couples what they don't understand, it can take even more time.

So! How long should the caller make dancers wait for their "reward"? At an average length of five steps for each "basic", a competent caller can comfortably call 20-24 "basics" per minute of music. If the caller is a stop-n-go caller, and many are, it's much fewer "basics" per minute. For dancers, a minute is a long time to dance without any assurance that the "team" is succeeding.

Here is an example patter square dance routine that is used by callers all over the world. The example is timed for a smooth caller. Double the time if you are a stop-n-go caller.

The sequence is a series of three items

1. A get in
2. Two a CB-CB Module
3. A resolution module from a Corner Box

SS-CB – the get in

- **Square thru** (10)
Total 10 steps = 5 seconds

CB-CB (Chicken Plucker Module)

- **Right and Left Thru**(6), **Pass to the Center** (2), **Centers Pass Thru** (2), **Right and Left Thru** (6), **Pass to the Center** (2), **Centers Pass Thru** (2).
Total 20 Steps = 10 seconds

CB-SS – the resolution

- **Star Thru** (4), **Square thru** $\frac{3}{4}$ (8), **Allemande Left** (6) **Swing at Home**(4-8)
Total 22-24 Steps = 11-12 seconds

The total dance routine, as written, will take 26-27 seconds to get back to a Static Square. The total length of the dance routine is 11 "Basics."

Now, what happens if the caller chooses to add in a Facing Couple Zero (FCZ) after the **Square Thru** and another FCZ across the street. Assume that each FCZ is a string of five basics, and each basic takes an average of 5 steps. That's an average of 25 steps or 12.5 seconds for each FCZ. That adds 25 seconds to the routine. The extended dance routine is now most of a minute (50+ sec) before the dancers are rewarded with the knowledge that they didn't mess up.

There is something else to consider.

Who gets to lead the parade? Most of the dancing done in the U.S. today is danced from the "Chicken Plucker Frame". Most of that time is danced with Head or Side Couples being the "active" couples, and the other couples stay at their home position. I've seen callers glue the inactive couples at their home position for as long as two minutes while they ran the active couples back forth across the grid. That's boring for the inactive couples.

The caller should balance the combined length of the Setup, the Zeros, and the Get-out so that all three components

work together to form a whole dance routine of a reasonable length. That takes planning. Keep in mind that the longer the interval between rewards, the higher the stress on the dancers.

My choice has always been to keep the Modules short and limit the number of Modules I use before I resolve to a Static Square.

I know how long each “basic” takes to dance. I strive to give them rewards at intervals of no longer than 45 seconds to 1 minute. If I observe that multiple sets are breaking down, I cut down on the length of the total routine. This is done by simplifying usually the Setup and/or

the Get-out. I also use shorter Zero Modules.

I try to call smoothly. I have found that if I expect people to keep up, they will keep up. And they are happier dancing easy material smoothly than dancing harder material where I have to wait for some dancers to figure out what to do.

There is a quick way for you to judge your performance. Have someone keep track of how long you call a patter tip and then count the number of times you return the dancers to home position. If the frequency of the rewards intervals is longer than one minute, you probably should look at why.



Ask Dr. Allemander

by Glenn Ickler with some additions by Barry Wonson

Dear Dr. Allemander: I'm really interested in the fun and fitness angle of square dancing. I just can't bear to tell anyone because the name 'square dance' is so ...well ...square ...like it is for nerds or geeks. Do you have contacts who may be able to change the name to something that is less.... "square"?

*Ican N.T. Standit
Na Na goon, Vic*

DEAR ICAN: How about calling your square dance by an earlier name – barn dance? That has a certain air about it.

Seriously though, research shows that several alternative names are available. If one wishes to retain a name that describes the shape of the starting configuration, there are such possibilities as quadrinomial dance, quaternary dance, tetradic dance and tetractinal dance and even tetraxial dance.

Moreover, if one desires a name indicative of dancing in groups of eight people, there are names such as ogdoad dance and octadic dance,

Since you seem to be concerned about being labelled a nerd or a geek, you might wish to use a name that square dancing is a cerebral activity. How about noetic dance, sagacious dance or apperipient dance. (Actually, my choice would be sapient dance.)

In this spirit, the caller might be given a more ascetic job description also – such as oracle, guru, or mahatma. Or one might follow the ancient custom of giving complimentary titles to the nobility. (For example: Yikes the Wise, Kevin the Perfect, Howard the Mighty, Steve the Stalwart). Perhaps you could enlist the support of some of the more influential organizations, such as the North Shore Tetractinal and Circinate Dance Association (NSTACDA) or the Allholy South Side Dancers Association (ASSDA) in your anti-nerd crusade.

Dr A.L. (Lefty) Allemander gives advice to the dancelorn on a regular basis in this space. He says a square by any other name would still be heads above the rest and still break down.



- **Abdicate:** To give up all hope of having a flat stomach.
- **Adminisphere:** The rarefied organizational layers beginning just above the working level. Decisions that fall from the adminisphere are often profoundly inappropriate or irrelevant to the problems they were designed to solve.
- **Administrivia:** All of the annoying little tasks associated with your job.
- **Adult:** A person who has stopped growing at both ends and is now growing in the middle. (see square dance caller)
- **Aquadextrous:** Possessing the ability to turn the bathtub tap on and off with your toes.
- **Arachnoleptic fit:** The frantic dance performed just after you've accidentally walked through a spider web. Most notably seen when Basic is called in the Advance Halls
- **Assmosis:** The process by which some people seem to absorb success and advancement by kissing up to the boss rather than working hard.
- **Avoidable:** What a bullfighter tries to do.
- **Balderdash:** A rapidly receding hairline.
- **Baloney:** Some hemlines fall here.
- **Barbecue:** A line of people waiting for a haircut.
- **Beauty Parlor:** A place where women curl up and dye.
- **Beelzebug:** Satan in the form of a mosquito, that gets into your bedroom at three in the morning and cannot be cast out.
- **Blamestorming:** Sitting around in a group, discussing why a deadline was missed or a project failed, and who was responsible rather than finding solutions or doing the job.
- **Bouyant:** A male insect.
- **Bozone:** The substance surrounding some people that stops bright ideas from penetrating. The bozone layer, unfortunately, shows little sign of breaking down in the near future.
- **Bungee Jumping:** Suicide, with strings attached.
- **Burglarize:** What a crook sees with.

The 61st ANSDC – 10-14 Apr 2020



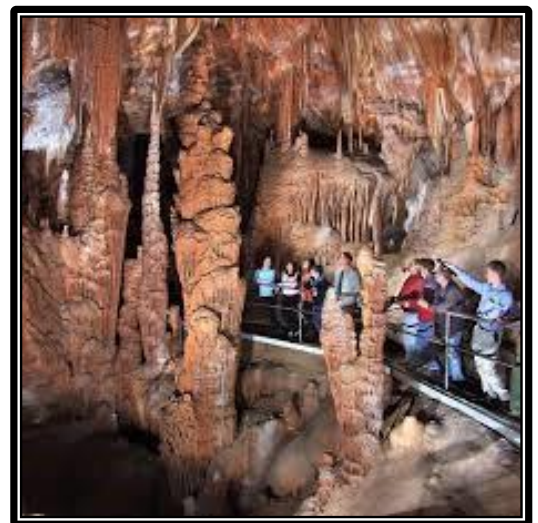
**Spring has arrived and it is time to shake off those
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Autumn & Spring are the most beautiful times in the Blue Mountains, and we are lucky enough to be holding the 61st Australian National Square Dance Convention in this World Heritage National Park in autumn from 10-14th April 2020. The 8.43 million people who visited this area last year can't be wrong. Did you know it was voted as the most popular National Park in NSW?

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A visit to the Carrington will transport you back in time to the elegance of a bygone era—but will all the comforts of the modern day. The Carrington Hotel has historically been the centre of Katoomba's development. The first owner, Mr Harry Rowell, drew Sydney's upper classes to the mountains to enjoy the health benefits of the fresh mountain air in appropriate comfort. Throughout its colourful history, various owners have extended, improved and renovated to meet the fashions of the day. The past is remembered in the restored details of Victorian splendour, through to the best art deco and nouveau style. The leadlight dome and minstrel gallery which were built to honour a royal visit and large Ming vases by the fireplaces are just a few examples of the grandeur of a previous era at the Carrington.

Come and join the 439 dancers who have already registered for this event! You will be entertained by some of the best callers/cuers in Australia as well as cuers from New Zealand and the United Kingdom and callers from Germany and the United States.



Our theme is Puttin' on the Ritz and we will be celebrating this theme on Monday night 13th April when you can dazzle us with your 1920's style. Downton Abbey or the Great Gatsby may fill you with creativity and inspiration.

So, join the fun as we relive the glamour of the 1920's when the Blue Mountains became one of Australia's first tourist destination.



Don't forget to register for the 61st Australian National Square Dance Convention in April 2020 - Check out our website <https://www.2020sdconvention.com> or join our Facebook group at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/434857693607535/> to keep up to date with what is happening.



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Cheers Susanne Horvat
Publicity Manager

Feel free to give me a bell on 0425 394 002 or email
publicity2020sdconvention@gmail.com.

THE Final WORD

At Least For Now

Our last issue for the year should be ready about the second week in December. This month is again a bit tight for us as Sue and I are heading to Bali for a week on 10th November. I also hope to have a second issue of 'Around The Square' out around the same time.

Our schedule is always a busy one, but this time of year the days go by so fast. It is hard to believe that it is nearly the end of 2019. It does not seem that long ago that we were all preparing for our computers, as well as most of civilisation, to crash at the start of 2000.

That is now nearly 20 years ago! The year 2000 was a big one. We had been excited for some years with the Olympic Games coming to Sydney for so many years – and now, it is just a distant memory! But a great one indeed.

Cheers
Barry



UPcoming EVENTS

Appendix of



We are always happy to advertise any type of Caller Training Event.

Just send me the full details and flyer.

.jpg (image) AND WORD DOCUMENTS preferred

Also check out the “What’s on in Australia” Caller Calendar

Dates To Remember on the front Page.

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Australian Callers Federation



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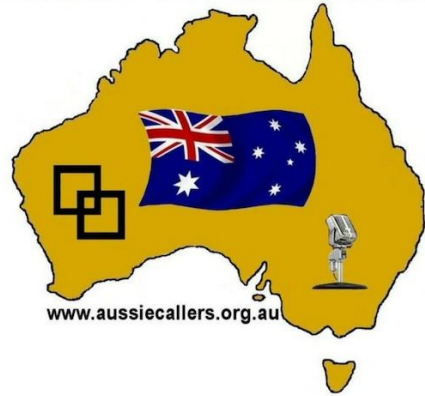
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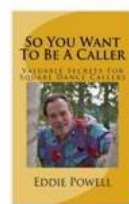
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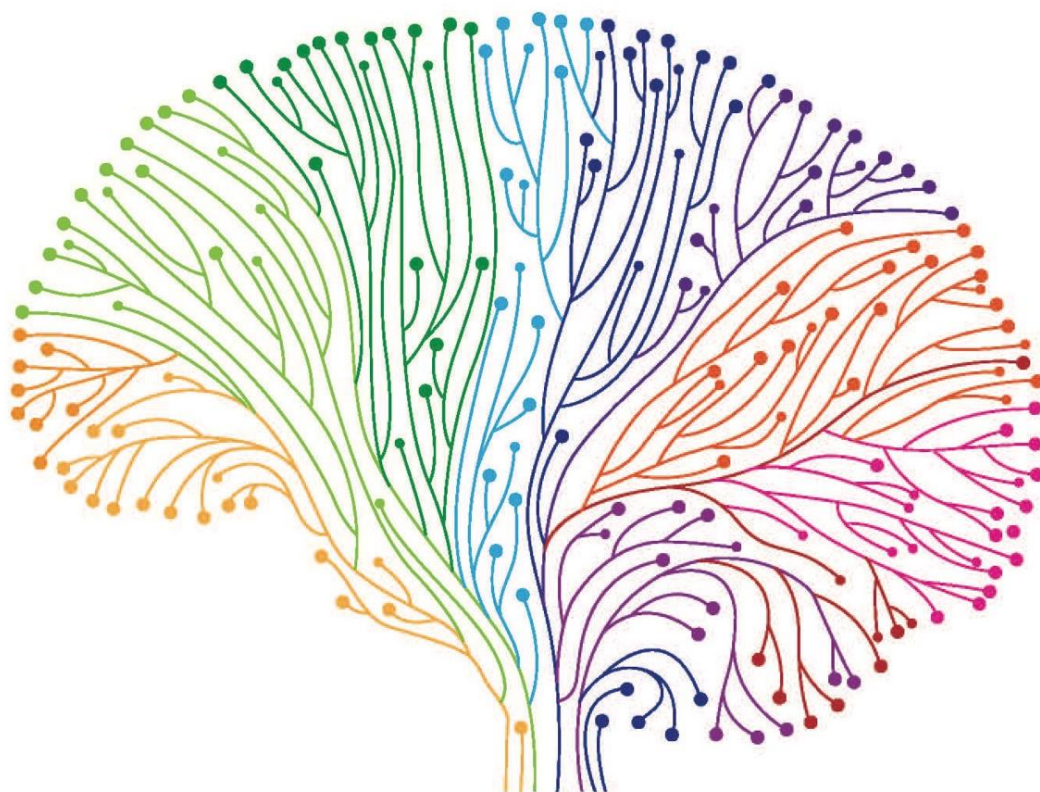
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