



News, Notes
'n' Nonsense:

An
International
Magazine for
Callers

OCTOBER 2019

DATES to REMEMBER

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

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On the Inside Track

Welcome to the October 2019 issue of "Behind The Mike".

This month we once again welcome a whole heap of new subscribers from all over the world. I hope that you will be able to find this month's information, ideas, choreography and of course a dash of humour, well worth the read, and that you will be able to utilise the material in your ongoing efforts in our great activity.

With shrinking dancer numbers worldwide, it is even more important than ever before to **share our knowledge**. By sharing we are able to nurture and assist each other. I remember what it was like when I first took up the microphone all those years ago. It was a time of full halls, many dancers and clubs and many callers. However; many callers shied away from sharing material and ideas lest another caller steals their material.

When I started the Note Service "FIGURING" back in 1977, I was even told by a leading caller of the time that I should keep all the really good ideas to myself; and not to share them with anyone! Thank heaven that times have changed!

This month we are presenting lots of interesting articles. Some of these are from the past but as relevant today as they were back then, and some from the present. As always, all the material that we present is aimed at the creation of a better knowledge base for all callers of today.

There is an even larger emphasis on continuous education for all callers today than ever before. Overseas there are many Caller Schools which are generalized or tailored to specific experiences or even single topics. They are looking to deliver tailored material at all levels of knowledge and experience. For many years generalized training was the focus and it was specifically directed to the training of new callers. Most schools reflected the same basic curriculum and in many areas, there was very little for the more experienced caller to continue skills development. Single topic schools such as Wade Driver's week long school focused on doing one singing call were practically unheard of. Thankfully, that oversight is now a thing of the past.

We will always need new callers. In an ideal world, more callers mean more dancers. However; it is so easy to forget that we all need stimulation. Our education process needs be an evolutionary one. As we grow, and gain knowledge and experience, we still need to have regular stimulation so that we do not become stale. It is only with a continuous education process where we can, not only gain more knowledge, but continuously inject enthusiasm into our presentations. Without such stimulation of ideas and enthusiasm, our get-up-and-go just no longer 'gets-up' because it has withered and died.

As callers, we do not, and cannot exist in isolation. We all require regular injections of this most important aspect of Caller Development - - **"The Social Side"** where we can share ideas and knowledge with each other. This is the very reason why we have such gatherings as our regular (every 4th year) ACF Caller Conference here in Australia. This is the reason why we have caller schools and workshops, and Callers that teach and mentor other callers to be the best that we can be. This is where we get together and stoke up the fires!!

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 til 9th

'Looking Forward, Looking Back'

Australian Callers Federation



Welcome to this months 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



Last month we presented a full schedule for the conference. If you missed this then please refer back to last months BTM OR jump onto the Caller Conference website. This month I present some more information on the Fairmont Resort - our outstanding venue for this conference.

Barry and myself made a trip to the Blue Mountains a few weeks back to run a number of errands and continue planning for the conference. Barry has made countless trips to the mountains over the past couple of years whilst this was my 2nd visit. He took me with him to help keep him awake only for me to spend the majority of the trip home asleep myself... we make a good pair!

We were able to spend lots of time at the Fairmont Resort, which really added to my appreciation of the venue. This is an outstanding place - the view from the foyer out across the mountains has to be seen to be believed. We had a good look at the various rooms we'll be using for the conference and again - these are excellent with more outstanding views of the region. The accommodation itself is of a very high standard - the discounted prices we have for the conference really are great bargains when you consider what you're getting.

Among the facilities at the Fairmont are; a Billiards Room, Library/Reading Room, Swimming Pool, Tennis Courts, Golf Club next door, Basketball courts, Indoor & Outdoor Gym (something which I'm sure will get a lot of use at the conference next year), Garden Maze, Cinema, Ten Pin Bowling, multiple restaurants & more. Not to mention the extraordinarily stunning Blue Mountains which seem to be viewable out every window.

Whilst up there we also had another look at the hall being utilized for the Thursday night dance with Randy (Blackheath Community Centre.) This is a really nice venue with a heritage feel. Please continue encouraging your dancers to attend - it will be an evening not to be missed!

Each day of the conference there will be lunch provided (along with morning/afternoon teas.) I have received a couple of sample menus to give us an idea what lunch may look like;

Sample Menu 1:

Garden Salad
Potato Salad, Chorizo, Pesto
Pork & Asian greens salad
Truffled mushroom soup
Grilled fish of the day with salsa rosso
Cajun roast chicken with rocket & lemon
Vegetarian ravioli with sauce
Provencal Garlic roast chat potatoes
Panache of vegetables
Fruit platter

Sample Menu 2:

Garden salad
Rice noodle salad
Greek salad
Roasted sweet potato soup
Beef curry
Roast pork with apples & raisins

Potato gnocchi with Mediterranean vegetables

Jasmine rice

Panache of vegetables

Fruit platter

You will see a few photos here showing what has been served at recent conferences. Whilst there, we saw a number of different morning tea's set up and I've gotta say - they all looked delectable. Between this & a scrumptious dinner on the Nepean Belle on Wednesday Night, the gastronomic aspect of the conference is looking very good.



Whilst staying at the Fairmont you'll need to arrange dinner for a few nights. The management have kindly provided a comprehensive list of restaurants within a few mins of the resort to choose from. Restaurants marked with * are the relatively inexpensive options. ** is for the restaurants a little bit more expensive and *** is for the upper end of dining in the area. Just google any of them to find more information & a menu. Or if you like - just send me an email on jadenfrigo@bigpond.com and I'll try and send you relevant menus.

** Silks Brasserie (modern Australian) , Leura

** The Lookout - Echo Point (modern Australian) , Katoomba

* Station Bar (modern Australian) , Katoomba

** Solitary (modern Australian) , Leura

*** Darleys (modern Australian) , Katoomba

* Wisteria Place Night (Czech/European) , Leura

*** Echoes (modern Australia) , Katoomba

*** Hydro Majestic (modern Australia/refined Asian) , Medlow Bath

* Mesa Barrio (Greek/Italian) , Lawson

I'll include the 2nd half of the list in next months update.

We now have a 5 person committee working on the task of bringing you this conference. **Barry Wonson** is chairman/coordinator - leading the team and making countless trips to the mountains. **Steve Turner** is working with Barry on the conference schedule/program and liaising with the presenters. **Gary Carpenter** is treasurer and also processing/managing registrations (for both the conference and the Thursday night dance with Randy.) **Kevin Kelly** is conference MC & in charge of ensuring all jokes are kept to an extremely high standard. **Yours truly** is in charge of publicity, social media/website along with many 'general' tasks.

Don't forget - get your registrations in ASAP.. 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 a lot of 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 AND Brian Hotchkies)
- 2014 RED BARONS Weekend with KEVIN KELLY AND 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 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>

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.
- **GUNG HO HOEDOWN #2:** This is another march medley with the US Navy anthem 'Anchors Aweigh' couple with the US Air Force theme 'Wild Blue Yonder'. Great melodies that should come together and work well.
- **SCHLAGER SMOOTH HD-** a great piece of music with a more gently European feel to it
- **SCHLAGER BOUNCE HD** – a more peppy modern sound.
- **DESERT WIND** – a great ballad from a very unusual Australian band
- **LOOKING FRWARD, LOOKING BACK:** a great song from Australia's late king of country, Slim Dusty



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...returns are very small and over 90% of music done costs the producers and callers money....they are paying to produce the music for your benefit, and doing so at a loss.

As 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. as long as the music has a good clean sound that has been recorded well,
2. and 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>

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

- UNTO US THIS HOLY NIGHT;
- WALK RIGHT IN;
- CHRISTMAS TIME'S A-COMIN'
- CRUISIN DOWN THE RIVER



"HANDS"

By Mel Wilkerson

This article was prompted by a number of discussions, and some that even turned into quite disturbing "shall we say directed opinions" regarding the subject of what is right and what is wrong. The topic was of course, the same topic of discussion, without agreement, that has been circling around since I started square dancing in the early 1980s. I have been assured that issue has been a hot topic long before then.

The question starts with, in the Callerlab definitions, it is clearly specified that for ocean waves the position is Hands up, for arm turns it is a forearm turn and so forth. Why can't callers teach this properly and correct bad dancing habits.

"It clearly states right from the basic level in styling that: **"Dancers should finish using Hands Up position with all adjacent dancers"**.

Well, the answer is that is 100% correct. It does clearly state that. However, it is absolutely essential that the rest of the words are read; and the full context of the "styling" be taken into account. Right after that, it also clearly states, "(See "Additional Detail: Styling: Arms and hands"; however, also see "General: Standardization")."

Too often with the definitions, callers get locked into the: **"the definition says A, B and C, so that is right. I do not need to read the appendices, or additional details found elsewhere in the document."** Callers that lock themselves into the mentality that "their way is the only right way", will find themselves in a predicament at one time or another.

Let's take a step back and look at hand positions starting at the basic level. It begins in the Callerlab Basic Definitions on Page 8.

(<http://www.callerlab.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=xwl6ZbMSMYA%3d&tabid=280&portalid=1&mid=2401&forcedownload=true>)



Standardization



One of the main reasons for standardizing dance programs and call definitions is to allow for caller and dancer mobility. No matter

where and from whom one learned to dance or call, one should be able to visit and successfully dance or call with any other group that is dancing the same dance program.

Throughout the world the calls are given in English. Another dimension of standardization is seen across the various dance programs. The calls in one dance program include all the calls and definitions from the prior dance programs. Almost without exception, calls are defined once and for all, and the definitions are not changed by another dance program.

Styling has also been standardized. While great strides were made in the 1970's and 1980's certain areas and groups continued to use styling that did not match the approved styling (e.g., "hands up" vs. "hands down" in ocean waves). In 1992 our membership acknowledged its inability to have one

styling used by all dancers with a motion which said, "CALLERLAB RECOGNIZES THAT REGIONAL DIFFERENCES IN STYLING EXIST."

As you go through the styling comments in the basic definitions you will see referenced to hands up hands down even a statement "Hands up as required for ocean waves" while talking about stars.

You will also see that arm turns, such as in Do-Paso or Allemande Left etc. are "forearm turns", not hand holds, ocean wave "hands up" turns, "hands up forearm together" turns, or "hands down fingertip touching" turns – but once again see the capital letters up top as in that **Callerlab recognises regional styling exists....Get Used To It.** This has been an ongoing argument since the 1970s and shows no sign of resolution.

What is the "hands up" and the "hands down" position? As to hands up and hands down, the difference is essentially the position of the wrist and fingertips.

- If dancers dance, arms relaxed to the sides and bend their arms at the elbows lifting them to parallel with the floor and have hands down like a handshake; that is the hands down position.
- If dancers stand arms relaxed at the sides and bend their arms at the elbows until the forearm is just above parallel to the floor but the fingers are pointing up and the wrists are slightly bent for comfort; that is the hands up position. Forearms just above parallel to the floor but hands still below the shoulders

At one time styling and hand position and grip was taught and tried to be standardised because the position of the hand and the grip each had a different meaning which when learned, made the dancing smoother and easier in both flow

and retention. The guiding principles used to be:

1. Handshake grip hands mean I am going past you to the next dancer
2. Ocean wave hands (elbows bent slightly, and palms crossed pointing up, thumbs resting gently on the back of the other persons hand not grabbing thumbs) meant I am going to be turning with you and maintaining that hand hold as the centre point of the turn.
3. Forearm turns (gentle grasping of the forearm between the wrist and the elbow) mean that I am turning with you, letting go and going back the way I came.

There never was an official "hands up pigeon wing" at the shoulders grip where you grab thumbs and pull in to speed up the turns. That was developed by younger enthusiastic dancers and was just "BAD STYLING". It was allowed to go on for so long, that it became the de-facto hands up wrist lock pigeon wing grip, that most people refer to as the "hands up ocean wave". Essentially it is a grip that should be left to the sport of arm wrestling and not square dancing.



This is the bad hands up that causes so many problems. This problem was also created by callers allowing it to go on for so long without it being corrected, much the same a plain vanilla dancing, rush to plus, hand slap and slide sideways circle to a lines and so many more things.....These are all now accepted as "regional differences – GET USED TO IT

The following was produced by Rich Reel on 5 Jun 1999 and is as valid now as it was 20 years ago. It is not a "method" but a statement of many of the various grips that were used in the area in which he was collecting information. It also provides opinion on the "what is good" and "what is bad". What is important is that they all exist and that they are all recognised as "acceptable by Callerlab under that "recognition of regional styling".

There is some variation in styling for hand holds in Square Dancing when the Dancers are facing opposite directions (Mini wave)

FOREARM

- Historical / official (Callerlab) styling
- More common in the eastern U.S.
- Still widely used for **Allemande Left** and **Scot Back**
- Best for turning - takes full weight and keeps dancers close together with the centre of gravity at the ideal height
- Some complain that it is very unpleasant when dancing with dancers (usually men) who sweat

HANDS UP (2 basic styles) - common from the first night of dancing (Basic) through Plus

- **Thumbs locked** - a gentle clasp that feels like a handshake
 - Very pleasant and comfortable position for your hand - feels like you are dancing *with* people
 - Natural style selected by most newer dancers without explicit training



- Some argue this leads to injury as it is difficult to let go if the other dancer doesn't want to (*Mel's note: I agree that a thumb grab wave is not ideal however this is not about my preference it is about the reality of what has become normal and we must recognise it*)
- **Crossed hands** - hands flat, thumbs closed next to other fingers - hands lightly rest across each other
 - Add a slight cup to the flat hand (curve) to take some weight while turning
 - "Safe" - Reduces the chance of injury by eliminating "grabbing" (esp. for older folks with arthritis, etc.)
 - Feels like less than a full handhold
 - I feel this style transmits a subliminal message of mistrust: "I don't trust you with a handhold that you might use to hurt me"

HANDS DOWN (2 basic styles) This hand grip becomes more common at Advanced and Challenge. Many feel that it is more relaxed and eases strain on shoulders

- **Handshake** - full but gentle grip that will take weight while turning
 - More common in the eastern United States
 - Cup hand as hand contact is made as if to try to create a little suction with the other dancer's palm

- Try to keep thumb loose allowing the other person to break free if they need to
- Can be very comfortable - feels like you are dancing *with* people
- Feels "grabby" to some dancers (too much contact)

- **Crossed fingers**

- Hands lightly touch
- More common in the western U.S.
- Not meant to take any weight while turning, only to establish formation
- Reduces the chance of injury by eliminating "grabbing" (esp. for older folks with arthritis, etc.)

My personal opinion is that I like the variety of hand grips. I prefer hands up for ocean waves, a forearm grip for arm turns and a handshake grip for Right And Left Grands, Pull By etc. Gentle easy grips where the pressure is only slight to establish a point of contact for the turn. I have always taught this and have always stressed, "no pulling, no thumb grabbing, no digging of claws (fingernails) into the backs of hands, no arm wrestling or wrist twisting, no pigeon wings etc. Funnily enough it has always worked.

I also acknowledge that the first time I went to dance in the western United States it was obvious I wasn't from around there because the ocean waves all had their hands essentially at their hips where they crossed palms. I adapted to the region and found, that worked as well.

When I went to the eastern US the first dance, I went to in Massachusetts had all handshake grips and forearm grips for

ocean waves. I found that calling box the gnat was frowned upon but other than that, I adapted and found that it also worked well because everyone danced that way.



Now, I live in Australia, and I find an anomaly of an ocean wave with a pigeon wing hands up, palms crossed, wrist slightly bent and forearms almost touching grip for allemande left and arm turns, as well as Thar grips for stars. Strangely enough they all dance like this and it all works well.

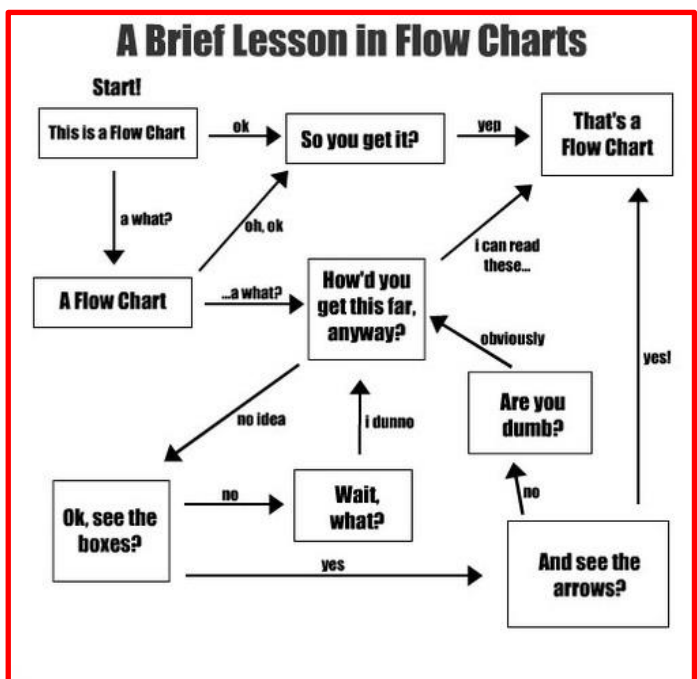
Regional styling exists. Find what works well in your region and blend. Teach your dancers to dance and the meaning of gentle regardless of whether the hands are up or down in your area. Most importantly, teach them to dance and have fun. Remember: Callerlab clearly answered the question of hands up vs hands down which had been going since the very early years of square dancing with Henry Ford and Pappy Shaw. In 1992 they clearly answered the dilemma with the statement. "[In 1992 our membership acknowledged its inability to have one styling used by all dancers with a motion which said, "CALLERLAB RECOGNIZES THAT REGIONAL DIFFERENCES IN STYLING EXIST."](#)

MAN RULES – How to live dangerously:

We always hear 'The Rules' from the female side. Now here are the rules from the male side to explain to your better half. Please note. These are all numbered #1 on purpose!

1. Learn to work the toilet seat. You're a big girl. If it's up, put it down. We need it up, you need it down. You don't hear us complaining about you leaving it down.
1. Men are not mind readers Ask for what you want. Let us be clear on this one: -- Subtle hints do not work! Strong hints do not work! Obvious hints do not work! **Just say it!**
1. Come to us with a problem only if you want help solving it. That's what we do. Sympathy is what your girlfriends are for.
1. Anything we said 6 months ago is inadmissible in an argument. In fact, all comments become null and void after 7 days.
1. If you think you're fat, you probably are. Don't ask us.
1. If something we said can be interpreted two ways and one of the ways makes you sad or angry, we meant the other one.
1. You can either ask us to do something or tell us how you want it done. Not both. If you already know best how to do it, just do it yourself.
1. Whenever possible, please say whatever you have to say during commercials.
1. If you want our attention, tell us so we can focus on you. We cannot do two things at once. When you are walking and just start talking while we are doing something else, we are not ignoring you. We honestly didn't hear you because we are focused on something else.
1. All men see in only 16 colours, like windows default settings. - peach, for example, is a fruit, not a colour. Pumpkin is also a fruit. We have no idea what mauve is.
1. If we ask what is wrong and you say 'nothing,' we will act like nothing's wrong. We know you are lying, but it is just not worth the hassle.
1. If you ask a question you don't want an answer to, expect an answer you don't want to hear.
1. When we have to go somewhere, absolutely anything you wear is fine...really.
1. Don't ask us what we're thinking about unless you are prepared to discuss such topics as football or fishing, square dancing, cars or something else. If you want to talk, get our attention and just say you want to talk.
1. You have enough clothes, and you have too many shoes.

Thank you for reading this. Yes, i know, i have to sleep on the couch tonight.. But did you know men really don't mind that? It's like camping.



Advice for Angels

By Bill Van Melle

This article was reprinted from the September issue of New and Notes by Stephen Noseck.

With classes underway in the Northern Hemisphere and some new dancer classes starting in various areas in the Southern Hemisphere, it is a pertinent article and a reminder to all callers to "school their angels" for new dancer success.

Please read through this list and keep it in mind, even if you think you've heard it all before, as the success of the class depends as much on the attitude of the club as on the talent of the students.

Much of this advice is appropriate in *any* square dance situation, but it's especially so with newer dancers. Your Lesson success starts here; don't blow it because of bad habits or because you did not know.

Callers, You are the Leader, do your part. Share this with your Club and Class Coordinator.

Be friendly. We want new dancers to have a good time, so please make them feel welcome. Ask them to dance with you, rather than letting them fend for themselves. Talk to them during the breaks.

Don't push. This is a special case of being friendly. If a class member is unsure of a call, some of you angels may experience a great temptation to grab the person and push him or her into position. Don't do this! Really --

God, I hate to use all caps like that, but this is really important. At the very least, this is simply rude behavior. Remember, the object is not for *you* to get through the sequence; it's for the *class members* to learn. They don't learn by being shoved.

Do your best to be in the right position yourself, hold out your hand expectantly and/or exert *gentle* (I repeat, *gentle*) hand pressure consistent with the flow of the call, but never, *never* grab or shove. It is *far* better to let your square break down than to start shoving people around to fix it.

Squares breaking down is great feedback to the caller (you as the Caller should see this too) about what moves the dancers are having trouble with. If you observe others shoving people around (sometimes there are visiting angels who fancy themselves good dancers by the amount of pushing they do), please take them aside after the tip and encourage them to behave themselves.

If someone is already in the right position but is looking around frantically as if lost, the best thing you can do is nod and smile. Not that you shouldn't be smiling even when the square is breaking down...

Balanced squares. If you can do so unobtrusively, attempt to balance the number of club and class members in a square. Experienced dancers in a square help to be good examples (please do), and reduce the likelihood that one dancer's error will take down the whole square, depriving the other dancers of practice.

The problem that arises time and again is that club members remember that it's important for class members to dance, and as result neglect to square up at all until they're dragged from the sidelines to fill out the last square. Of course, that

square ends up being club-heavy, while the class members in their enthusiasm have already formed very class-heavy squares.

Don't let this happen--get out there when the music starts! One of the best ways to achieve balance is to preferentially ask class members to be your partner. Just think--if every class member was partnered with a club member, we'd automatically have balanced squares.

Class members have priority.

Remember, they're here to learn, and so they need to dance. But many are shy, or not completely comfortable yet asking for a dance. If you see a class member sitting out, offer to give up your spot in the square, especially if you're in a club-heavy square. Of course, if you all do your job of asking class members to dance with you, we won't need to go bumping club members like this.

Don't play-caller. Sure, you can whisper small hints to people who are momentarily confused, but while a tip is in progress, don't try to do any teaching or fixing on your own (and if you're on the sidelines, don't jump into the square

(Note: Caller lab recognizes regional styling on hands but hands up, elbows bend, palms crossed is still the best method of dancing for new dancers – and in my opinion only, for all dancers at all levels – but that is another discussion – Mel)

trying to help). There's already a caller up front with a microphone, and we'd like to train new dancers to pay attention to him (or her). Reserve lengthier problem solving to breaks--ask the caller for help with the move that was in question.

No frills. *Never* initiate a frill with a class member. In fact, don't even do them with club members during class tips. Frills make dancing more fun but interfere with learning, even if a class member is not directly involved in your frill. Save your frills for the club tips at the end of the evening. Class members typically don't get interested in frills until December or January.

Examples of frills are the twirl on **Weave the Ring**, the highland fling **Do Sa Do**, and the swing in the middle of **Sides Promenade Halfway Round**. And please dance hands up, at least for the class--it's still the standard styling for Mainstream and Plus in our area and across the country.



Thoughts, Experiences and Inspiration from Our Readers!



From Our Readers

From Marcel Konath, Germany

This is a continuation of a large number of modules sent in by Marcel last month.

GET-INS – CB in Sequence

- (SS-CB) HEADS SQUARE THRU, -- BUT -- on the 3Rd hand SLIDE THRU, PASS THRU:
- (SS-CB) HEADS BOX THE GNAT, SLIDE THRU:
- (SS-CB) HEADS TURN THRU, FACE YOUR PARTNER, LEFT TURN THRU:
- (SS-CB) HEADS TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$, LADIES RUN, ZOOM, DOUBLE PASS THRU, CLOVERLEAF, DOUBLE PASS THRU, CENTRES IN, CAST OFF $\frac{3}{4}$, PASS THRU, BEND THE LINE, SLIDE THRU.
- (SS-CB) HEAD BOYS WALK, LADIES DODGE, MEN RUN, LEAD RIGHT.
- (SS-CB) HEADS TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$, LADIES RUN, PASS THRU, CENTRES IN, CAST OFF $\frac{3}{4}$, CENTRES WHEEL AROUND, ALL WHEEL AROUND, FLUTTERWHEEL, SWEEP $\frac{1}{4}$:
- (SS-CB) HEADS PASS THE OCEAN, LADIES TRADE, RECYCLE, PASS THRU:
- (SS-CB) HEADS PASS THE OCEAN, SWING THRU, TURN THRU:
- (SS-CB) HEADS SWING THRU, SPIN THE TOP, EXTEND, (CBW)
- (SS-CB) HEADS SPIN THE TOP, SLIDE THRU

GET-INS - RB (Right Hand Lady Box (in sequence)

- (SS-RB) HEADS SPIN THE TOP, MEN RUN, ALL LADIES PASS THRU, IN THE WAVE - SWING THRU, OUTFACING LADY RUN, DOUBLE PASS THRU, FIRST GO LEFT, SECOND GO RIGHT, BOX THE GNAT, SLIDE THRU.

GET-INS – LRB (LEAD RIGHT BOX)

- (SS-LRB) HEADS TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$, WALK & DODGE.
- (SS-LRB) HEADS PROMENADE $\frac{1}{2}$, LEFT TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$, WALK & DODGE.
- (SS-LRB) HEADS TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$, GIRLS TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$, EACH 4 - WALK & DODGE, MEN SWING THRU, LADIES FACE IN, EXTEND, MEN RUN, MEN WALK, LADIES DODGE, ALL WALK & DODGE, LADIES RUN, MEN RUN, SLIDE THRU.

GET-INS - LLB (LEAD LEFT BOX)

- HEADS LEFT TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$, WALK & DODGE.

GET-INS – PL (PARTNER LINE in sequence)

- **(SS-PL)** HEAD MEN TAKE PARTNER & CORNER, FORWARD & BACK, ALL SLIDE THRU, STAR THRU, SLIDE THRU
- GET-INS - CL (CORNER LINE in sequence)

GET-INS – OL (OPPOSITE LADY LINE in sequence)

- **(PL-OL)**: PASS THE OCEAN, ALL 8 CIRCULATE, RECYCLE, SWEEP $\frac{1}{4}$.

A2 from Jeff

From Jeff Seidel, Adelaide, South Australia

- HEADS PROMENADE $\frac{1}{2}$, TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$, WALK & DODGE.

GET-INS – CL (Corner Line in sequence)

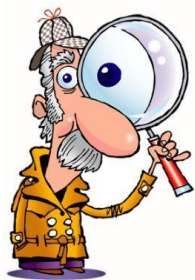
- **(SS-CL)** HEADS RIGHT HAND STAR, PICK UP YOUR CORNER, STAR PROMENADE. BACK OUT, CIRCLE LEFT, MEN FORWARD & BACK, MEN SQUARE THRU, LADIES SLIDE IN TO FACE THE BOYS, PASS THRU, LADIES TURN THRU, MEN U TURN BACK, COURTESY TURN.

From Barry: **(PL-OL)**: $\frac{1}{2}$ SASHAY, LADIES WALK, MEN DODGE, LADIES TRADE.

- **(PI-RESOLVE)** SQUARE THRU, TRADE BY, PASS THRU, **AS CPLS** -- RIGHT ROLL TO A WAVE, BEND THE LINE, REVERSE FLUTTERWHEEL, RIGHT & LEFT THRU, PASS THE OCEAN, LADIES HINGE, DIAMOND CHAIN THRU, RIGHT & LEFT GRAND.

- **(SS – RESOLVE)** HEADS STAR THRU, ALL 8 CIRCULATE, SLIP, RECYCLE, TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$, LADIES RUN, PASS THE SEA, LADIES HINGE, DIAMOND CHAIN THRU, RIGHT & LEFT GRAND.





Mainstream Focus of the Month – Oct 2019

CAST OFF $\frac{3}{4}$ requested from and ideas by Misako Salais – Japan

<p>SINGING CALL</p> <p>HEADS SQUARE THRU 4, CENTERS IN, CAST OFF $\frac{3}{4}$, CENTERS TURN THRU, CAST OFF $\frac{3}{4}$, SQUARE THRU 3, SWING & PROMENADE</p>	<p>SINGING CALL</p> <p>HEADS LEAD RIGHT, CIRCLE LEFT $\frac{3}{4}$, (to a line) DOSADO TO WAVE, CAST OFF $\frac{3}{4}$, MEN U-TURN BACK, MAKE A LEFT HAND WAVE, (ladies start) SWING THRU, MEN CIRCULATE, RECYCLE, (it's a lefty) SWING & PROMENADE</p>
<p>CB-CB</p> <p>TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$, LADIES RUN, PASS THRU AND STEP AHEAD, BEND THE LINE, VEER LEFT, LADIES CROSS RUN CAST OFF $\frac{3}{4}$</p>	<p>PL-PL</p> <p>RIGHT AND LEFT THRU, PASS THRU, JUST THE CENTRES TRADE, CAST OFF $\frac{3}{4}$, JUST THE ENDS PASS THRU, EVERYBODY PARTNER TRADE.</p>
<p>CB-CB</p> <p>SWING THRU, HINGE, EXTEND, LADIES SWING THRU, MEN FACE RIGHT AND CIRCULATE, LADIES CAST OFF $\frac{3}{4}$ EVERYBODY WHEEL AND DEAL</p>	<p>PL-PL</p> <p>VEER LEFT, $\frac{1}{2}$ TAG THE LINE, CAST OFF $\frac{3}{4}$, RIGHT & LEFT THRU, PASS THRU, BEND THE LINE</p>

<p>CB-PL</p> <p>TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$, CENTRES BOX CIRCULATE, CAST OFF $\frac{3}{4}$, CENTRES RUN, COUPLES CIRCULATE, BEND THE LINE PASS THE OCEAN, CENTRES TRADE, MEN RUN, PASS THRU, CAST OFF $\frac{3}{4}$</p>	<p>PL-CB</p> <p>PASS THE OCEAN, SWING THRU, GIRLS CIRCULATE, MEN TRADE, MEN RUN, TAG THE LINE, FACE IN, PASS THRU, WHEEL & DEAL, DOUBLE PASS THRU, TRAILERS IN, CAST OFF $\frac{3}{4}$, PASS THE OCEAN, RECYCLE</p>
<p>CB-RESOLVE</p> <p>CENTERS IN, CAST OFF $\frac{3}{4}$, CENTERS FOUR PASS THRU, CAST OFF $\frac{3}{4}$, STAR THRU, DOUBLE PASS THRU, TRAILERS IN, CAST OFF $\frac{3}{4}$, SLIDE THRU, CENTERS PASS THRU, ALLEMANDE LEFT</p>	<p>PL-RESOLVE</p> <p>SQUARE THRU 3, ENDS CROSS FOLD, PASS THE OCEAN, CAST OFF $\frac{3}{4}$, GIRLS RUN, DOUBLE PASS THRU, LEADERS TRADE, RIGHT AND LEFT GRAND</p>
<p>CB-RESOLVE</p> <p>SWING THRU, MEN RUN, CHAIN DOWN THE LINE, PASS THRU, TAG THE LINE, TRAILERS IN, CAST OFF $\frac{3}{4}$, SQUARE THRU 2 RIGHT AND LEFT GRAND</p>	<p>PL-RESOLVE</p> <p>PASS THRU, WHEEL & DEAL, DOUBLE PASS THRU, TRAILERS IN, CAST OFF $\frac{3}{4}$, PASS THRU, WHEEL & DEAL, GIRLS SWEEP $\frac{1}{4}$ & BACKAWAY, MEN PASS THE OCEAN - AND - SWING THRU, EXTEND, CAST OFF $\frac{3}{4}$, MEN TRADE, RIGHT AND LEFT GRAND</p>

What is the Focus movement of the month?

We are asked periodically, this question and more importantly why. 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.

Focus of the month movements are not always the same as the Callerlab Emphasis calls, but they essentially serve the same purpose and are intended as a supplement to those emphasis calls.

Behind the Mike magazine is a magazine primarily for callers, but also for dancers. We try to objectively present comments, critiques, ideas and opinions, and often choreographic ideas in an open and unbiased format. While not all opinions presented may be the same as that of the editor or the staff, we feel it is important that a forum for expression on these opinions is needed. The generation of discussion, review and debate, and professional development is an ideal that we strive for. We firmly believe that to keep our activity alive, healthy and growing, the development of Callers' skills and techniques is essential.

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 be 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.

Ideas to build on. We try to give a format that allows the use of the movement from a variety of positions and also in singing calls. It is important that as you not only learn from what others have done but also try and develop your own choreography which includes the "variant use" of the movement in the singing calls as well. It is the reward for the work or the icing on the cake.

If you have any ideas or specific movements, or even choreography that you feel is focused and of value, that you would like to see in the BTM Focus movement of the month, please feel free to e-mail our editor at

bjwonson@gmail.com or to Mel

Wilkerson at wilkerso@bigpond.net.au

Choreo Commentary

By Deuce Williams and Steve Noseck

Reprinted from "New and Notes Revisited – Sept 2019"

It's Fall (Autumn) check-up time (in the Northern Hemisphere) and time to find out just how your last year's Mainstream dancers weathered the summer.

- **How ready are they now for this season's beginnings?**
- **Many areas Clubs shut down for the summer to enjoy their family time, boats, cottages.**

All of this combines to slow the pace of dancers a bit. To see how quickly they can snap back into the swing of things check these out,

You will need to check the dancers "P.A."

What is the dancers "P.A."?, you ask.

It is a very important part of their dancing ability: "Position Accuracy".

Much of our choreography requires dancers to know their position constantly, **AND**, not only what position but how to get there via the correct route in order to be in the correct facing direction once they get there, etc.

That is an extremely important capability for any dancer who desires to work on their Mainstream skills, or perhaps look at going onto Plus. Workshopping "positioning" for the dancers will enable them to enjoy more complex choreography with fewer breakdowns.

I will give some examples below but here are some warnings:

- Use these at Workshops, NOT at regular dance
- These are NOT for everyone
- Some dancers DO NOT want this -- Know who you are calling to.

Best of Luck

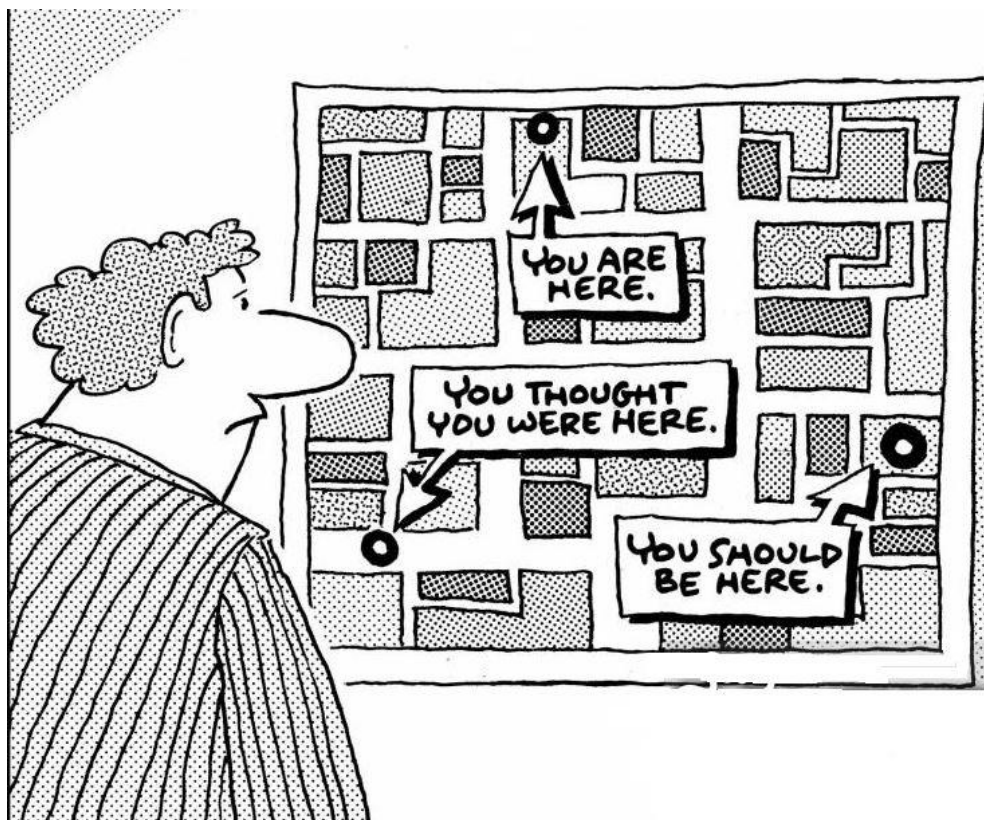
Examples of Positioning - by Deuce Williams

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">□ (PL) PASS THRU,
TAG THE LINE, FACE RIGHT,
CENTERS CROSS RUN,
FERRIS WHEEL - ALL VEER LEFT,
LADIES TAG YOUR LINE,
FACE RIGHT,
EXTEND (parallel 2-faced line),
ALL TAG YOUR LINE,
LEADERS TRADE,
SWING THRU 1-1/2 (R-L-R),
RIGHT & LEFT GRAND. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">□ (CB) CAST OFF 3/4,
(NEW) CENTERS TRADE & RUN,
TAG THE LINE - FACE IN,
PASS THRU, MEN CROSS FOLD,
SWING THRU, CENTERS RUN,
HALF TAG THE LINE, MEN RUN,
ALL PROMENADE - Keep Walking,
SIDES WHEEL AROUND,
SLIDE THRU, ALLEMANDE LEFT. |
|---|--|

- **(PL 1P2P - PLUS)** - PASS THRU, TAG THE LINE, FACE IN, PASS THRU, CENTERS TRADE (*Inverted Line*), ALL 8 CIRCULATE TWICE, LADIES CROSS FOLD, PEEL OFF, ORIGINAL HEADS BEND THE LINE (*to a new line*), SAME 4 -- WHEEL & DEAL, SWEEP 1/4 MORE, ORIGINAL SIDES -- BEND THE LINE TO FACE IN, JOIN 16 CIRCLE LEFT ¼, STOP AT HOME.

Pass the Ocean (1/2 sashay) by Lee Kopman & Steve Kopman

- **(SS- PLUS)** HEADS 1/2 SASHAY AND PASS THE OCEAN, EXTEND, SWING THRU, LADIES TRADE, LOAD THE BOAT, ALLEMANDE LEFT
- **(SS)** HEADS 1/2 SASHAY AND PASS THE OCEAN, EXTEND, CENTERS TRADE, LADIES RUN, BOX THE GNAT, TOUCH 1/4, COORDINATE, BEND THE LINE, BOX THE GNAT, FAN THE TOP, RIGHT & LEFT GRAND.
- **(SS-PLUS)** HEADS 1/2 SASHAY AND PASS THE OCEAN, SIDES 1/2 SASHAY, EXTEND, ACEY-DEUCEY, MEN RUN, COUPLES CIRCULATE, 1/2 TAG, FACE YOUR PARTNER, RIGHT & LEFT GRAND.
- **(SS – PLUS)** 4 HEADS 1/2 SASHAY AND PASS THE OCEAN, SIDES 1/2 SASHAY, PING PONG CIRCULATE, EXTEND, ACEY DEUCEY, RECYCLE, RIGHT & LEFT GRAND.
- **(SS – PLUS)** HEADS PASS THRU, SEPARATE, AROUND 1 TO A LINE, PASS THE OCEAN, CAST OFF 3/4, CENTERS TRADE, SCOOT BACK, FOLLOW YOUR NEIGHBOUR AND SPREAD, ACEY DEUCEY, SWING THRU, RIGHT & LEFT GRAND.
- **(SS)** HEADS 1/2 SASHAY AND PASS THE OCEAN, EXTEND, SWING THRU, SCOOT BACK, MEN TRADE, ENDS FACE -IN, HOME



Our Customers

By Jim Mayo

We have forgotten our customers—and they have left us.

Modern square dancing became hugely popular because it provided a reasonably attainable activity that brought people together. Our classes, although they lasted for most of a school year, let people enjoy each other's company doing something that most could do successfully. A huge share of MWSD dancers danced only with their club. Their callers used material that most of those attending could make it through with only a few mistakes. Choreography was not primarily challenging. Singing calls routinely used the same figure four times through.

By the end of the 20th Century we had changed all that.

We were catering to the interests of the most active dancers with choreography that was increasingly difficult. Callers became fascinated with constantly changing routines.



They read many of these, first from paper and then from computer screens. They could no longer be concerned with dancer success.

The trend became that too many callers catered to the most eager dancers at the

front of the hall—if they watched the dancers at all.

Even singing calls had changing routines for each chorus. New dancers no longer had full evenings devoted to material they could dance. They shared the time with the experienced dancers watching what they feared they would never learn.



Our customer pool started shrinking in about 1980.

That year we invented All Position Dancing (APD), which the customers hated. We renamed it Dance By Definition (DBD), but the thing they hated didn't change. Our routines continued to become more varied—and more difficult. We also sacrificed dance ability (smoothness and timing) in our own fascination with complexity and variety.

We are today (2019) still chasing choreography with little concern for the quality of dancing. Could we possibly increase the popularity of MWSD if we returned to appreciation of smooth dancing and customer success?

Advanced Dancing: Tips For Callers

By Ed Foote

Looking Back

The following article was written by Ed Foote over 30 years ago for the New England Caller magazine. It is always interesting and informative to go back and have a look at the way we looked at the activity in those days...to see what has changed....and to see what has remained the same

- Barry

Advanced dancing continues a strong growth. No one would have dreamed of this ten years ago; but with growth has come a 'watering down' of the product. Many callers are calling 'quasi-advanced', which means one Advanced call from one memorised position, followed by 15-20 Plus and Mainstream calls from standard positions, the one more Advanced call. **This isn't Advanced, this isn't Plus all-position, it's nothing!**

The big *weakness* I see among countless Advanced dancers today is a *failure to understand Mainstream and Plus calls*. Callers are not working Mainstream and Plus calls D.B.D. nearly enough with their Advanced dancers.

We know that D.B.D. is not a requirement for the Mainstream and Plus plateaus. It is an option, and many, if not most, MS and Plus clubs do not use much D.B.D. Fine; but Mainstream and Plus D.B.D. is a requirement for Advanced, and the only way dancers are going to learn it is for the callers to call it.

Why are MS and Plus D.B.D. a requirement for Advanced?

Because these plateaus are the *foundation* of square dancing; if we are going to build on top of this with an additional plateau, (**Note: just one at that time – Barry**), the dancers must have a strong foundation. If a building does not have a solid foundation, it will crumble, and this also applies to dancers attempting Advanced.

A1 has become an increasingly popular plateau. This is where callers should teach and constantly call MS and Plus D.B.D. Somewhat less can be called at A2, but it is still needed for dancers to maintain proficiency.

Basic Rules Of Thumb:

1. In teaching A1, for every Advanced call taught, a MS or Plus call should be reviewed DBD. DBD is only appropriate for about 40 or so of the MS and Plus calls. This means that when the dancers have completed learning A1, they will also have completed a solid foundation of learning for the MS and Plus calls
2. In calling an A1 dance, 1/3 of the dance should be MS and Plus calls from a wide variety of positions. Many callers become so enthralled with the Advanced calls, they forget about the MS and Plus calls. **Don't forget!** The dancers need constant repetition of MS and Plus DBD so they will sink in.
3. In calling an A2 dance, 10% of the dance should be all-position MS and Plus Calls. Do not let the dancers lose their foundation. Continue a maintenance program by sprinkling in a variety of positions for MS and Plus.

Summary: If you are going to be involved with Advanced, then "do it right". Give the dancers the solid foundation they need, and keep giving it. This is your responsibility as a caller, to the dancers and to the activity.

In Conversation – With Don Beck

(continued from September)

patter and while it stood out that he had

By Mel Wilkerson and Don Beck

Square Dance “Tempo”, “Timing” and “dancing on phrase”.

PART 2 – TEMPO, TIMING AND PHRASE – UNDERSTANDING THE DANCERS

During our discussion on this matter, Don recalled some notes that he had taken as well as some notes provided by Jim Mayo on a workshop on this specific topic back on 5 November 1992. I have gone back through what I could find on the topic, and although there has been a lot of discussion, the actual workshop that they did was the first that I found which actually looked at the tri-factor (tempo, timing and phrase) with an analytical conclusion on the effect on dancing and how to better use these three lynchpins of calling to achieve better success on the floor.

This material is extracted from Discussion with Don Beck and from notes material provided from an article called “Notes From A Tempo Workshop 5 November 1992 which was organised by Don Beck With callers Shawn Cuddy, John Hendron, Everett Mackin and Jim Mayo.

The average tempo for square dance music averaged about 128-134 BPM for a long time. In the 1990s it was noted that many callers were slowing down the average speed and calling to a tempo of about 128-130. At that time Don did a lot of dancing and travelling and he went to a dance which was called by Ken Bower.

Don noted at that time that Ken was doing a singing call after a particular

actually slowed the tempo of the music for the singing call just a little bit. The dancers however did not drag or seem to slow down at all and it would have been only someone with a musical ear that would have really noticed this.

This led to the conducting of experiments on Tempo adjustment and the effects it would have on dancers. What Don had found out, and actually put into words was what many of the exceptional callers of that time did without realising or if they did realise the effect were unable to articulate to newer callers the Why. That was:

ADVANTAGES

1. “When you slow tempo on patter and singing call approx. 4-5 beats per minute, then you give the dancers an extra fraction of a second to think.
2. It is essential that dancers are able to dance to the music if you do this and that the delivery timing is correct for the music as well. You only slow the number of beats per minute of music, never the number of beats to do the movement.
3. Doing so adds a Split second of extra thought time to interpret the hear the call, interpret the requirement, and anticipate the upcoming action.
4. Doing so allows dancers to handle difficult material more effectively because of that fraction of a second interpretation time and it also allows and substantially enhances for the better, “normal dancing”.

5. The decided advantage of slower tempo (only about 4 bpm) is that they can dance better, be more successful and reactive, and they will feel better about themselves

Don also noted some disadvantages but Don being Don, and working with Jim Mayo did not just identify problems, but provided practical solutions to turn the negatives into positives.

DISADVANTAGE

- Slowing the tempo sometimes created a "Dragging – less exiting sound" which didn't feel right to the dancers or to the caller.

Solution: Callers must not adjust the timing delivery for the movements, as this would force dancers off the beat, but they can compensate with adjustment to their vocal modulation to get the excitement and remove that slow feeling with a change of pitch, a filler word or a delivery emphasis on specific aspects of the lyrics (either choreography or song)

This of course is what led Don Beck and Jim Mayo to conduct their "guinea pig" type experiments. Jim and Don and a few other callers named above used dancers as guinea pigs (knowingly) and devised a number of tests (Calling at the level Mainstream through Plus) to play with these ideas and issues and determine what the effects on the dancers were.

The workshop consisted of a range of volunteer dancers. There were 3-½ squares of dancers participating and to ensure that the tempo speed and phrasing were indicative of square dancers in general and not just young dancers dance faster and old dancers dance slower, the range in ages was from the early 30's to dancers over 75 years old. To ensure it was not just

experienced dancers as well, the dancers ranged in experience from 3 years (new to plus) to more than 30. The dance material used was mainstream (extended) and "Standard PLUS" which was ensured comfortable and assured level of dancing for all those in attendance.

The workshop began by asking each caller to call a segment (about 2 minutes of patter) using familiar and common patter recordings set at whatever RPM they were comfortable calling at.

The range of tempos went from 118 to 122. The dancers reported quite noticeable differences in "speed" even though the difference is only a fraction of a second.

Mathematically if the change of 4 beats per minute over two minutes is 0.066 seconds per minute (6 /one-hundredths of a second) in tempo or music speed.

Further discussion suggested that these differences in speed of dancing (faster and slower) could be attributed to the "style of delivery" which means how many filler words were used and very minute differences in timing (when the call was delivered).

What effect does the music have?

The dances were then asked to execute a series of long calls (Square Thru and Relay The Deucey) without music. The tempo that they settled on as most comfortable was on average, about 120 BPM (normal walking pace). It was also noted that the pace increased slightly as they moved through the movements. In this it is noted that music is a control measure for the movement on phrase to regulate the speed at which movements are conducted. This had to be checked.

The dances were then asked to form a circle and promenade to taped music. This had recorded segments that ranged from 115 bpm to 135 bpm. They reported the 115-120 as feeling slow, and the 130-135 as too fast, but all dancers agreed that the range from 120 bpm to 130 bpm was comfortable to dance and move to.

- It needs to be noted here that initially all the callers were calling at about 118-122 BPM and with the vocal delivery rather than just a direction there was little discomfort, however when there was no vocal guidance, 118-120 was not considered overly slow whereas 118-120 with no vocal interaction from the caller was considered too slow.

The next experiment was that all the callers were given the same pattern record (JoPat 503 - Sunshine) which was fixed at 124 bpm. Each caller was asked to call a full segment. Once again, the dancers who did not know that the BPM was fixed, found noticeable differences in the sensation of speed and which callers had the record faster or slower.

- Discussion determined that noticeable speed variations had to do with the use of "filler words" vs essentially "prompting" delivery.

One observation that began to surface in this part of the program was that callers using more words also tended to use slightly tighter timing.

The timing differences were agreed by the observing callers to be less than 1 beat (1/2 second).

After this was noted, one of the callers tried using the same tempo (124 bpm) to call first with a "prompt style" and then with added filler words. The effect was

that this did increase the "sense of speed" but also the dancers and observing callers agreed that the timing was tightened slightly when the extra words were added.

Another caller then tried calling first at 128 bpm and then at 132 bpm. The dancer consensus was that 128 bpm was comfortable but that 132 was noticeably less comfortable.

- Further discussion suggested that this caller was less comfortable at 132 BPM and that this affected the calling making it less smooth and the delivery less well timed. Rather than being rushed through however and racing from movement to movement, the timing changes in delivery actually had the dancers reporting that at the higher tempo (132 BPM) they were having to wait more – stop and go dancing – rather than smooth consistent flowing dancing at the slower tempo of 128 BPM.

At this point a trend linking tempo and delivery to dancing on phrase (smooth dancing) was beginning to emerge. To prove this hypothesis and the way the trends were going, an additional experiment involved using less familiar choreographic arrangements and movements called from differing formations was conducted using a tempo of 124 BPM.

This produced noticeably more ragged dancing even though the material was well within the capability of these dancers. In both this situation (extended applications, changing formations etc.) and when the tempo was above 130 bpm with standard (vanilla) choreography, the observers noted that the dancing began to look "ragged."

- The dancers did not move "as a unit" as well as they did at slower tempos.
- Some dancers who had been stepping on every beat started walking "off the beat" when the tempo got too fast for them personally at tempos above 128 bpm.

At this point a picture becomes clear that the comfort of dancing has much to do with three factors working together.

1. **Tempo** (speed of music)— 120-128 bpm is the most comfortable area for dancing speed and moving to the music
2. **Timing** (delivery) – when the callers call between 120-128 bpm they are more comfortable and able to deliver the choreography with the music allowing the correct number of beats for the dancing of teach movement on time. Callers can modify the feel of the music with their vocal ranges and “filler” for the fast feeling without interrupting the flow of the dance.
3. **Dancing on phrase** (moving with the music) – with a tempo of 120-128 the dances can move comfortably with the music and sustain that movement for long periods of time. There is time to think and act accordingly with only minor tempo changes of up to 4 BPM needed within that range to allow dancers to mentally adjust for “surprise variations” to choreography.

Additional discussion revealed that the dancers experience differences in "speed" during the course of an evening with a caller who is using the same tempo for all music.

There was substantial agreement with the statement that **timing is much more**

important than tempo in determining the dancers sensation of speed.

The dancers also agreed that **dancing at tempos anywhere in the range from 118 bpm to 128 bpm is comfortable and 124-126 is preferred.** At tempos faster than 128 bpm there were many who found the dancing too fast and many agreed that even 128 bpm would be too fast for the whole night although they would enjoy it for a tip or two early in the dance.

Many callers have trouble changing tempo and find themselves in a niche range. For the most part this is thankfully between 124-128 BPM. What is nice about this range is you can easily drop that 4 BPM without affecting your music or your dance delivery much, but you can also alter the feel by changing your delivery.

it really doesn't matter how good your material is, if you are calling at a tempo of 128 to 132 BPM even simple stuff can become tricky or difficult to dancers because of the Feel. This is exponentially increased if you are a “fill in the blank space” caller and use massive amounts of filler words. If you are doing a workshop with tricky movements, this makes it very difficult for dancers to stay on phrase with the music and the dancing begins to feel uncomfortable and both mentally and physically tiring. In contrast, dropping about 4-6 BPM (6 to 8 / one-hundredths of a second per minute) actually gives the brain more time to think, absorb interpret, anticipate and react. This can make a tricky, workshop or complex choreography easier by “giving the thought second”.

It is imperative that dancers are able to dance to the music. This should be the

first principle of teaching dancers to dance and is a guiding principle that should be emphasised at every dance. Callers that are able to bring the slow walkers up and the sprinters down to get everyone in sync with the music are truly successful callers indeed. This is what Ken Bower did in the initial notes by Don Beck when he noticed the tempo was slowed for the singing call but the dancing was still effective.

Remember: Tempo is more of a perception thing, rather than a speed and music thing. Tempo is important and should be maintained between 120-128 BPM but smooth dancing has to work within that range and the success has much more to do with the delivery and timing and keeping the dancers together on beat, more so than speed of the beat itself.

A good example of this was noted on the record Green River (Grenn 12133) which was recorded by Earl Johnson at 135 BPM.

The figure for this recording was:

OPEN, BREAK, CLOSE

Sides Face, Grand Square (16 beats)
Reverse (16 beats) Go round inside the land come home, Swing and Whirl and Promenade again

We'll sail along that old Green River On
the good ship Rock and Rye

FIGURE

1 & 3 Right & Left Thru (Backaway),
Sides Star Thru, Pass Thru, Star Thru,
Pass Thru, Tag The Line, do a
Cloverleaf in time, Centres Turn Thru, go
Left Allemande, Dosado Your Partner,
Then Corner Swing, Swing that lady
round and you can Promenade The Ring

We'll sail along that old Green River On
the good ship Rock and Rye

Dancers found this danceable when it came out as the figures and the movements were relatively standardised and that was the choreography of the day – “Fast and furious with little variation”.

The dancers at the experimental workshops found it fast and difficult and when using this figure repeatedly it “felt” very difficult to dance to. The experiment continued by slowing the BPM down to about 129 (6 BPM) and then calling four different figures, including this one. The delivery and timing changes with the even with the new figures made a significant change. The dancers found it more comfortable and danceable, slower to dance to and there was no feeling of being run through a race course. Even with different figures, it was noticeably slower and much more danceable. What is important to note here is that the perception became the reality. Variety and difficulty was mitigated by giving that fraction of a second longer in thought time for each movement even though the dancers were dancing on phrase with the beat of the music.

The slowing down of tempo by 6 BPM also meant that the total time of the song was longer. Although the thought time in total was 26.4/100ths of a second longer over all the movements (the brain works fast doesn't it?) was given to think and react than was given at 135 BPM, the song itself rather than lasting 3 minutes and 30 seconds (as recorded) it lasted 3 minutes and 49 seconds (19 seconds longer). That equates to, when you include the opener and tag lines of the song, less than 2.7 seconds longer per each of the seven phrases in the song.

The difference in such a little change however was staggering. The dancers danced more comfortably and on phrase with little or no difficulty. Slowing the tempo helped and was amplified by a good delivery and good dancing on phrase. The result was successful dancing and a feeling of accomplishment by the dancers.

During this conversation Don summarised a few key points to remember and take away. They are as follows:

- **Perception of speed is a bigger factor than actual speed**
- Slow down, ensure the dancers can move to the music,
- The voice, delivery and presentation must also assist the dancers to move to the music.
- Compensate the feel of speed and excitement with vocal modulation.
- Smooth dancing starts with good calling and good calling is so very much more than just understanding how a movement works and body flow.
- Many factors control the smoothness of dancing up to and including a full moon, or a bad piece of fish. You cannot control those so do not try. Control what you can and that is music, timing and dancing on phrase.

Don finished up by telling me of what he considered one of the biggest compliments he received as a caller.

At a dance he was calling, a dancer came up to him and said, "*Boy do you ever call fast!*" The man then compared Don to another caller who was performing at that event and said, "*but he called slow*". Don also knew that the other caller was calling at a different tempo much faster than his. The man went on to say, "*You call really fast, and he calls slow, but I can really dance good to you – when are you calling more....*"

As Don thought about it he noted that the difference was the timing and delivery. Don had called with close timing and delivery which flowed with the music and makes the body less tired. However, it appeared fast moving from one movement to the next with an anticipation of execution that is not stopped.

The other caller was faster in tempo but the delivery was often moving against anticipation, no thought fraction of a second for thought was given, and the result was stop and go dancing "off phrase". Don noted that although the speed was faster when he was calling, for the dancers it felt slower and more comfortable to dance. Don said in retrospect that this was one of the biggest compliments that he had ever received.



Movin' Down The Mainstream

With Barry Wonson



This month we feature a theme of having just one of the centre dancers in a Line RUN. It is nothing difficult, but just a possible concept to use as part of a theme for a specific patter call within a Mainstream tip.

Using a concept such as this along with a “specific call” as general themes always works well. I usually try to build each tip around one or two general themes. The reason for this is that, even with standard choreography, each tip is a “stand-out” from all the others in a complete dance.
- Barry

- (H) STAR THRU, TRAILERS IN, ALL PASS THRU, **CENTRE MEN - RUN RIGHT, CENTRES ONLY - WALK & DODGE, CENTRES RUN (around the ends), NEW CENTRES PARTNER TRADE, PASS THE OCEAN, BOX THE GNAT SWING THRU, RIGHT& LEFT GRAND.**
- (H) TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$, LADIES PASS THRU, CENTRES PASS THRU, CENTRES IN **AND -- SAME FOUR CALIFORNIA TWIRL, SAME CENTRES PASS THRU, CENTRE MEN RUN RIGHT (around centre lady)**, COUPLES CIRCULATE, FERRIS WHEEL, LADIES TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$, WALK & DODGE, PARTNER TRADE, LEFT $\frac{1}{2}$ SQUARE THRU, SLIDE THRU, PROMENADE.
- **(CB)** SPIN CHAIN THRU, HINGE, CENTRES TRADE, ENDS CIRCULATE, **CENTRE MEN RUN (around the end lady), OTHER 4 DIAGONALLY WALK & DODGE, ALL PARTNER TRADE (PL)**
- **(CB)** TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$, CENTRES TRADE & RUN, BEND THE LINE, FWD & BACK, **CENTRE LADIES RUN RIGHT**, ALL 8 CIRCULATE, **CENTRE MEN RUN LEFT**, CENTRES GIRLS RUN LEFT, BEND THE LINE **(PL)**
- **(PL)** RIGHT & LEFT THRU, PASS THRU, **CENTRE LADIES RUN RIGHT**, CENTRE 4 -- WALK & DODGE, MEN FOLD, PASS THRU, MEN SWING THRU, LADIES TRADE, MEN U-TURN BACK, EXTEND, LADIES RUN LEFT, **cast left $\frac{1}{4}$, AND PROMENADE.**
- **(CB)** TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$, CENTRES TRADE, **CENTRE MEN RUN RIGHT**, **New** CENTRES TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$, WALK & DODGE, ENDS ZOOM & FACE IN, STAR THRU, **(PL)** PROMENADE.
- **(CB)** TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$, CENTRES TRADE, CENTRES RUN, BEND THE LINE, CENTE LADY RUN RIGHT, CENTRES SCOOT BACK, SAME 4 WALK AND DODGE, , CENTRES RUN, BEND THE LINE , RIGHT & LEFT THRU **(PL).**

OOPS! I made a mistake – Dealing With Anxiety

By Mel Wilkerson

This article was prompted by a conversation expressing frustration by a new caller that had a difficult night. We have all been there. At some time, every new caller probably thought, what the hell am I doing here? I just cannot seem to get this straight.

I will first start by providing the context of my first time calling in a public venue, at another club of very good dancers with an excellent caller while I was in Germany in the 1981.

I knew I was going to visit as was our club caller, and he told me that I might get asked to call a tip. I was told to practice and prepare just in case. It happened. I was asked to call a guest tip and as a new caller with a hall full, of experienced dancers, this new rookie gets up full of confidence. I had my routines down I practiced, and I was prepared.

I messed up my first resolution and had the heads crossed. I realized my mistake and focused on it so I didn't repeat it. I didn't, I called the next sequence and had the sides crossed. Then I couldn't find the corner. I called for 4 minutes of patter and only resolved 3 times without crossing the dancers. I had become very frustrated and was angry at myself, but I don't believe I showed it.

I did a good singing call, choosing the easy figure that came with the record because I was too nervous to do the one that I had prepared. The dancers applauded at the end and I quickly

ducked out of the hall when the RD Cuer came on.

The caller came up and complimented me on my calling and I looked at him as if he was an idiot. I said, how can you say good, I couldn't resolve, and they had to feel and hear that in my voice – I felt like it was crap. He told me to look at the dancers. They were smiling and laughing and having a good time. It doesn't matter if you call allemande left and right and left grand all night long. If that is what they want, and they are entertained and dancing then you are a good caller. It is not just the choreography or resolving. That will come in time.



He told me, to focus on what I did right and not what was wrong. It is necessary to identify and fix problems one at a time; but keep building on what you do well because the dancers will remember that more if they are having fun.

It is very hard to provide content and suggestions to a caller, who has had a bad evening without knowing what was called, or what the audience was like, and/or knowing what went wrong.

What I can do however is provide a word of advice that was given to me when I started.

“If you ever find a caller that tells you that they got up behind the microphone and always have called a perfect dance with no mistakes right from the beginning -- avoid them - they are an idiot. They call for themselves and don’t care about the dancers”

Learning to call is a long time commitment and a never ending process. Self-analysis is absolutely important. Critique is also important, from **yourself and others**, BUT **make sure the focus is on what you did well.**

Yes, it is absolutely important that you need to identify what you did wrong and why – **but do not forget to accentuate the positive.**

Too often we forget that “Constructive Criticism” is constructive – not just pointing out mistakes in ourselves and others. Remember what it means:

Constructive criticism. This is the process of offering valid and well-reasoned opinions about the work of others (or yourself), usually involving both positive and negative comments, in a friendly manner rather than an oppositional one.

So, let’s work on what we did well. Let’s use an example of a fictitious caller calling a fictitious tip. The caller introduces you. **“Ladies and gentlemen -- put your hands together for a new an upcoming caller and give a special welcome to Joe Bloggins”.** (you come onto the stage)

You have the mike, you set the music and then you turn to the crowd and say”

Hi my name is Joe Bloggins, and I am going to call a tip for you. Be forgiving and bear with me because I am a new caller”.

- Well you have just re-introduced yourself; you have told them again what your name is and that you are a new caller and you have informed them that you are going to call. Don’t you trust that the dancers were listening when the host introduced you and just told them that. Worse, you have also just told them to lower their expectations and it is likely not going to be very good so forgive me before I make the mistakes that I AM GOING TO MAKE AND YOU BREAK DOWN TO. You have already told the dancers that you are going to mess up, so they are expecting bad calling.

Do you think a better response might have been something like, *“Thank you for having me, it is a real pleasure to be able to get experience with such good dancers. Here we go…….”*

Are you prepared:

In preparing for this dance you sat down and you thought about what you were going to call and you decided that you were going to make sure your choreography worked so you said, “I know how to resolve **IF I GET LOST**, but, I am not going to sight call yet so I am going to use modules and sequences that I know work. I am going to focus on **Spin The Top** as my theme for the tip.

You programmed your material for your patter as follows:

- **OPENER**, to let them get use to my voice

- **FIGURE ONE** to get them used to my timing – simple figure to allemande left,
- **FIGURE 2**, a module get-in to a corner box, a corner box module, and a cb get out to allemande left – that should get everyone with me
- **FIGURE 3** – I was at a dance with caller “X”. He did this nifty figure and I wrote it down, so I am going to do the same thing. Most of these dancers were there so it should be no problem
- **FIGURE 4**. programmed choreography that is good and works. I have checked it out on my computer, and I know it works and times out perfectly.
- **FIGURE 5**. Get-in to a CB, CB-PL module, a figure using the nifty figure again to finish.
- **SINGING CALL** – that uses my focus figure

I have now prepared my material. I have used SQDDY or Caller Helper or whatever program to ensure that my choreography is doable. I have typed it in for timing and that the movements can be done from those positions. I have practiced all this for a week and then double checked everything on my computer to make sure it works and practiced it some more. I will also have the figures written on my computer screen to display so I can refresh my memory at a glance.

You start to call:

OPENER:

- FOUR LADIES CHAIN $\frac{3}{4}$,
CIRCLE LEFT, MEN CENTRE,
LADIES SASHAY, CIRCLE LEFT,
MEN MAKE A RH STAR,
PASS YOUR PARTNER,

ALLEMANDE LEFT CORNER,
TURN PARTNER RIGHT,
ALLEMANDE LEFT,
TO AN ALLEMANDE THAR,
SLIP THE CLUTCH,
WALK BY ONE,
ALLEMANDE LEFT,
RIGHT & LEFT GRAND,
PROMENADE

FIGURE ONE – SIMPLE ROUTINE TO AN ALEMANDE LEFT

- HEADS STAR THRU,
DOUBLE PASS THRU,
U-TURN BACK,
CENTRES PASS THRU, DOSADO,
SPIN THE TOP,
RIGHT & LEFT THRU,
PASS THRU, WHEEL & DEAL,
CENTRES SQUARE THRU 3,
ALLEMANDE LEFT,
RIGHT & LEFT GRAND,
PROMENADE.

FIGURE 2 – GET IN TO CB, CB MODULE, GET OUT TO RLG

- **GET IN TO CB:** (H) SWING THRU,
SPIN THE TOP, PASS THRU (**CB**)
- **CB-CB:** SWING THRU,
SPIN THE TOP, PASS THRU,
BEND THE LINE, SLIDE THRU,
RIGHT & LEFT THRU (**CB**)
- **CB-RESOLVE:** PASS THE OCEAN,
LADIES RUN, LADIES STEP THRU,
LADIES CLOVERLEAF, **MEN - (slide together)** SPIN THE TOP, EXTEND,
MEN RUN, STAR THRU,
PASS THRU, TRADE BY,
SQUARE THRU 3,
ALLEMANDE LEFT

FIGURE 3 – MY WOW FIGURE!! – DIFFERENT SPIN THE TOPS

- (S)LADIES CHAIN,
(H) BOX THE GNAT, **SPIN THE TOP**,
MEN TRADE, EXTEND,
RIGHT & LEFT THRU, TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$,
CENTRES TRADE, **Everybody -**
SPIN THE TOP, **CENTRE FOUR -**
SPIN THE TOP,
VERY CENTRE BOY ONLY RUN,
LADIES (Slide Together) &
SPIN THE TOP, **MEN --**
IN YOUR OWN 4 CROSS RUN,
(**slide apart girls**) CENTRE COUPLES
-- WHEEL & DEAL,
OTHERS (slide together) &
SPIN THE TOP, RECYCLE,
ALLEMANDE LEFT,
RIGHT & LEFT GRAND, HOME

FIGURE 4 – EASIER SPIN THE TOP TO RELAX

- (H) SLIDE THRU, PASS THRU,
SWING THRU, MEN CROSS RUN,
SPIN THE TOP, CAST OFF $\frac{3}{4}$,
EVERYBODY ZOOM 1 & $\frac{1}{2}$,
SCOOT BACK, **JUST THE ENDS -**
ZOOM, EXTEND,
RIGHT & LEFT GRAND,

FIGURE 5 – GET IN TO CB, CB-PL, PL-RESOLVE

- **SS-CB:**(H) BOX THE GNAT,
SLIDE THRU, SWING THRU,
SPIN THE TOP, SLIDE THRU (**CB**),
- **CB-PL** MODULE: SWING THRU,
LADIES CIRCULATE,
SPIN THE TOP, RECYCLE,
REVERSE FLUTTERWHEEL (**PL**)
- **PL-Resolve:** ENDS TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$,
CENTRE FOUR **SPIN THE TOP**,
JUST THE OUTSIDE 6 --
WALK & DODGE,
CENTRES RECYCLE,
EVERYBODY TRADE BY ,
PASS TO THE CENTRE,
LEFT SQUARE THRU 3,

BOX THE GNAT, PASS THRU,
RIGHT & LEFT GRAND

SINGING CALL – USING THE TWO SPIN THE TOPS AGAIN

- 4 LADIES CHAIN, (H) LEAD LEFT,
RIGHT & LEFT THRU, TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$,
CENTRES TRADE, **SPIN THE TOP**,
MEN SPIN THE TOP, STEP THRU,
SWING CORNER, PROMENADE

You have prepared and checked your choreography and tested it on the computer and practiced it. You were well prepared and let's say for sake of argument, you are one of those exceptional callers with a good memory and you only had to have a quick glance at your screen to refresh your memory without reading it.

You have practiced; checked, double checked, practiced some more and you are ready.

Now let's look at how all that preparation above has gone when you put it into practice.

“THE DREAM VERSUS REALITY”

You are introduced and you begin calling. You humble yourself with the introduction you have made; but it is false bravado because you know your material and you have checked it and it is good stuff. They will see how good you are. (*ooooh – confidence is one thing, but cockiness is another*)

You start calling and, the opener goes fine. The first figure goes really well, and the dancers are moving great. The second figure goes really well too, but you noted you had to say slide together on that spin the top with the boys. No problem the dancers adjusted very quickly. It was a little choppy, but it went surprisingly well.

You repeated it starting with the sides and the second went well again. Now you think it is time to wow the dancers at your choreography.

- Suddenly you called Extend, Right and Left Thru, and the dancers hesitated and lost the beat of the music.
- You correct quickly and call Touch ¼ and start to say Centres Trade, but half the floor starts a Scoot Back like they expected that instead.
- You call Spin the Top, and they get that and
- then you call Centres Spin THE Top and they get that,
- you call Centre Boys Run but it is 4 boys in the center wave and they let go, shuffle around a bit, look at each other and realize ahhh... you meant just the very centre boys only run around the end boys...they fix it for you.
- You have to tell them to slide apart because you only wanted the two boys in the middle to move because
- the girls have to slide together and make a wave now to Spin the Top.
- You get that fixed and call Boys Cross Run but tell them to make sure you are in your own four....but the boys are going the same direction and the girls have to slide apart and one pair is in a mini-wave and the other is a couple...is that what you meant?
- You call Centre Couples - Wheel and Deal (ahhh that is recognisable so we know what to do),

- others Spin The Top....ummm oh yeah – we have to slide together to make that wave I remember now...
- then Recycle to a static square Allemande Left...(whew that was just weird and awkward).



As a caller we are now thinking , “We prepared our material and practiced it. We know it works and is good but the dancers just aren’t getting it”. – frustration and anxiety begins to creep in.)

About this point you are wondering “what happened?”, so you decide to show that your choreography works. After all, you checked it on your computer, and you practiced it for a whole week. You say, “Let’s try that again”. and you walk them through it step by step.....

You finish but your now 7 minutes into your 4 minute patter and you decide to leave it there. You are hot under the collar and a bit miffed at yourself. But; at least you got them through it and they know it works. They have it, so you do your singing call. Now you are really flustered and nervous, but the dancers give you polite applause – after all, you

did tell them at the beginning to be forgiving because you are new.

You now do your singing call. It goes well and you make sure you deliver it with the choreography over emphasizing what you want and the two Spin the Tops and it all works. The dancers applaud and cheer you and you leave the stage thinking, **“Well, that was a really crappy tip”**.

Your mind may be thinking something like: I heard “big name caller” call that same wow sequence I had in figure 3 two weeks ago. He only had to give two prompts, slide together and very centre boys (yeah, I said “centre boys” not “very centre boys” but there are only two centre boys in that wave.)

THE AFTERMATH

The host caller comes up to you and says thank you, you did a good job. You of course look at him because you think he is patronizing you. You say, I don't understand it, I know the choreography works and times out, I checked it and practiced it. I don't know what happened. Maybe this isn't for me.

That caller with more experience now has an opportunity to make or break you. First, he has told you did well. Accept it. He/she is talking to you in private and is telling you what is good. He/she is also giving you an opportunity, and if you want to know more, or if you want help or suggestions, they know you will ask.

Here is a hint: **ASK !!!!**

A good caller will tell you first off that what you did was correct (if it was) and point out your strengths and what went right. You will get praise. Then they may say, let's look at your material and see if there is something in it that

happened. Ahhh, I see...your material is fine, but the dancers had no prior preparation to know what you were going to do. That material is quite complex to call cold. If I had known, I might have done a few Spin The Tops from Left Hand Waves, or had them slide together to set you up for success. You told them that you were new and not to expect much, so they expected simple and anticipated it. You gave them something other than what they expected.

Your material is actually really good; but some of that really needs to have the dancers prepared first. Mind you, I would like to borrow that because I like the idea that you have (**Note: all callers research other callers materials into their repertoire. If an experienced caller tells you he wants that take it as a sincere compliment because it is.**).

Let's look at the other stuff though.

- You did well in the sequencing in the opening. You got them moving to the music and gave them time to hear you and move to you. It was really good and not repetitive or time wasting. Many new callers call a grand square to fill in time. You had them dancing well and moving and listening. That was really well done.
- The first figure you did was short and sweet. I tell that you set Spin The Top as your focus then because of how you emphasized it.
- Your second figure was a nice little get in and a nice little zero. I also really like that get out you used. It was just a little bit different. You told them to slide together the first time and it was just a little choppy with the slide together and Spin The Top but they got it the rest flows really well. It was also fantastic that you gave

them that success by repeating it for the sides. I noticed you got to the corner box differently but used the same get out and told them to slide together as part of the flow. It was really nicely done **and by the way I am stealing that too.**

- Your singing call also was really well delivered, and I liked that you used the two Spin The Tops which were fairly easy but just a little different. Good success, and you can really tell that from the way the dancers perked up. That showed that they understood what you were doing. It was a good choice to step thru to the corner rather than slide together and such. It was different but although it sounded difficult, the dancers couldn't help but succeed on it. Very well done. I am keeping that figure too by the way.
- I noticed throughout, that you had good right hand left hand flow. - Good movement selection and good direction changes. There was no overflow and the dancers enjoyed it. That is something few new callers really pay attention to at the start.
- Overall, I think your timing and delivery was pretty good and it showed in your singing call. At the beginning it was on the beat and the dancers were dancing on phrase. They moved with the music and I called giving them the down beat. Keep that up it is really good to be able to do that.
- I think your music choice was good too. You had good upbeat music that wasn't overpowering and had a good beat for the dancers to move to. You selected a good choice of music for your patter; and your singing call

complimented it well. I would look for more in that range and selection

At this point you are probably thinking:

"What the hell is he talking about? OH MY GOD was he even watching the same tip I was calling? When I started to do all that choreography that I practiced and ran through the computer it didn't work. I know it works and I made sure it worked on paper, but the dancers still broke down and I had to explain it 3 times to get them through it. I didn't even finish my routine. Everything went to crap especially, and it started on that right and left thru. After that the dancers couldn't dance, and the timing was off, and I couldn't recover them. it was frustrating and the dancers were frustrated God I hate myself when that happens. Why am I putting myself through this"?

The reason is, because that is what you are likely focused on without asking yourself why is what went wrong. What that other caller (and it should be yourself as well) is doing is telling you what was right and what was good. Then they will tell you, and help you identify a problem(s) and maybe offer suggestions to start to deal with it/them.

They initially answered your question about your choreography by deflecting it but haven't identified it yet. Now is the time that you should be saying, "thank you for that, I really didn't think about what was good. It just felt bad and I wasn't sure how to get out that mess".

The caller talking to you should be now ready to say something like, "*Square dance calling is like downhill skiing, you can go really fast first time out and not fall but like all skiers you will fall and explode on impact. – well that is what it feels like anyway. The secret to*

remember is that if you never fall skiing, then you are never trying to get better. It is the same with calling. If you never make a mistake, then you are not trying to learn and get better”.

Let's look and identify what you think is a problem and making sure you don't repeat what you did until you have found a solution. You did so much right that worked and I could go on with that for a while, but as you like, let's so identify what you did wrong, don't do it anymore and fix those issues one by one as you learn and grow. For example:

You called some pretty complex stuff there. I am sure the choreography probably works but the dancers were not ready for it. Here is a way to fix that:

1. If you have an idea – present them one at a time
2. If you are calling a guest tip do not workshop or do something that needs workshopping unless you discuss it with the club caller beforehand.
3. Let him/her know what you are looking to do, especially as a new caller. That way if some preparation is needed, they can do some stuff beforehand for you to assist preparing the dancers for that flow.
4. As a general rule, do not get too tricky or complex. Especially if only doing a guest tip. What you did on that second figure was a little tricky but successful, and you repeated it giving the dancers success. They were pleased and surprised and actually a bit wowed because you told them you weren't that good. That would have been a good place to stop. You should never go past that line on a guest tip. **(Note: notice how the caller advised what he**

did in his third workshopping tip as a mistake but explained it with a positive reinforcement. You need to be self-critical as well but use the same method. Identify the problem and look at how to fix it.)

5. You did a lot of spin the tops. No problem with that, but you really want to level out what you do. I noticed that you had two other figures written down there. One used a left hand spin the top and the other used a 6 person walk and dodge concept. Both are doable but I think you made a great choice by not using that material. It would have just clouded what you were trying to do with slide together spin the top and the spin the top, center 4 spin the top. Both of those worked well by the way. **(Again; this caller probably knew you were having trouble and rather than point out negativity in the other prepared material, instead complimented you on your choice not to use it. He identified a problem and gave you a solution to fix it before you exposed it to the dancers.)**

When doing self-critique look at what you do right first. Then identify your problems and see if you can find a solution. Set them aside and work on them one by one. Do not do them again until you have a solution. Ask yourself questions like why it didn't work; for example:

- Is it possible that the material worked for caller X because he was ready and prepared the dancers, but I did not?

Solution: prepare the dancers with similar material and flow before introducing a concept

- Is it possible that Caller X knew, prepared and practiced his material and had time to introducing it moving from the known to the unknown but I wrote mine out and it was on the card (computer screen in front of me)?

Solution: Do not introduce new or workshop or context material unless I have time to prepare both myself and the dancers to succeed at it

- Caller X presented with confidence, and only had to quickly prompt them through the sequence. I was nervous and did the same but then I had to stop and teach it and walk them through it three times and by that time everyone could feel that I was having problems and I could hear it through the microphone. I just wanted to quit.

Solution: as with the above material, work and present for the dancer ability. Don't introduce more than one complex idea at a time per tip. Call to give the dancers success and be confident with the material. Check it all and not just my focus movement but everything that surrounds it. I may have missed something.

- Caller X started simple and brought the dancers to him - I was doing a guest tip and I tried to call weird and complex choreography that I know works but the dancers had trouble with.....they should know the definitions shouldn't they. I know it and it works....why can't they – WHAT AM I DOING WRONG?

Solution: stop trying to be caller x. Learn from him/her and take the good and make it yours. BUT be the best you can be. Start small and build a good foundation to start from.

Caller X has a large base foundation of choreography that he/she has learned and built over years of practice and use and developed the confidence an ability to bring the dancers to him/her. Build your own foundation first, then build the house, then you can decorate. You cannot decorate the house unless it is built first, and you cant build a house without a foundation and expect it to last. Likewise – **Remember:**

knowing the definitions as a dancer is NOT/NOT the same as knowing the definitions as a caller

- I checked my choreography on the computer and it works SO I KNOW THE CHOREOGRAPHY IS GOOD. Why cant the dancers do it?

Problem: I have not got up from the computer and walked myself through it or pushed the checkers through it so I can judge how complex it is. The computer tells me I can do it from this position and gives me choices and selections to write choreography. It displays animation and I can see they all get home and what the timing is. The definition is right, and the movement is correct. Why doesn't it work?

Solution. Understand that dancers are not computer programs. There is nothing wrong with using a computer to check your work. It is however more important to understand your work as a dancer and as a caller. **Get off the chair, away from the computer and check it out with checkers. Get up and walk through it as a dancer with phantoms and see what you are doing.** You will never understand the choreography you write, or even the stuff you acquire

unless you get a good sense of it and how it works and flows.

Checkers will help you see and feel and understand the flow. If you have trouble moving your checkers through it then chances are the dancers may have trouble understanding what you want. Your computer will say that Heads Left Square Thru, Right And Left Thru, Star Thru, Start Thru, Box The Gnat, Allemande Left With A Full Turn Right And Left Grand is fine because all the movements are legal. Try it. Do you want to dance technically legal, or do you want smooth and flowing. Also ensure the movements you are going to introduce have a relationship to the movements that come before it. If they don't, and the dancers are having trouble, ask, is it possible I set the dances up to fail?

Wade Driver, one of the masters of delivery and calling in general, put a statement in a Newbie Caller post on Facebook that said something like

"Attention New Callers"

**You are not as good
as you think you are.**

There was no embellishment or clarification just a bold and solid statement.

It generated a lot of discussion, both on and off the social media page. I would advise all new callers to take that statement with strong reverence. If someone like Wade Driver is trying to impart an important lesson with just a simple statement, it is well worth listening to. I would also dare to add, once you realize that simple truth from Wade, focus and develop what you do correctly and take pride in it, and develop and accentuate the positive.

Constructive criticism points out the positive, accentuates it and inspires you to build on it. It identifies potential weaknesses and helps find solutions to overcome those. The rest of the stuff will come with time and practice. Don't let the negative consume you but; address it one thing at a time. If you focus on the negative, you will stop development.

- Focus on the positive and develop those skills
- Identify problems and why – don't repeat them
- Address them one at a time – find a solution and slowly introduce correcting those issues into your repertoire.

**DON'T GIVE UP.
THE JOURNEY IS HARD,
BUT IT IS WELL WORTH IT.**

Positive Plus

With Barry Wonson

This month we present a selection of modules that were all originally written for inclusion in FIGURING back in the 80's, but never made it to publication. No particular theme, just general building blocks.

positive
plus

- (H) PASS THE OCEAN,
LADIES TRADE,
PING PONG CIRCULATE,
(In the wave) SINGLE HINGE &
BOX CIRCULATE, MEN RUN,
REVERSE THE FLUTTER,
SWEEP $\frac{1}{4}$, DOUBLE PASS THRU,
TRACK 2, EXPLODE THE WAVE,
BEND THE LINE, PASS THE OCEAN,
ALL 8 CIRCULATE 1 & $\frac{1}{2}$, HINGE &
ROLL, R & L GRAND.
- (H) PASS THRU, CHASE RIGHT,
(S) SQUEEZE IN & TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$,
4 MEN RUN: **CB**
- (H) PASS THRU, CHASE RIGHT,
(S) SQUEEZE IN & TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$,
SCOOTBACK,
LADIES U TURN BACK: **CB**
- (H) FLUTTERWHEEL,
SWEEP $\frac{1}{4}$ & SPREAD,
ENDS LOAD THE BOAT,
CENTRES SQUARE THRU 6 : **CB**
- (H) STAR THRU,
DOUBLE PASS THRU,
LADIES TURN $\frac{1}{4}$ RIGHT,
ALL 8 CIRCULATE – **BUT -**
MEN GO TWICE,
LADIES ONLY - BEND THE LINE,
MEN TURN $\frac{1}{4}$, **RIGHT & MEN --**
BEND THE LINE, ALL STAR THRU,
DOUBLE PASS THRU, TRACK 2,
SWING THRU DOUBLE, RECYCLE
CB
- (S) PASS THE OCEAN,
ALL EXTEND TWICE,
IN THE WAVE - TRADE THE WAVE,
OTHERS - MEN U-TURN BACK,
CENTRE LADIES EXTEND TO A
GIRL & BEND THE LINE,
MEN TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$, ENDS PASS THRU
& LOAD THE BOAT, **CENTRES --**
FOLLOW YOUR NEIGHBOUR,
EXPLODE THE WAVE,
ALL PASS THRU, TRADE BY: **CB**
- (H) PASS THE OCEAN,
LADIES TRADE,
TRADE THE WAVE, EXTEND,
LEFT SWING THRU, EXTEND,
CENTRES LEFT SWING THRU,
TRADE THE WAVE, GIRLS TRADE,
OUTSIDES U TURN BACK,
EXTEND, SLIDE THRU: **PL**
- (H) PASS THE OCEAN,
PING PONG CIRCULATE,
LADIES TRADE, EXTEND,
LINEAR CYCLE, LOAD THE BOAT,
TOUCH $\frac{1}{4}$,
FOLLOW YOUR NEIGHBOUR &
SPREAD, ACEY DEUCEY TWICE,
RECYCLE, VEER LEFT,
CHAIN DOWN THE LINE : **PL**

Ask Dr. Allemander

by Glenn Ickler with some additions by Barry Wonson

Dear Dr. Allemander: *At a recent square dance weekend, people kept trying to persuade the caller to call 'Yellow Rock.' What in the name of teacup chain is so special about yellow rock, anyway?*

-Class of '18, Melbourne


DEAR CLASS: Yellow rocking is healthy. It cures depression, reduces stress, induces sleep, and is invigorating and rejuvenating. Yellow rocking has no unpleasant after-taste or side effects. Yellow rocking is all natural and organic. It has no added preservatives, is sugar and salt-free and has no artificial ingredients. Yellow rocking is 100% pure.

Yellow rocking needs no batteries to wear out, no periodic check-ups, and no regular inspections. Yellow rocking is low on energy consumption, high on energy yield, isn't subject to inflation or government regulations, is non-fattening and requires no monthly payments or insurance premiums. Yellow rocking is theft proof, non-pollutable, and fully returnable. Best of all, no-one has figured out how to place a tax or levy on yellow-rocking.

(Dr. A.L. "Lefty" Allemander gives advice to the dancelorn in this space on a regular basis. Next time any of you ladies out there have an urge to experience a yellow rock, he advises that he is most practised in this art-form, with lots of experience (and recommendations from previous users), and suggests that you look for him and seek his advice, assistance and expertise.)

Popular colors of residential submarines



 Yellow



The majority of the following 'daffynitions' were written by John Dromey from Illinois and were published in ASD magazine in the early 1980's. A few 'traditional' ones have also been included as well as some updates.

- **ACCESSORY:** Set Decoration
- **APRIL FOOL:** A dance instructor who one day a year gives grades to students based solely on the width of their shoes (A,B,C.)
- **BOLO:** String around the collar
- **BREAKDOWN** (in communications): a dance that's 'not on the level' advertised.
- **"CLEAN DANCING":** Twirls, spins, lariats – the 'spin cycle' of the dance
- **CLOGGING RECORDS:** Trying to put too many 45's in a tight record case.
- **CLOSE CALL:** The kind you get when the calling is being done by someone who is also dancing in your square.
- **COFFEE:** Someone coughed upon
- **CONCRETE EXAMPLE:** A square dance demonstration given on a tennis court.
- **CUER IN A CROWDED HALL:** Leader of the packed.
- **CUSTOMS INSPECTION:** Watching a native dance.
- **EASYGOING EXPERT:** A dancer who is welcome in all the best circles, and squares.
- **EXERCISE FOR HEALTH REASONS:** Dance to your heart's content.
- **FLYING HAIR RIBBON:** Accessory
- **FOREIGN EXCHANGE:** Swing your corner while on an overseas junket.
- **GOING THROUGH A PHASE:** Advancing in round dancing.
- **HALF A SQUARE:** A dance formation.
- **HEROES:** What the guy in the boat does with the oars
- **HOME RUN:** A much-faster-than-usual promenade.
- **ICEBREAKER:** A caller who begins the first tip with a 'hop' so nobody can possibly start off the evening on the wrong foot.
- **INTERMISSION:** Hoedown slowdown.
- **JUNK:** an item which you have had stored away for many years, and then throw away one week before you need it.
- **LADIES CHOICE:** Same as the gentleman's – enjoy the dance.
- **LATTE:** Italian for "you paid too much for that coffee"
- **MICROPHONE LEAD:** Calling cord

- **NEEDLEWORK:** Playing 45's unless the five-piece band has the job of supplying the dance music already "sewed up"
- **NO FRILLS SQUARE DANCING:** The absence of 'lace' could mean that each time that you kick up your heels, a shoe flies off.
- **ONE-SIDED-HIT-RECORD:** Flip flop.
- **OPTIMISTS:** people who dance their troubles away.
- **OUTDOOR SQUARE DANCE:** Sun Set.
- **PESSIMIST:** Someone who expects to find a sentry posted outside a 'challenge' dance to keep away anyone who does not know the password.
- **PROMOTE SQUARE DANCING:** 'Set' a good example for others.
- **PROPAGANDA:** A perfectly correct goose
- **PROTEST MARCH:** What an impatient April fool does.
- **QUIET EVENING:** What a lady can expect a dance when her partner is an unsuccessful prizefighter who has been conditioned by years of failure never to answer the 'belle' after the first round.
- **RAISE THE MICROPHONE:** An easy way to keep callers on their toes.
- **READY FOR "WAVES":** fit to be 'tide'.
- **SET LAG:** Delay in forming squares caused by convention go-ers forgetting to adjust their watches following a change of time zones.
- **SETS SAIL:** What happens when square dancers go on a cruise.
- **SNOREOGRAPHY:** A dance routine so boring that it puts your feet to sleep.
- **SQUARE DANCERS ON VIDEO:** T.V. set.
- **SQUARE FEAT:** Calling a big dance with a little microphone.
- **STEALING ANOTHER CALLER'S MOVES:** Choreo *graft*.
- **SYMBOLIC GESTURE:** Going on a dance tour with a square suitcase.
- **THREE-QUARTER TIME:** Time to waltz over to the soft drink machine.
- **TOMORROW:** A mystical land in which 99% of human productivity, motivation and achievement is stored.
- **VARIED PROGRAM:** Around the world in 80 ways.

**KNOW PUN
INTENDED**

Community Dances in the 80s: Dare To Be Square!

by Phil Jamison (Nov 1988)

This article was sourced from the The Old-Time Herald Volume 1, Number 6 (Winter 1988-89). (<http://www.oldtimeherald.org/index.html>)

Community Dances in the Eighties: Dare To Be Square! In this issue of the OTH we have combined the "Dance Beat" and "Issues" columns to reflect the concern that many dancers and musicians alike feel regarding current trends within the dance community. Phil Jamison is the editor of the OTH "Dance Beat" column, and is an active musician, dancer, and caller. He is a member of the Green Grass Cloggers and makes his home in Asheville, N.C.



Phil Jamison is a nationally-known dance caller, old-time musician, and flatfoot dancer. He has called dances, performed, and taught at music festivals and dance events throughout the

U.S. and overseas since the early 1970s, including more than thirty-five years as a member of the **Green Grass Cloggers**. His flatfoot dancing was featured in the film, **Songcatcher**, for which he also served as Traditional Dance consultant. From 1982 through 2004, he toured and played guitar with **Ralph Blizard** and the New Southern Ramblers, and he also plays fiddle and banjo. Over the last thirty years, Phil has done extensive research in the area of Appalachian dance, and his recently-published book **Hoedowns, Reels, and Frolics: Roots and Branches of Southern Appalachian Dance** (University of Illinois Press, 2015) tells the story behind the square dances, step dances, reels, and other forms of dance practiced in southern Appalachia. Phil teaches mathematics as well as Appalachian music and dance at **Warren Wilson**

College, in Asheville, North Carolina, where for twenty-five years he served as coordinator of the Old-Time Music and Dance Week at the **Swannanoa Gathering**.

With the resurgence of interest in old-time music and dance in the 1970s, new community dances began to appear across the country. These were not like the old, local ones held at VFW's and grange halls, but they often started up in college towns, cities, and other places where groups of people interested in old-time music got together. For many people, old-time music and dance fit right in with other folk music tastes, back-to-the-land ideals and interest in the old-time ways. Old-time music and other varieties of traditional music went hand-in-hand with homemade bread, food co-ops, and thoughts of log cabins and living off the land.

When there was a dance, local musicians would come out to dance as well as play, and there was a general sense of a community of people who were having fun and who enjoyed being together. The dances called were mostly traditional squares, except in New England where contras were a regional style. (In a contra dance, the dancers stand in lines opposite partners, as

opposed to a square formation.) Over the years, things have changed. The biggest change has been in peoples' attitudes toward dancing, and this has appeared in many different manifestations. Contras are still the popular dance form in New England, but now "contra-mania" has swept across the rest of the country and in most places has just about completely taken over, to the exclusion of squares. The music that is used to accompany contra dances, usually Northern fiddle styles with piano back-up, has replaced the Southern string-band sound at many dances. Attendance at dance events is increasing and new weekly dances are springing up all over. That may seem encouraging, except that many old-time musicians and dancers have been alienated by the contra invasion on their scene, so they no longer attend. Many dances now have a strict New England contra dance orientation and square dance musicians and callers are no longer welcome. Gone, also, is a large part of the cooperative community spirit that existed ten years ago, replaced by a different attitude on the dance floor.

In my travels around the country this past summer, I mentioned this to a number of people to see what extent it was a nationwide phenomenon. Every place I went I was besieged by veteran old-time musicians, callers, and dancers who had more than a few words to say about the situation. What is contra-mania all about and how has it affected the old-time music and dance scene?

Before I come down on contras, I should say that I enjoy dancing them, especially when they are mixed in among squares, circles, and couple dances in the course of an evening. I also call some contras, having learned my first ones out of self-

defense when I found that I could not call at certain dances as strictly a square caller.

What is contra-mania? Has your local dance succumbed to it yet? Here is the test: Step up to the caller's microphone and say, "Find a partner for the next dance." Then look out over the dance floor. Are people forming squares with an occasional hand raised where another couple is needed, or are they all lined up like iron filings as if the floor had instantly become a magnetic field?

Through the years, as contras have taken over, I've wondered what their big attraction was. Perhaps they are the result of people's search for novelty and an alternative to squares. Or, maybe they are a superior dance form. They do have certain advantages over squares.

From a caller's point of view, contras are easier to call than squares. The constant vigilance of a square caller is not needed. Once the dance is started, the caller can cease calling and let the dancers continue on their own. The timing of the prompting is important, but it is more straightforward and simpler than square calling. Square calling depends more on a caller's personal style, which may take years to develop. The timing of squares is not always spelled out by the phrasing of the music, but is left up to the caller's instincts. In contrast, contras can literally be read right out of a book and called.

Collections of recently composed and other favorite contras are available in print, enabling new callers to develop huge repertoires of dances almost overnight. New callers are not exposed to many square callers, and squares are not as accessible in print, so they are not as familiar with them.

Because of the variable length of contra lines, contra callers never have to coax dancers out onto the floor to fill out a definite number of couples as required for a square.

Basically, contra callers are in demand and popular with the swelling numbers of people at dances. The demands and desires of dancers certainly influence a caller's choice of dance and there are a number of reasons why dancers like contras. For some of the newer dancers, that is all they have seen and all they know. The predictable, repetitious nature of contras can be appealing. Dancers like to be able to continue on their own after a few times through without continuous prompting. The repetition with the phrasing of the music allows dancers to become mesmerized by the movement as in waltzes and other couple dances. Dancers seem to prefer the long sets now in style so that they can dance with as many other people as possible. Due to the lengthened sets, contras in which everyone is active have become popular so that no one has to wait their turn to dance. Finally, some dancers dislike squares because they have had a boring or bad experience with them in the past. It is a challenge for callers to develop into good square callers when they're never given the chance or encouragement to call them.

Contra-mania has many implications for those of us involved in old-time music. Many old-time musicians who play southern-style dance music have become alienated from community dances due to the preference for contra dance music. Contras require a more restrained and controlled music than squares - more regularly phrased, like marching music. Contra dances and Northern fiddle tunes are a good match.

In the past, I have seen old-time musicians turned off by inflexible musical demands and lack of understanding on the part of some contra callers. When allowed to play, some old-time musicians feel that they are required to bridle raw energy and spirit of their music to match the tamer tempo of the contra figures. The need to conform to this required tempo and tune structure has driven many fine musicians away.

A musician suggested to me that the Northern music usually used for contras is cleaner, friendlier, and "more palatable to Yuppie ears" than the less tame Southern old-time string band sound. Is it closer to new age" music?

There are problems on the dance floor, too. Many veteran dancers who prefer squares and southern music have been alienated by the fanaticism of avid contra dancers. To some people it is merely a question of taste in music and dance, but in many places the relaxed spirit of the square dance seems to have been replaced by an intense competitive feeling. This has a detrimental effect on community spirit and especially affects newcomers. At large dances, newcomers and out-of-town visitors find it difficult to get a partner to dance with. They are often ignored and passed over by the "in" crowd who don't want to risk being stuck with a novice partner, who perhaps can't swing well. Often those who are the most obnoxious in this respect are those who recently overcame the new corner stigma themselves.

It's like a pecking order. When a dance is announced, all experienced dancers rush to get an experienced partner and then crowd into the set in the middle of the floor. Bob Dalsemer calls this condition "Centre Set Syndrome." In the

rush, newcomers get passed over, left to dance with other novices in a side set. It is hard for them to gain experience, being isolated from the seasoned dancers, until they realize the importance of being in the centre set and push to get there themselves. Centre Set Syndrome creates a snobbish clique that effectively blocks out many newcomers and makes them feel left out of the exclusive set.

Newcomers will often also find that the regulars have booked themselves two or three dancing partners in advance. These habits may have come from an eagerness to dance, but the unfriendly message to newcomers is quite different. With the formation of long contra lines, a single dance may last 20 or 30 minutes which adds to the time pressure of finding a dance partner. It's a long wait until the next dance. With these concerns people don't take time to talk and socialize except during the break. This is a far cry from the enthusiastic community spirit and relaxed atmosphere of dances 10 years ago.

So why are so many people into contra dancing these days? Some like the exercise and physical challenge. They love it when the music is slightly too fast for the figures and they have to run to keep up. They charge down the hall and back, losing all sense of the timing of the music and the grace of contra dancing. Other people come to dances to socialize. It's a good, safe alternative to singles bars. In a long contra line, you get to dance with huge numbers of people without fear of commitment, due to the brevity of the interactions. Many dancers use swings as an opportunity to flirt safely, though not subtly. These superficial looks can be confusing or distressing, especially to newcomers. Notice that very few couples attend

dances. I hope some people still come out to dance because they actually love old-time music, though I'm afraid that they're a minority these days. The folk music boom is over, and most contra dancers could care less about traditional music or the traditions of the dance.

I don't feel that contra-mania is the cause of all this, though perhaps it didn't help. It is more of a symptom or an indicator of a trend. As a caller, I have been forced to call more contras if I want an audience. It is not that uncommon for callers to hear "boos" from the dance floor at the suggestion of doing more than just a token square in an evening.

A consumer attitude has developed at dances that separates the musicians from the dancers and hurts community spirit in general. Musicians who used to attend weekly dances, no longer feel like a part of the community and now only show up if hired to play. This same split carries over to many weekend and week-long dance events. The dancers have become consumers and they want to be entertained. Their demands often include, "Show me something new that I've never seen before." Musicians and callers are forced to resort to gimmicks to keep them satisfied.

I would like to see more squares called and danced. Dare to be square! They have enormous potential that is not being used. The spontaneity of patter calling in squares can make them fun and less serious than contras. With the caller's ability to alter a dance at will, the caller, musicians, and dancers all function together as one organism. The caller remains involved throughout the dance as a link between the musicians and the dancers. The music can be less structured and livelier, reflecting the

excitement of the often unpredictable calls. Because of this freer form, dancers remain attentive and more tuned in to the calls and music. While it can be exhilarating in a contra dance to become mesmerized by the figures on the dance floor, it excludes the caller and musicians, except as accompanists. While long contra lines may appear to unify all the dancers on the floor, I feel that they do not bring people together individually as well as squares or shorter contra sets. Dancers in the long lines do get to interact with more people, but each contact is short and superficial. Squares and short contra sets allow dancers, even newcomers, more time dancing with a more intimate group. Due to their shorter length, time-wise, everyone has more chances during an evening to get into dance sets and this reduces the frantic fear of getting stuck on the sidelines for 30 minutes during a long dance. Maybe there is a reason why, traditionally, contra sets included only six to eight couples. With the experienced dancers split into many smaller sets, a phenomenon like Centre Set Syndrome does not occur.

Many dancers approach dancing from an academic point of view rather than the heart. This is not surprising since many are college educated, but it restricts them, and they get more concerned with the intellectual challenge of the dances than just the uninhibited joy of dancing. They dance to the called figures, but not to the feel and the beat of the music. They become uncomfortable if they aren't kept moving at all times and they have a fear of being inactive. In traditional, visiting-couple squares, as well as traditional contras, dancers spend part of their time being inactive, waiting for their turn to do the figures.

Fear of being inactive may just be another aspect of the fast pace of the modern world, or as I have suggested, it may come from a too-intellectual approach to dancing. Dancers prefer contras in which everyone is active, in order to avoid being inactive as in a traditional square or contra. A parallel situation, though I doubt many contra dancers would want to identify with it, is western club-style square dancing, where everyone is kept active, and the figures are so complicated dancers are required to take lessons to dance: Dancing from the head, not the heart.

Maybe we need workshops to teach people the art of inactivity. Aside from serving an important function in the dance, being inactive is a great time to shuffle your feet to the music, swing your partner an extra time, listen to and enjoy the music, or, believe-it-or-not, simply enjoy watching other people dance.

I have seen the old-time music and dance scene grow and change in the last decade and I wonder what it will be like 10 years from now. One of the main purposes of old-time music has always been dancing. The dance scene is booming, but I would like to see it include the old-time music scene once again. They need to remain related and reinforce each other. A stronger community will emerge when dancers can get away from a consumer orientation and musicians can feel like more than just employees.

Dance callers need to be responsible to the desires of the musicians, as well as the dancers, and be a link between the two. Don't be a slave to contra-mania; but dare to call squares and get some of the southern style old-time musicians involved again. I've always thought that if

the music is "just right," and really moves the dancers, the figures become secondary. Dances don't always have to be complicated, challenging, or new. Give dancers the chance to loosen up with fun and simple dances.

I urge dancers to have an open attitude. Try squares as well as contras and be open to the old and familiar as well as the novel. Relax and enjoy being inactive at times and let the music move your feet. Take off your "thinking cap?" once in a while and dance from the heart as well as the head. Don't take the music for granted; but enjoy it as much as the complexity of the dance figures. I would hate to see live music become replaced by records as has happened in western club-style square dancing. And let's

welcome newcomers. Remember, we were all there once, too. Dance with them and help them become better dancers through interaction. This will also help the spirit at your community dance.

Old-time musicians need to get out to the dances and be heard. Learn to be a good dance musician by working with the caller and knowing the appropriate dance tunes in your repertoire. It's different than just jamming at home, but it can be just as satisfying. Make them want to get out on the floor and "shake a leg." Try dancing when you aren't playing. The dance crowd will listen more when you do play, and it will give you a better understanding of how dances work and how your music fits in.



Old-Time Square Dancing in the 21st Century:

by Phil Jamison (2003) – 15 YEARS LATER

DARE TO BE SQUARE PART 2

This article was sourced from The Old-Time Herald Volume 9, Number 3 (2003).
(<http://www.oldtimeherald.org/index.html>)

This is part 2 It clearly shows development and progression in both square dancing and Contra dancing and the resurgence of the activity in some areas. It also highlights some of the aspects of what is making "old time" dancing seemingly more popular with the younger generations which MWSD seems to have lost over time. I find it very profound, the effect of presenting an opinion in a "closed group" can have and what Phil endured for the initial writing of his article. 15 years later however, he was shown to be correct. We at BTM hope you enjoy this little look back at history from a modern context

Fifteen years ago I wrote an article for the Dance Beat (Vol. 1 No. 6 , November 1988) titled, "Community Dances in the Eighties: Dare To Be Square!" In it I described changes that I was observing at community dances; squares were on the decline and "contra-mania" was spreading across the country. In looking back over what I wrote in 1988, while there are a few things that I would modify slightly, or articulate more clearly, for the most part I stand by what I said back then, but even more so! I know that writing in the *Old-Time Herald*, I was for the most part, "preaching to the choir," and while I received much support from the old-time music community, some people in the contra dance scene were offended and angered by what I wrote.

I was accused of being "divisive," and I was unwelcome as a dance caller at a number of venues. Robert Reed, a contra dancer from Portland, Oregon, responded in the *Bay Area Country Dancer* in 1989. Both "Dare To Be Square," and Robert Reed's response are still available for reading on the internet. My original article can be found at the *Old-Time Herald* website <<http://www.oldtimeherald.org/dare-to-be-square>>. Robert Reed's response is at Bill Tomczak's contra dance website <<http://www.northwindvt.com/contradance/articles/dare-reed-response.html>>. I had always intended to write a follow-up, so now fifteen years later, here it is.

In the 1970s, with the growing interest in traditional music and dance, many new square dances started up around the country. Many of these dances were extensions of the old-time music community, functioning as gathering places for musicians as well as dancers. Except in New England, where contras became the dominant form, traditional southern squares were common throughout the country, and the music was primarily southern old-time. Outside of New England, contras were also danced at Berea, Brasstown, and other affiliates of the Country Dance and Song Society (CDSS), but these dances were often separate from the thriving old-time music and dance scene.

In the fall of 1982, I helped start the weekly dance here in Asheville, called the Old Farmers' Ball. From the beginning there was a mix of squares and contras, the latter reflecting the influence of Berea and Brasstown. The music was more-often-than-not

southern old-time music, and every Thursday, members of Asheville's old-time music and dance community gathered to dance, play music, or just hang out.

Over the years, what I used to refer to as our "square dance," evolved into a "contra dance." Today contras are the norm, and it is rare that a square is called. Southern old-time string-bands are now infrequent, having been replaced by contra dance bands. There are fewer banjos, and more keyboards and various forms of percussion, including drums. Musical styles have become eclectic, drawing from the New England, Celtic, and old-time repertoires, with a few newly-composed tunes mixed in. Our dance, like many others, has grown in attendance and is thriving, but now those of us who prefer squares and southern music have become alienated and have quit attending. However, I believe that the dance abandoned the old-time music community, rather than the other way around, and I have witnessed that what started out as a "community dance" for the community has now become a "dance community" for contra dancers. And this has, I believe, led current dancers to have more of a consumer attitude. The "professional" contra dancers seem to be annoyed by beginners and other "bad" dancers who get in the way, avoiding them as partners, and pushing them around in the contra lines. Contra dance bands now delight the dancers with rehearsed musical arrangements and tune medleys. New callers, all from the ranks of the dancers, cater to the dancers' demands, calling all contras and no squares.

Although I have been calling dances for almost thirty years, and do it well, I am now seldom asked to call at local dance events, perhaps because I insist on calling squares as well as contras. I have been hassled, and even booed, by rude contra dancers, who object if I call more than one or two squares during an evening. I have even had dancers call me at home before a dance, to see if I was going to call any squares, and if so, they were not going to come. It is discouraging, to say the least, and makes me speculate whether I am a dance leader or just an employee of the dancers.

What I have portrayed here is not unique to Asheville. The contra-mania that I first described fifteen years ago is flourishing and continues to spawn new contra dance events across the country, while only a few old-time square dances survive. Some contra dance callers do attempt to include some squares, but these are vastly outnumbered by the predominance of contras. I used to believe that squares and contras could exist side-by-side and that squares would eventually regain their popularity, but I now have begun to wonder if they might both be better off at separate venues.

The Rise of the Contra

Competition between contras and squares is nothing new; these two rival dance forms have been contending for popularity for centuries. Contra dances developed from the longways country dances that became popular in English upper-class society as early as the seventeenth century. The dance trends of that era can be ascertained by looking at the hundreds of country dances described in successive editions of John Playford's *English Dancing Master*. During this period "Longways for as many as will," gradually became the dominant country dance form, replacing earlier squares, rounds, and longways sets for four, six, or eight dancers. In Playford's first edition of 1651, longways

sets make up only about one third of the dances. In later editions they became more prevalent, as dancing masters devised new ones for their clientele, and by the final edition of 1728, 98% of the dances are in the longways [contra dance] form. Cecil Sharp accounted for this change, noting that "...in the Longways dance the professor of dancing found a form easily adapted to the genteel style which he affected. Attracted, therefore, by this form alone, he forced it into prominence to the exclusion of the earlier and less flexible types." English dancing masters also taught contra dances throughout colonial America, and they remained the popular dance form, along with reels and jigs, into the early years of this country.

The War of the Quadrilles

Another chapter in the history of the contras vs. squares rivalry occurred two hundred years ago, in 1804, in New Orleans. It has been described by dance historian, Maureen Needham Costonis, as "The War of the Quadrilles." In December 1803, New Orleans became United States territory as part of the Louisiana Purchase. Prior to that time, the favoured dances among the city's predominately French-speaking Creoles were French Quadrilles, referred to at that time as "French contredanses." French Quadrilles had not yet come to the United States, where "English contredanses" [contra dances] were still in fashion. On January 8, 1804, only a few weeks after the transfer to the Americans, a quarrel between the Creoles and the Americans broke out at a public ball, over which type of dance should be done. According to one account of the incident: "Two quadrilles, one French [a square], the other English [a contra], were formed at once. An American, taking exception, brandished his stick over a fiddler, and there was at once, great turmoil..." Eventually, after much persuasion, "...the French quadrille [square dance] was allowed to go on, but the American interrupted it on its second time around with an English quadrille [contra dance], taking his position on the floor; someone cried out: 'If the women have a drop of French blood in their veins, they will not give in!'"

The contra-square controversy continued and erupted into a brawl at another public dance later that month. As reported by the New-York Herald on March 10, 1804, the dancing began with cotillions [squares], followed by a country dance [contra] for twelve couples. The musicians were instructed to end the contra after all of the couples had been active, but six additional American couples joined the end of the line and demanded that the music continue. In the ensuing ruckus, fiddles got broken, swords were drawn, and dancers were arrested. In an effort to resolve the issue and let the dances continue, the New Orleans City Council stepped in, prohibiting citizens from carrying arms to the dances, assigning policemen to keep order, and legislating a rotation of dances: two "French contredanses [squares]," followed by one "English contredanse [contra]" limited to twelve couples, and then a waltz, to appease those of Spanish descent.

Following the War of 1812, with the exception of New England, which remained pro-English, Americans completely abandoned the tradition of English contra dances in favor of the French quadrilles. Quadrilles were promoted as being "new" and "fashionable" and contras were seen as "rustic" and "old-fashioned." While remnants of some of the formal quadrille figures remain in New England squares as well as western squares,

they had less influence in the South and mid-West, where visiting couple squares became the popular form.

Modern Contras

So now, after almost two hundred years as the prevailing dance form, squares are no longer in fashion, and contras have made a comeback. But not the old traditional contras that were displaced by the quadrilles in the early nineteenth century; almost all of contras at today's dances have been composed since the 1970s, in a modern form. Most of the old contras were danced in triple-minor proper sets, involving groups of three couples taking hands-six, rather than pairs of couples taking hands-four (duple-minor form). Dance calling was not yet commonplace, so the dance would be led by the top couple, with each successive couple following. All other couples were inactive until they arrived at the top of the set. And despite limiting sets to twelve couples, contras were often described as seeming "never-ending," not finishing until the original leading couple had made it back to the top of the set.

Modern contra dances are choreographed to keep all the dancers moving all the time, with no inactive couples. Duple-minor dances have replaced the less-active triple-minor form, and to accommodate today's longer lines, "unequal" figures (in which one couple is more active than the other) have been eliminated. (The equivalent in the square dance world are the modern western square dances of the 1950s.) These modern contras, prompted by a caller, make use of only a dozen or so interchangeable figures in repetitive permutations, and they are easily mastered by new dancers in a relatively short time.

Contemporary Contra Dancers

In an attempt to better understand the contemporary contra dance culture, I recently posted a survey on the internet to several dance communities in the southeast asking about motivations for dancing, as well as musical preferences and opinions concerning squares vs. contras. Close to sixty contra dancers responded and the results are informative.

Dancers attend contra dances for various reasons. The most common response (76%) was a social reason, which included the "need for community," "physical and social contact," and opportunities for "safe flirting." Due to the brevity of the interactions in a contra dance, dancers interact with large numbers of people without fear of commitment, or even having to talk. One dancer from Atlanta said that contra dances "serve my need to be physically creative and connect with other people. Verbal interaction is not always expected." Almost half of the dancers (47%) are attracted to contra dancing for aerobic exercise, which may account for the water bottles, spandex, running shorts, and head bands seen at many dances. Slightly over one-third (34%) mentioned the music, and about one-in-five (19%) said they enjoyed dancing and physical movement in general. Many dancers (39%) refer to the fun and the exhilaration of dancing. A dancer from Knoxville wrote of "the 'dancer's high' that comes with the triple combination of dance, people, and great music." Another from Chapel Hill spoke of "being drunk on the ecstasy of dancing." For many others (27%), contra dancing goes beyond simply recreation, and is perceived as being "therapeutic" or even "spiritual." These dancers

speak of the importance of "centeredness" and "getting into a trance." One dancer in Atlanta said, "I don't think about anything else when I am dancing and am as much 'in the moment' as I ever am." Obviously contra dancing is fulfilling a need in people's lives, and even though there is no single reason why dancers are drawn to contras, and it appears to be more than just an alternative to the gym or singles bars.

Many contra dancers are new to dancing. Of the 57 dancers who responded to my survey, the majority (54%) have "discovered" contra dancing *since* I wrote "Dare To Be Square" in 1988. Dividing the sample into two groups, those who have been involved in dancing for less than 10 years (40%), and those who have been involved in dancing for more than 20 years (25%), reveals a polarization of dance preferences. Of the more experienced dancers, 43% prefer squares, 7% prefer contras, and 50% like both. Of the newer dancers, 70% prefer contras, 30% like both, but 0% prefer squares.

It is no surprise to learn that newer dancers overwhelmingly prefer contras to squares. Many of these folks sound like ones I have encountered at dances, who are almost belligerent in their attitude toward squares, and believe that squares have no place at a "contra dance." It is not uncommon for a caller to hear moans or boos from the dance floor at the suggestion of doing more than just a token square in an evening. Typical of the comments I received from dancers were, "I can endure one square a night, or possibly two, but never any more," "One square during a contra dance would be more than enough," and "I have left a dance because the caller called too many squares." Maybe I should look on the positive side and be encouraged that 30% of the new dancers do tolerate squares. For many though, this means one, or at most two, during a full evening of contras "regardless of the caller."

One dancer in Florida posed a question that had never occurred to me, "If you agreed to dance a contra with someone, and the caller makes the next dance a square instead of a contra, would you still dance?" Independently, another dancer from Knoxville provided the answer, "There's sort of an understanding among contra dancers that an invitation to dance the 'next dance' isn't binding if the next dance turns out to be a square." I was surprised to find out that according to many of today's contra dancers, "squares don't count as dances!" If you ask someone to be your partner for the "next dance," this means the next contra dance. One dancer from Atlanta declared, "The only real benefit of a square is to give me a chance to change my shirt or go to the bathroom...I can certainly tolerate squares at a contra dance. After all, I do need time to change my shirts and go to the bathroom."

When asked about musical preferences, the contra dancers surveyed preferred New England or Celtic music over old-time music almost two-to-one. The banjo is cited by several dancers as their least favourite dance instrument. The rhythms, tempos, and 32-bar format of New England or Celtic tunes are perhaps better suited to the requirements of contras than are many of the great southern dance tunes. A few old-time tunes, however, have met the criteria and have been adopted by contra dance musicians, becoming a part of the standard repertoire. Regardless of the style, though, the dancers seem to care little about traditional music, and more about bands that offer "variety." In addition to dynamic medleys of tunes, this often means the use of drums, percussion, and unusual instruments, or other "cheap tricks that make the dancers yell." Perhaps

these so called "bells and whistles" wake up and energize contra dancers, lost in trances induced by the repetitive figures of the contra dance.

A number of contra dancers specifically mentioned not liking old-time music, finding it "boring" and "monotonous." While it may be monotonous (but no more so than the repetitive contra dance figures), this same quality makes it so appropriate and good for fast-paced southern squares. Medleys and contra dance band gimmicks do not work well, but instead can be a distraction to dancers who need to stay focused on the free-form calling.

Squares vs. Contras

So, what is it that contra dancers dislike about squares? Unfortunately, this question doesn't take into consideration that there are many different types of squares (southern, New England, western, singing, etc.), and dancers may like one kind but not another. The traditional old-time southern squares that I love seem to be the least favourite.

One of the most common criticisms I heard was that squares take too long to teach. A longer walk-through means less time for dancing, or as several dancers put it, "bad talk-to-dance ratio." This is often true, but part of the blame lies with the dancers and their lack of experience and familiarity with squares. If squares are not part of the regular program, dancers have little exposure to them. As a caller, I know to expect a longer walk-through when people do not already know such basics as the Grand Right and Left. Also, many squares have unique figures that may show up in only one dance. It *is* harder to teach a square; it often involves some actual teaching. By comparison, most contras are "taught" by merely announcing the sequence of the figures and having the dancers walk through them; new figures are seldom taught. This of course leaves beginners feeling lost.

Another shortcoming of squares is the necessity for eight dancers in each set which can add to the time it takes to organize the sets (but not if dancers are eager to dance them). As one dancer from Asheville pointed out, "You could conceivably have up to seven dancers wanting to dance, but unable to because they cannot find an eighth person. In a contra line the most you would ever have forced to sit out is one dancer." In my experience, with a little creativity, even an incomplete set can still dance most of the figures of a square, and they usually have fun giving it a try.

A number of dancers complain that squares are "boring." This has as much to do with the dancers' attitudes as with the caller's choice of choreography. I admit that some squares are more interesting than others, but even simple traditional visiting couple squares can be enjoyable. Having met the same fate as traditional squares, "Rory O'More," "Chorus Jig" and other traditional contra dance "chestnuts," in which one couple is sometimes inactive, have also been eliminated from today's contra dance programs.

Many contra dancers find squares "confusing." They are discouraged if they are the ones who are confused, or a more common complaint, they are irritated if they "get stuck" in a square with inexperienced dancers. As one dancer pointed out, "If you are in a "Bad" square, you are in it for the whole dance. You don't simply move on to new

neighbours like you would in a contra." Confusion can sometimes be the result of the caller's inexperience, which can manifest itself in unclear teaching or "bad calling." Contras are straightforward and easy to prompt, but many contra callers have little understanding of the timing of calling squares.

One other drawback to squares, that several dancers pointed out, is that contras make "more efficient use of floor space" in a crowded hall. This may be true, but is efficiency of space a major consideration at a dance and a reason to dislike squares?

I have observed that some of the same characteristics of squares that one dancer dislikes are exactly what another dancer likes. Some dancers like the challenge and variety of figures offered by squares. This, however, does not satisfy those contra dancers who want to get into a "trance" or "the right brain 'Zen' state that is sometimes possible in contra dancing." The challenge, sometimes bordering on confusion that these dancers dislike, is enjoyed by others who like the faster pace and spontaneity characteristic of squares.

Some contra dancers object to dancing with only seven other people in a square set, but others enjoy the "great sense of teamwork" and "synergy of eight people working together" in a square. One dancer pointed out that "...you spend enough time with the people in your square to get to know them, unlike a contra where the interaction is fleeting and superficial."

While some contra dancers will tolerate a few token squares as "a nice change from dancing up and down lines," these dancers tend to prefer the squares that are most "contra-like." In other words, not southern squares, but ones that are phrased to the music and use contra dance figures in a square formation. Some dancers think a square is fun if it has challenging, intricate figures that force you to think and work as a team. Though complex squares can at times be fun, other dancers find them too "cerebral," lacking much of the essence of what squares, southern squares in particular, have to offer.

Dare to be square!

Contra-mania has become more widespread and established throughout the country since I wrote "Dare to be Square" in 1988. While some callers do include a few squares, many dance organizers discourage squares, and today's contra dancers seem more intolerant than ever. In many locations, the old-time music community, offended by fanatical "contra nazis," has parted ways with the contra dance scene. One dancer from Lynchburg, Virginia suggested that the controversy results from "an intersection of subcultures...Square dancing seems like more of a local community gathering to me while contra dancing is more cosmopolitan." In spite of this, I urge contra dancers to have an open mind toward squares; they can be wonderful and just as exhilarating as contras. A dancer from Chapel Hill wrote, "I didn't like them up until about 12 years ago. I was so greedy for my dance buzz, I couldn't tolerate the times that squares wobbled, broke down, were badly called, or were too 'corny' for my taste. I wanted non-stop exciting dancing with fabulous partners and neighbours. Needless to say, I danced in the centre set during contras and ignored beginners. Friends who loved squares influenced me to be more open minded, I matured, I started caring more about the overall group

experience rather than my own pleasure, and I danced enough squares to be able to help when they wobbled and laugh when they fell apart."

In some places around the country, in particular in Denver, Seattle, and Portland, Oregon, new old-time square dances have started up, completely independent of the contra dance scene. As a contra dancer from Knoxville pointed out, "Neither contra dancing nor square dancing is for everybody... I'd rather see contra dances and square dances billed separately than to try to force the two into the same venues, that way each can appeal to its own set of people and use the music that suits it best."

Perhaps this is the best way to go, if the contra dance community continues in its current direction. Rather than trying to force hardcore contra dancers to loosen up and appreciate traditional squares, the re-establishment of old-time square dances, separate from the contra dance scene, would benefit musicians, as well as dancers and callers, and make for a stronger old-time music community. This may be easier said than done, but it would revive one of the main functions of old-time music, which is playing for dancing. It would also provide family and beginner-friendly dances for all ages, where callers could call squares, and the community could come together to dance, socialize, or just enjoy the music.

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- *Phil Jamison is an old-time musician, flatfoot dancer, and dance caller, who has been calling squares since 1975. He is assistant director of the Swannanoa Gathering at Warren Wilson College in Asheville*

Thanks to Larry Edelman and to all of the contra dancers who took the time to answer my dance survey

Phil Jamison is an old-time musician, flatfoot dancer, and dance caller, who has been calling squares since 1975. He is assistant director of the Swannanoa Gathering at Warren Wilson College in Asheville, NC

The 61st ANSDC –10-14 Apr 2020



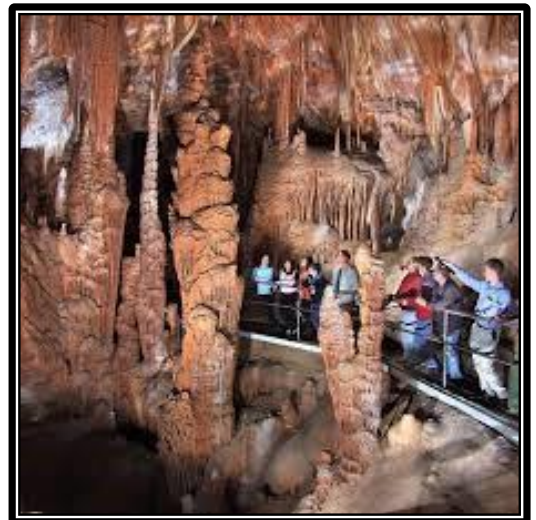
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Cheers Susanne Horvat
Publicity Manager

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

THE Final WORD

At Least For Now

Well, another month closer to Christmas again! As we get older, the years just seem to fly by.

Last October, Sue and I were looking at booking a family holiday overseas in Singapore. Our kids said that it would take forever for the year to pass until we actually got to go. However; now it is nearly time, and we will all leave on October 3rd. Sue and I felt that the time had flown -- the kids felt that it had dragged. I guess it all depends on our relative ages and perspective. Our time ahead is limited, but their time ahead is lengthy!!!

This is my favourite time of year: the days and nights are only cool, rather than cold. Spring is here, and Summer is just around the corner. This is the time when we, in the Southern Hemisphere, get to take a break from the general square dance club scene (when it is just too hot to dance) and usually have at least four weeks off. According to Sue this is a well needed break to do the lawns, paint the house, do repairs etc. Damn; now I can't wait for the Clubs to start up again just to have a bit of a relax!!!

As you can see from this month's Magazine, we are trying out a new format for presentation. Many like to print out the magazine to read and have expressed that they like the two column layout as it is easier for them. We would like to hear your thoughts and suggestions.

Cheers
Barry



Appendix of UPcoming EVENTS



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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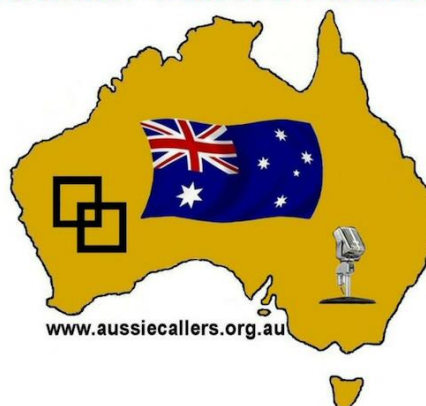
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Reduced

To become a member of the Sting Productions 'Ambassador Club' and be one of ONLY 150 callers to receive the next year's output of Sting music - one year ahead of the majority of other callers – all that you need to do is visit

www.stingproductions.co.uk/ambassador.php and sign-up as a Regular Member.

Membership available for \$160.00(us)

STING PRODUCTIONS AMBASSADOR CLUB - Tune List 2019

Each of the tunes listed below became available on 1st April 2019, to Ambassador Club members - as part of the Sting Productions Ambassador Club 2019 Edition (24 pieces of music):

98.6

A Little More Country Than That

Boom Boom Goes My Heart

Candle in the Wind

Eleanor Rigby

Home Is Where Your Heart Is

How Do I Break It To My Heart

I Don't Care If You Love Me Anymore

I'm Alright

Love You In a Barrel

More Questions Than Answers

The Bystanders

Easton Corbin

Alex Swings Oscar Sings

Elton John

The Beatles

The Sounds

Kenny Rogers

Raul Malo, The Mavericks

Jo Dee Messina

The Lenners

Johnny Nash

Small Town Southern Man

Some Girls Do

Summer Holiday

The Devil in Her Heart

When Your Love Is Alive

Wild World

You've Got to Hide your Love Away

Alan Jackson

Racey

Cliff Richard

The Beatles

Neighbours

Cat Stevens

The Beatles

Patter Music (4Tunes + 2 Bonus SNOW Tunes)

Pork-Pie / Milk-Stout - Smidgen / Malarkey

Nincompoop / Gadabout (SNOW)

IF YOU DON'T WANT TO SIGN-UP AS A REGULAR MEMBER BUT LIKE THE MUSIC...

You can also help to support our work by purchasing the previous Editions of the Ambassador Club, at discounted prices. For details (and Audio Samples) of the tracks included - on each of these Editions (including 2019) - visit: www.stingproductions.co.uk and click on the Ambassador Club.

**Bulk Purchase Deals Sale of previous Ambassador Club Editions
(2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018) :-**

(2011) \$35 - (2012) \$35 - (2013) \$40 - (2014) \$55

(2015) \$80 - (2016) \$95 - (2017) \$135 - (2018) \$160

or - all eight Previous Editions (177* tunes) for \$600

**the number of tunes figure includes SNOW 2017 & 2018 releases - and may increase*

Special REVISED 'Super' Deal:

Sign up as a Regular Member - for the 2019 Edition - and buy the 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 & 2018 Edition music, (201* tunes) - the entire bundle for a special price:

Reduced
2018 prices!

(only...) **\$750!!**

Reduced
2018 prices!

Contact: Paul Bristow: paul@stingproductions.co.uk

for more information about Regular Membership and/or to purchase these Editions

MAKE THE TRANSFORMATION



THE OFFICIAL

SO YOU WANT TO BE A CALLER.®

SQUARE DANCE CALLERS SCHOOL (Based On The Book) By: EDDIE POWELL, MBA
World's First Online Callers School

- Anywhere
- Anytime
- 24/7/365 From Your Device (Access Required)
- Learn At Your Own Pace So You Can Absorb
(Not Just A "Brain Dump" Of Information)
- Printed Submissions
- Audio Submissions
- Video Submissions
- **Live Coaching Calls Featured Discussions On:**
 - PERSONAL CRITIQUES
 - Guest Tips
 - Marketing Yourself
 - Teaching Classes
 - The Business of Calling
 - Events and Festivals
 - Singing Calls
 - The Flow Of The Dance
 - The Flow Of The Choreography
 - National vs. Traveling vs. Local Callers
 - Publicity For You and Square Dancing
 - ...and Much More!

**Imagine the transformation from where you are to
the Square Dance Caller you want to be...**

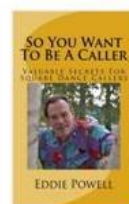
It takes action, practicing the right way, and becoming ready to market yourself. It took time and practice as a dancer to learn the moves, the same is true of calling.

Think About It

**Every Superstar Athlete Has A Coach
Now, You Do, Too!**

**Learn The Basics, Repeat The Right Ways, and
Become The Caller You Are Destined To Be...**

**Enroll
Now**



Eddie@EddiePowell.com

Kip Garvey – Central Sierra Caller School ONLINE

The First Online Caller School

Unlike conventional caller schools that often result in information overload and are considerably expensive when you add in time off work, travel, accommodation, meals etc., this Remote Learning Series is a low-cost alternative. It offers, especially to new and newer callers, but also to more experienced callers, the ability to work at their own pace in the development of their own choreographic skills

The school consists of well developed, easy to follow and time-tested and proven lessons that offer callers of any level the opportunity to build and/or refresh their knowledge of choreographic structure, flow and many other important skills.

- \$30 Membership in the Caller School, on line gives you:
- Access to the full on-line school and the first two lessons;
- Access to the Course lessons and ability select and view your own personalized course curriculum
 - Each lesson is a 3 to 7-page explanation of the lesson objectives and content, and a video presentation of the lesson to further explain lesson content and show methods.
 - Registration gives you the opportunity to acquire access to eight additional lessons; each precisely designed to walk you through the caller's learning curve at your pace
 - Access to a library of reference material on choreographic structure as well as various white papers and technical documents used as reference material for the lessons
- Access to Kip Garvey as a personal mentor through direct on-on-one email communication and through prior arrangement direct telephone conferences.
- Access to critical analysis of your calling via e-mail and pre-recorded mp3 Files
- Access to the Remote Learning Series Bulletin Board where you share thoughts, ideas and concerns with your fellow callers and students in an open forum

To register or find out more information about Kip and the Online Caller School to www.kipgarvey.com and follow the links.

A&S Record Shop



We go that extra mile to give you better service

We can send you a Download Link for MP3's from the following labels:

(Also CD's available!!)

- Aussie Tempo,
- DownUnder,
- ABC,
- BVR,
- All Blue Star Labels including HiHat...Map,
- Imperial IR,
- Shindig,
- Gramophone GP,
- Fine Tunes (FT),
- Gold Wing (GWR),
- Chinook,
- CBarC, 7C's,
- Crown (CRC),
- MM,
- JR Records (JRR),
- Ranch House,
- Rockin M (RMR),
- Stampede (SR),
- MLS,
- SDBOB,
- Silver Eagles,
- SharpShooter,
- Sting (SIR),
- Snow (SNW),
- Prairie,
- Mountain,
- Desert,
- Ocean, and MarLet,
- 4BarB,
- Quadrille,
- SquareTunes,
- Pioneer, and
- Many More!

We have EXCLUSIVE CD Rights for the [Riverboat](#) label.

**NOTE THAT THE ONLY LABELS ON www.asrecordshop.com are
ESP, GMP, AND AandS!!**

**ALL THE ESP'S ARE NOT LISTED HERE, BUT WE HAVE THEM ALL!!
[EMAIL US](#) ABOUT SONGS ON OTHER LABELS! WE WILL SEND THEM TO
YOU AND TELL YOU HOW TO PAYPAL US. WE HAVE BEEN IN THE SAME
GEORGIA USA LOCATION FOR 38 STRAIGHT YEARS AS AandS RECORD
SHOP AND I'VE BEEN A CALLER FOR 45 YEARS WITHOUT A BREAK.**

WE WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR BUSINESS!!

BOB and MARIE SHIVER BOB@ASRECORDS.COM OR ASRECORDS@COX.NET

[A&S Record Shop – Music downloads and much more.](#)

Application
**NORTHEAST
CALLERS
SCHOOL**
Sturbridge, MA
October 10-14, 2019

Name: _____

(spouse/partner) _____

Street: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Cost: \$400.00 per caller.
For reservations, a \$100 deposit is required.

I/We have enclosed \$_____ (\$100 per caller)
deposit and understand the balance is due
at time of registration.

Make checks payable to:

Northeast Callers School
Ken Ritucci
132 Autumn Road
West Springfield, MA 01089
Phone: (413) 262-1875
Email: kenritucci@gmail.com

Canadians please remit U.S. funds



School Information

www.northeastcallersschool.com

Cost:
\$400.00. No charge for accompanying
spouse/partner. Food and lodging not
included.

Program:
Starts Thursday, October 10th at 7:00 pm
Ends Monday, October 14th at 12 noon.

Lodging:
The host hotel will be utilized for part
of the school. Special rates have been
worked out. Hotel information will be
provided upon registration.

Food:
Several local restaurants available with
good food at reasonable prices.

Location:
Off exit 9 from the Massachusetts
Turnpike.

Additional Info:
To be mailed before the start of school
recommending dress and essentials,
including directions to the hall.

Northeast Callers School 2019



Ken Ritucci
Massachusetts
(Callerlab Accredited Caller Coach)

SPECIAL GUEST INSTRUCTORS:



Jerry Story
Iowa
(Callerlab Accredited Caller Coach)



Steve Turner
Australia
(Callerlab Accredited Caller Coach)



Barry Clasper
Canada

Programs for Beginning
and Experienced Callers
October 10-14, 2019
HOST HOTEL & HAYLOFT BARN
STURBRIDGE, MA

WHETHER YOU ARE JUST GETTING STARTED, or want to improve your calling, the Northeast Callers School will provide you with the tools to make you a successful caller. Ken Ritucci has 44 years of calling experience. He and his staff have the knowledge and leadership to assist you with your career.



KEN RITUCCI has been calling for 44 years and has been teaching callers since 1983. He has traveled throughout parts of the United States and Canada, calling and conducting Callers Schools and Clinics. Ken has taught hundreds of callers how to call and has helped them succeed in their careers. A member of Callerlab, Ken is a member of the Board of Governors and will be serving on the Executive Committee beginning in the spring of 2014. His experience in all aspects of the calling profession will help you become a true professional. Ken is a Callerlab Accredited Caller Coach.



JERRY STORY began calling in 1969 at the age of fourteen in Fairfield, IA. During the early 1970s he taught many classes and traveled throughout the Tri-State area of Iowa, Illinois, and Missouri. In the spring of 2002, he and lifetime friend and business partner Tony Oxendine, opened Pride RV Resort in Maggie Valley, NC. Jerry has been co-owner of Royal Records since 1985. Jerry is proud to have been part of the McAllen Callers Association and promoting McAllen, TX as the Square Dance Capital of the World by holding the "World's Largest Beginner Classes." He has also served as a Board of Governors member in CALLERLAB and is dedicated to the preservation of Modern Western Square Dancing. Jerry and his wife, Kristy own the Hideaway, a Beer Garden and Pub on the Town Square all while taking care of both elderly mothers in their beautiful country home a mile south of Fairfield, IA. Jerry still travels worldwide and still finds time to help build a strong local home program using the new CALLERLAB 50 Call SSD Sustainable Dance Program. Read all about it at jerrystory.com



STEVE TURNER
1967 Started Square Dancing in England
1968 immigrating to Perth Western Australia.
1968 Started calling
1969 formed the first club called Shanondahs with beginner classes twice a week
1973 Started a Plus club,
1982 Round Dance club was formed and this new hobby had become 5 nights per week.
1970-80 had a demonstration dance team which performed in public promoting Square Dancing
1985 3 week calling tour through the States of USA
1990 formed an Advanced club
1992 became a full-time Caller calling for up to 8 clubs per week and running a Record and Tape business
1995 formed their own Australian Record Label "AUSSIE TEMPOS" and DOWN UNDER RECORDS
1998 Called full time at the Square Dance Centre for 5yrs
2000 5 month calling tour in 8 counties around the world
2018 Currently calling Mainstream/Plus/Advanced
2019 Celebrating 50 years calling



BARRY CLASPER lives in Toronto, Ontario with his wife Pam. Barry started calling in 1984. Barry changed careers in September 2007. He retired from IBM after 30 years and is now a full-time caller. He's called at weekends and conventions in 8 provinces, DC, and 26 states, as well as Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Japan, England, the Czech Republic, Taipei, Beijing, and New Zealand. He's also a staff caller with the Academy for Advanced and Challenge Enthusiasts (AAEC). Barry has also done numerous caller clinics and presentations at CALLERLAB conventions. He has written extensively with articles appearing in publications such as Zip Coder, American Square Dance Magazine, The Call Sheet, the CALLERLAB DIRECTION, and T&D Topics. Barry is a member of CALLERLAB, the Gay Callers Association, and the Toronto and District Square and Round Dance Association. Within CALLERLAB he is a member of the Board of Governors, served on the Executive Committee (2011-2017), and is a Past Chairman of the Board (2013-2015).

POINTS OF INTEREST

While at the school, take advantage of New England's Fall Foliage Season. The colors are breathtaking and the view is spectacular. Also, Sturbridge is the home of the famous "Sturbridge Village". One of the most popular visitor sites in the area. Come and see some of the early heritage history of New England.

Key Benefits of this School Include:

- Develop confidence in your calling ability
- Improve your choreographic skills
- Learn how to program your dances
- Acquire the skills necessary to make yourself a more professional caller

Topics of Discussion:

- Mechanics of Choreography
- Timing
- Voice / Delivery
- Smooth Dancing / Body Flow
- Programming
- Teaching
- Music / Rhythm
- Choreographic Management
- Ethics / Leadership

TWO LEVELS OF PROGRAMS

Beginner

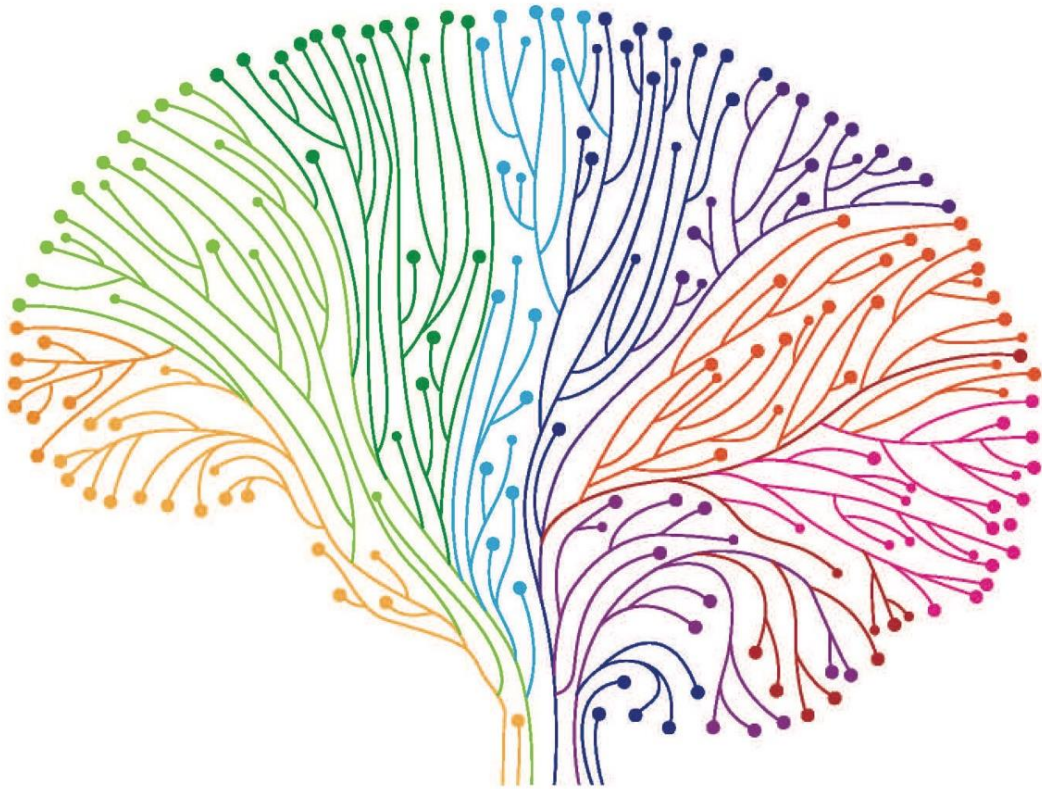
Designed for new callers who need all the basics, including: Basic Choreography, Microphone Technique, Voice Control, and Introduction to Sight Calling Methods.

Experienced

For Callers with experience between two or more years. Emphasis will be on Advanced Sight Calling Techniques, better timing and body flow, as well as Creative Choreography, plus much more.

BECOMING A SQUARE DANCE CALLER

by Bruce Holmes



\$30 8.5X11" 153 pages Wire bound 2nd Edition

- "I wish there had been a book like this when I started 25 years ago." - Glenn Wilson, Queensland, Australia
- "Clear and helpful! I would recommend to especially new callers like myself!" - Connie Graham, Stanberry, Missouri
- "Firstly I want to say that I enjoyed your book and the "New Caller" market lacks this type of approach, so thank you... Keep up the good work, and I love the way you approach the exercises." - Steve Turner, Accredited Caller Coach, Western Australia, Australia
- "The caller school sent us a large document in preparation for the school. I have been reading that too and find myself going back to your manual over and over to understand what they have said. Yeah for your manual!!!" - Bobbi Nichol, Pensacola, Florida

<http://brucetholmes.com/Becoming.html>