

AROUND THE SQUARE



*An International Magazine for dancers,
callers and cuers*

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DATES to REMEMBER

09 Apr 2020	Special Trails End Dance with RANDY DOUGHERTY (USA) – Blackheath Community Centre
10-14 Apr 2020	Australia National Square Dance Convention – Wentworth Falls NSW

WHAT'S INSIDE THIS MONTH

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On the Inside Track

WELCOME to the very first Edition of “**AROUND THE SQUARE**”; a magazine for square dancers. Each issue will bring you articles, ideas, commentary, and much more, providing Information, Education, Entertainment, and even Enlightenment, to anyone interested in our great square dancing activity and all it encompasses.

BACKGROUND: Over 40 years ago, I created and published a magazine for our Square Dance Clubs, the Red Barons. There were about a dozen issues over the first couple of years, then, as usual life just got in the way. Things came up that got in the way of producing a regular newsletter and it fell by the way for many years. The next incarnation saw only a few issues, but as before, things just took over.

Within that overall period, I also created, wrote and published a Note Service called “FIGURING” which was designed for Callers. That service ran from 1977 thru until 1988 when our first daughter was born.

I had done a few other writing jobs in the 1980’s as well. During my second time at the University of Wollongong, I also was involved in the writing and editing of a student newsletter; as well as writing the usual essays and papers!

In 1992 I again took pen in hand and wrote a 160 page coffee table book for our local Primary School’s 75th Anniversary. This a very different type of writing for me, as I was commissioned to create something beyond a plain old history of the school. It was to be a book that anyone could pick up, open at any page and be interested and entertained by the material on that page. This was a difficult task, and I gave much thought to the general structure and information that should be included. It ranged from edited newspaper reports, photographs, personal anecdotes and histories, and so forth.

In the end I developed a framework based on 5 specific sections – The Past, Sport, The Present, The Pool (our school was one of the very few in NSW to have its own pool), and The Future. Intense research was needed ranging from newspaper searches at the City Library to locating and interviewing alumni, both students and teachers, from all previous eras.

As it turned out, the concept worked very well indeed. The coffee table book was so successful that we went into a second printing, which also sold out

Not too long after this I also became President of the NSW Callers Association, and, as part of an education incentive for our members, I again took pen (well, computer keyboard by this time) in hand, and began a newsletter once again. This was to be an irregular publication, based on material and information from the membership. It was a good idea but a good idea, but alas, only lasted 2 issues.

When our new association (SARDA NSW) was created, I undertook the role of education coordinator. I saw this position as an opportunity not only to provide regular educational and training sessions; but as one that revolved around the continuous sharing of information via a new digital newsletter. This worked well for some time. However, when I made the decision to step down from the role as Education Coordinator, I also had to work out what to do with the regular newsletter

I had created. I really enjoyed putting it together each time, and I did not want to let that aspect of information sharing just vanish. That was the drive behind the creation of “**Behind The Mike**” (BTM) Callers Magazine.

BTM, in just a few short years, has grown from its humble beginnings as just a localized Caller’s newsletter to an Electronic Callers Magazine that has a huge readership of Callers, associations and dancers throughout the entire world.

The magazine has:

- a direct distribution in excess of 800 e-mail subscribers;
- Our own website (created by Jaden Frigo) which sees over 250 BTM newsletter downloads each month,
- Thousands of monthly downloads also occur on various social media websites as well as links directly with 6 of the more popular FaceBook Caller Forum sites.

It is humbling to find that many callers, and caller associations use this material regularly as meeting discussion points, training material or just good old fashioned choreography workshops and get together to bounce ideas off each other. This simple idea that information on square dance calling needs to be shared and available has had a wide impact on the square dance arena.

Within the pages of BTM each month, I have attempted to present as wide a variety of topics and ideas that could be of interest to callers. Not just educational pieces, but choreography, ideas, training at all levels, entertainment and generally informative information. Each month, some sections could also be of “general interest”, not only to callers, but to anyone who has an active interest in our square dance activity.

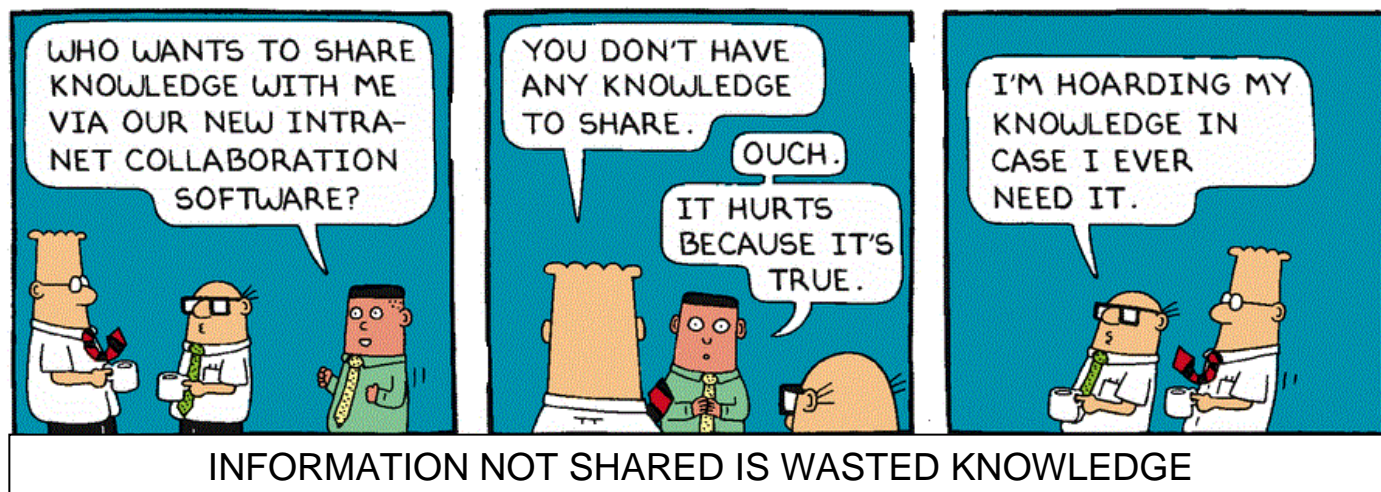
Many of these cross-over articles and sections are hand-me-downs from the original club newsletter I wrote all those years ago. During that time, as well as the years I published FIGURING, I had an exchange agreement, not only with the other Callers Note Services of the time, but with a huge number of other magazines that were being published all over the world. At that time, I remember that I regularly received 6 magazines just published in California alone! Before scanners, I had to photocopy anything I thought would be of use at some point in the future from each magazine, and file it away in a cabinet purchased for that purpose alone.

For those of you that we have had the pleasure of hosting in our home, you will have seen some of that collection. We still have a majority of the exchange magazines, and still have all the photocopied material. While some of the material contained in those cabinets is dated, much is still applicable to our activity today. It is some of these items that I have been using over the last couple of years in BTM (dancer related articles, humour, etc).

There have been some articles that although dated, when I came across them, I have been prompted to expand and update for a new audience. I felt that these articles and ideas were just too valuable not to be handed on to a new generation.

One of our BTM subscribers contacted me a few months ago asking me if it would be OK to take some of the dancer related sections in BTM and give them to his club members. I replied with a resounding YES!!!.

I have always believed, as do those who work with me on BTM that information is useless unless shared and developed by anyone including the originator. This started me thinking (again) about the possibility of putting more of these pieces together, and creating a regular, (well maybe at least a semi-regular) magazine that would contain not only articles from the BTM Caller's Magazine but inclusive of many others I have filed away, that could be of interest to anyone involved in our activity. I have discussed this with quite a few dancers and callers over recent times and thought that I would start the ball rolling.



A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME:

While it may seem easy, the first problem I came across was - - **What do I call it?**

I had 'Behind the Mike' for callers...what do I use for the general square dance population as a whole? I thought of:

- 'From the Floor',
- 'Beyond the Floor',
- 'In Front of the Mike',
- 'Outside the Square',
- 'Inside the Square',
- 'Beyond the Square',
- 'Enhance the Dance',
- 'Perchance to Enhance the Dance',
- and many, many others.

None seemed to really click with me. The current title '**Around the Square**' was suggested by one of our dancers, and is the only one that seems to fit in with what I felt was needed, Mind you, I am always open to change if something more appropriate comes along.

Frequency

I hope to have at least 4 issues each year; possibly more, depending on acceptance, interest and my ability to produce. Our magazine is not trying to compete in any way with those hard-copy sources that are in existence. Rather it is aimed at complementing the 'localised' magazines to present much wider and more generic images of our activity.

"Around The Square" will be available to anyone via email subscription as well as via some of the existing Facebook square dance pages. It is a free magazine; and I hope it will be shared quite freely among friends. The best way is via direct email subscription; however our main aim is to have information that is freely available to anyone in our great activity.

Okay, there you have it. One question you may ask is **"who is this Barry Wonson bloke anyway?"** That is me on the right. I am a club caller, and have been for nearly 51 years now. I live with my wife Sue, in Wollongong, NSW, Australia.



As a caller, I have had the opportunity to travel the world, and have been featured in many festivals, weekends, specials, conventions in such areas as USA, Canada, New Zealand, England, the Channel Islands, France, Germany, Belgium, Switzerland, Holland, Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark Sweden, Norway and Italy. From 1977 thru 2001, I travelled to the USA more than 20 times and also had 17 calling trips to Europe thru 2011 (after which I made the decision to not accept any more overseas engagements overseas as I wanted to spend more time with our family).

I still call locally 3 times each week for our own Red Barons Square Dance Clubs. Due to a stroke in 2017, I had to give up any weekend engagements, but still call for our own Red Barons Square Dance Clubs 3 times each week.

I am an avid reader, a collector of movies (over 6000 BluRays and DVDs), a lover of music (over 6500 CDs), a keen player of strategy board games (over 1200 games in our collection as well). We also have lots of other collectable items in our rambling house.

My wife Sue and I met at a Square dance some 44 years ago. We have two daughters (Amerie and Alessa), one son-in-law (Christopher) and one grandson (Ronon).

A couple of months ago our local newspaper, the Illawarra Mercury featured an article on people involved in various forms of 'collecting'. I have always had a wide variety of interests. Check out what your publisher does in his spare time:

<https://www.illawarramercury.com.au/story/5914103/three-illawarra-collectors-share-their-quirky-obsessions/>

Breakdown

By William Myer

(The following special article was originally written by William Myer for the US Magazine "Zip-Coder" more than 35 years ago as an April Fool's joke. I have made some slight changes and tweaks to the original and added a new section at the end – Barry).

I have been Square Dancing now for about fifteen years. I have done practically everything in the Square Dance movement, except invent a movement or choreographic concept that would be worthy of publication.

Actually, I did not invent the concept that I am about to put forth, but I can say with honesty that I most assuredly have perfected it! I am sure that adding this concept to one's repertoire of movements will greatly enhance the dance experience and give great satisfaction and fulfillment.

The concept is called **"Anything and Breakdown"**.

The concept can be, and often is, used in conjunction with any of the square dance movements in existence today, within any of the defined Callerlab programs, as well as any others that are still classed as experimental. Just think of the possibilities!

You can start with **Square Up & Breakdown**, or **Bow to Your Partner & Breakdown**. You can **Breakdown** individually or you can have the **man or lady breakdown**. You can **Breakdown as Couples** as well as individually, and not just from a single formation, but from any formation that is in use today, and possibly some that have not even been invented yet!

Breakdown works well within all levels, but is especially satisfying with higher level calls such as **Relay The Deucy & Breakdown**, **Motivate & Breakdown**, or even **Cast A Shadow & Breakdown**.

The real skills of square dancing come into effect with this movement. Some dancers may find it a difficult movement to master, but with practice, it will come naturally. There is, of course, a right way and a wrong way to *Breakdown*. The more skilful and experienced dancer will, however, master these in a very short time, often even after a single walk-thru.

Of course, the only way to *Breakdown*, is to TOTALLY BREAKDOWN. To totally *Breakdown*, the following 3 rules need to be applied.

1. Move completely out of position, usually to someone's spot that is already occupied.
2. Refuse to take anyone's hand or offer of help. If grabbed, take the grabber with you as it is even more satisfying assisting another to *Breakdown*.
3. Look from side to side, with glassy eyes, staring at nothing, while turning in a small circle, constantly shifting direction. This may sound difficult, but usually takes minimal effort and time to master.

If you practice and develop these skills, I am certain that you will realize that ***Anything & Breakdown*** is a fulfilling, rewarding and totally enjoyable concept that can be applied at any dance that you attend, be it club nights, special events or even festivals and conventions.

By the way, if you find yourself executing this concept when your caller has not called it, don't let it get you down. I am forever *Motivating* when I should be *Percolating*.



Of course the "*Breakdown Concept*" is not just applicable to dancers, it can be applied equally as well to callers and cuers. Some callers are even a bit on the sneaky side, as instead of just calling "*Anything & Breakdown*", some may try to mask the *Breakdown* within the guise of another call, or even a series of calls.

This has been seen at certain events where a caller used the movement Box Circulate from lesser used set-ups, without adding the "& *Breakdown*" follow-up command. Of course the dancers understood exactly what he was after and every single square on the floor automatically followed his unspoken "*Breakdown*" command.

Some callers use this sneaky way of using *Breakdown* so often that many of the dancers are well and truly prepared to *Breakdown* to those particular callers.

The expectation is automatically present, even though some callers may go to great lengths to hide the *Breakdown* command within other calls that seem reasonable (to them anyway).

The resulting *Breakdowns* can only be described as total. This method of using *Breakdown* is really not recommended, as while it seems that the callers in question derive great enjoyment from use of the call, there may be some dancers who do not have quite the same reaction. And may not find it quite as amusing.

A Successful Club

Author And Origin Unkown

This article comes from an unknown Square Dance publication from about 45 years ago, It applies the same today as it did then; not just to our Square Dance groups, but to our Associations, our Dancers, our Cuers and Callers.

A successful Club depends on many, and varied things. These include good dancing, good fellowship, a good caller, a good location, a regular night of the week, area acceptance and area location – to name just a few.

The clique mystique. We often hear of cliques as a problem in some clubs, but there is a certain clique that must develop in order to keep a club together. That is the clique that sees to it that things actually get done. It is, indeed, a rare group, organisation or club where all jobs are shared equally among the members. This is a “hoped for thing” but in reality, it is seldom accomplished.

Most clubs have certain workers that just pitch in and get things done. This is a clique, one which we would like to encourage everyone to join. Actually, most clubs contain many cliques. Webster's first definition of a clique reads:

“A small exclusive circle of people”.

Now the clique I refer to above does not mean to be exclusive. The fact that others do not pitch in to help just makes it an exclusive group, through no fault of its own. This is a clique of doers with no title or satisfaction other than it just happens.

But if we take it further now? Isn't your own circle of friends a clique? Do you mean to keep others out? Probably not, but because of mutual dislikes and likes, shared hobbies and interests and other factors both in and out of your control, you seem to be drawn together. If it wasn't for circles of friends (cliques), most people would not continue to Square Dance. As a matter of fact, there are those who drop out of our clubs (and Square Dancing as an activity) because they just don't seem to fit in into any circle of friends (clique).

Sometimes it is their own fault; because they withdraw into themselves and just don't relax and get into the fun. We encourage people to mix and become better acquainted, but if we don't get them accepted in to a circle of friends (clique), then often they just drift away to find another hobby where they will feel more accepted.

I don't think “clique” is a dirty word as some folks seem to feel. I believe each club is made up of a group of cliques; we just try to get them together to share the fun at our dances. We hope we are successful.

The cliques get together to plan dances, they get together for pizza, for lunch, or snacks after dances; they get together to travel to dances near and far. Our entire Society is just a large group of cliques consisting of our circle of friends, our relatives, our fellow workers, our church group, and perhaps a dozen more isolated groups that may or may not intertwine in our lives.

Let us not 'knock' the clique; rather let us try to be more successful in getting the groups to work together and to have fun. You can't have a whole club over for snacks at your house (given numbers today, it sure is possible now), but you can have your own little clique over, and this is what it really all boils down to. We just do not want one clique fighting another, but rather working together for a common cause – the enjoyment of everyone with the total group.

How about joining a clique?

Insights

- Some of the most important problems we face as we grow old are poor memory, tiredness, lack of sleep, poor memory, aching muscles, not enough hours in the day and poor memory.
- There are 2 kinds of people at parties. Those who want to go home early and those who want to be the last to leave. The trouble is that they are usually married to each other.
- Next to a beautiful girl, sleep is the most wonderful thing in the world.
- Behind every successful man stands a surprised wife.
- Why a man would want a wife is a mystery to some people. Why a man would want more than one wife is a “bigamystery”.
- A woman with a past attracts men who hope that history will repeat itself.
- The best way to save face is to keep the lower half shut.
- A Lawyer is a man who helps you get what's coming to him.
- Neurotics build castles in the air. Psychotics live in them. Psychiatrists collect the rent.
- A bank is an institution where you can borrow money, provided you can show sufficient evidence that you do not need it.
- Under Communism, it's "Dog Eat Dog". Under Capitalism it is the reverse.
- The time spent on making progress reports restricts the time allocated for progress, so stability can only be achieved when all time is spent reporting on the lack of progress.
- Behind every beautiful woman...there is a beautiful behind.
- There are more important things in the world than money....but they won't go out with you if you don't have any!
- Did you know that Limbo dancing was invented by a Scotsman trying to enter a pay toilet?
- Did you hear about the gay tattoo artist who has designs on several of the local sailors?

Our Music

Over recent times, I have released several Singing Calls and Hoedowns on A&S Records in the USA. Like any caller, I am always on the lookout for new music to use. We callers always have favourites, but we are also always in need of 'new' stuff that re-invigorates our interest. For many years I regularly purchased new records (what on earth is a record?) and still do. However; in general listening to the radio, I periodically come across a song or two that has never been cut as a Singing Call. For many years I used to make a list of all these that I felt would work as Singing Calls, and to fantasize that one day I would get around to contacting one of the record producers and ask them to do some of these. A few of the record producers have been guests with us on occasion and I have suggested some titles to them. Years ago, I suggested 'From a Chevy to a Lincoln' (an old Sugar & Dave song) to Al Horn (who owned PMDOU music at that time). He actually created the music and asked me to provide a vocal. Likewise with 'Seven Little Girls' that Paul Bristow (Sting) released.

These were just odd occasions, and I had never given more than an occasional thought to the idea until at the Canberra National a few years ago when I was talking to Jeff Van Sambeeck, who had created the music to 'The Carnival Is Over' specifically for use at that National. I thought the song worked well, and after negotiating with the Convention Committee (who had commissioned that piece) had Jeff re-work his original piece to what I wanted, and then released it thru Bob Shiver at A&S records. The background work (licensing etc) was not too hard, and I was happy with the result. The recording paid for itself and that led to me suggesting other titles to Jeff (and Jeff suggesting some to me as well).

Since then we have done several tunes that have all been well received – Rip Rip Woodchip, I Have A Dream, and a number of others. Jeff had also done a waltz, just for his own interest, and he asked me if I wanted to use it as a Round Dance and write some choreography. I liked what he had done and came up with choreography that I thought fitted well to the musical phrasing. I did a vocal, and again released via A&S. This tune, "I Still Call Australia Home", was presented as a showcase at our National Convention that year and won both dancer and cuer popularity polls, and thus was added to our National List. It was also featured at many Round Dance events overseas where it was also voted as the most popular in the Phase 2 – Phase 3 category. I have always loved Round Dancing and am still amazed that my very first attempt at Round Dance Choreography, A Million Tomorrows, was a hugely popular dance all those years ago, and is still on a 'classics' from Roundalab.

Below are some of the ones that have been done over the last year or so and are all available from A&S Records:=

- **AS 136 - IF I ONLY HAD A BRAIN** – from the 1939 classic movie, 'The Wizard Of Oz'. This song was sung (and danced) by Ray Bolger. A fantastic Harold Arlen tune.
<https://www.asrecordshop.com/index.php?action=listingview&listingID=2494>
- **AS 137- GUNG HO Hoedown #1** – A medley of Army and Marines music with "Halls of Montezuma", and "As the caissons go Marching Along" (lyrics were later changed to 'army' instead of 'caissons').
<https://www.asrecordshop.com/index.php?action=listingview&listingID=2495>
- **AS 138 – A MAN NAMED ARMSTRONG** – this was a Top 40 hit record for Australia's legendary Country singer, Reg Lindsay in 1971. It was penned in 1969 by another legend, John Stewart, from the Kingston Trio. Another country artist, Lobo, also did a good cover version in 1974, however the Reg Lindsay version is the one that is remembered here in Australia. I thought that this was an ideal song, given the recent release of the new film based on Neil Armstrong's contribution to the history books "First Man". <https://www.asrecordshop.com/index.php?action=listingview&listingID=2496>
- **AS 139 – AND YOU SMILED** – the music for this one should be familiar to many...it was written as the main theme to the English TV series 'Van Der Valk' in the 70's and was a hugely popular record on the hit parade. The original title was EYE LEVEL. It became a #1 hit and, in the UK, sold over 1,000,000 copies and was listed as one of the 12 best-selling singles of the 1970's. Some years later, lyrics were added, and it became a successful release for Matt Munro. The music for the Singing Call has come up

well. The problem I have with these nowadays is in recording the vocal. Each vocal is done live at a dance...problem for me is that my calling skills have deteriorated somewhat since the stroke last year and I now struggle to get it right to the point where I am satisfied!!! (maybe the problem was always there!!)

<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: A nice smooth patter for a relaxed hoedown.

SCHLAGER BOUNCE: This one has a much more peppy feel to- great for getting a flow really hopping.

DESERT WIND: An up-tempo ballad written by the Pigram Brothers'

LOOKING FORWARD, LOOKING BACK: An iconic song – the last hit for Slim Dusty.

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:

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

MORE SINGING CALLS COMING SOON from Barry on Tracy's labels:

- UNTO US THIS HOLY NIGHT;
- WILLIE, WAYLON & ME;
- CRUISIN DOWN THE RIVER;
- WALK RIGHT IN;
- BANJO SAME

Square Dance - Daffynitions

- **PARTNER:** That person who is looking for you while the other couples are Promenading.
- **CORNER:** That person who will soon be your partner, but by the time you realise it, is already your opposite.
- **RIGHT & LEFT GRAND:** A frantic search for partners.
- **EIGHT CHAIN THRU;** Right & Left Grand done by squares who dance in narrow hallways.
- **DIVE THRU:** A means by which the caller discovers how many dancers are wearing wigs.
- **CALIFORNIA TWIRL:** An opportunity for all in the square to discover who didn't use their 'mum'. (Australian deodorant brand for those trying to figure out the label)
- **HOEDOWN:** A form of dancing favoured by callers with poor memories for Singing Calls.
- **GUEST CALLER:** Caller who really only came to dance, has a terrible cold, wouldn't think of calling, but just happens to have a couple of music tracks on a flash drive or record and a microphone with him.
- **TIP:** That special hint that many new Australian callers wait for at a caller's school when the North American instructors say after all the instruction, this is a good tip for structure...then proceeds to call an Australian Dance Bracket (patter and singing call)

A Tourist Guide To Aussie English

TOURIST GUIDE TO AUSSIE ENGLISH



Get buggered up (Get fouled up)



Petrol (gasoline)

Tyre (tire)

Auto (Means of transport)

She's "gone crook" over that bearskin



Two MATES share a joke



Buying TUCKER (shopping)



STIRRER (practical jokester)



Give it a go (go to it)



To Billet (host) you in a home

Supper (Evening meal or intermission snack)



Look at the BEAUT show!

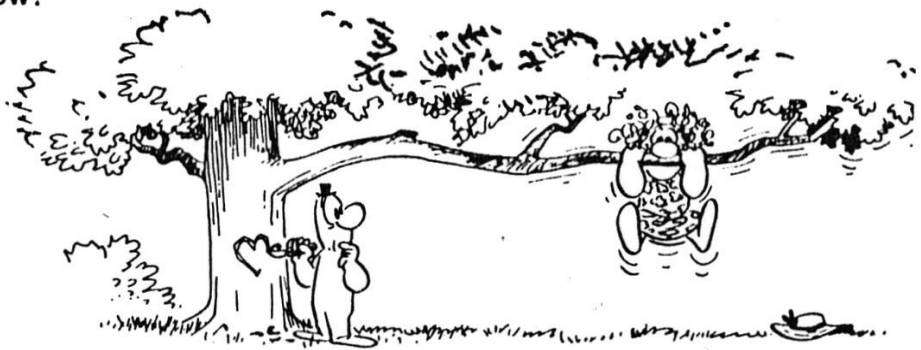
Give way (yield)



Take Away Food (Carry-out)



SUMMER HOUSE
(Some'r for men, some'r for women)



She'll be right (Everything is fine)

Ask Dr. Allemander

by Glenn Ickler with some additions by Barry Wonson

Dear Dr. Allemander: *During all those months in the desert in the Middle East and the other places we have sent our boys and girls in uniform, did any of the troops ever get to do any square dancing?*

I.M. Retired, Puckapunyal, Vic .

Dear Mr. Retired: Of course our troops had a chance to square dance in the desert. When they were in Saudi Arabia, did you not hear General Schwarzkopf's explanation of what happened? He said the planners decided not to pass the ocean, and instead to circle left from their home position. Many of the armoured divisions proceeded in single file towards their goal. Then they did a bend the line, a veer right, and a zoom as they passed to the centre of Kuwait.

Even the Iraqis got a chance to square dance. When they found themselves in a crossfire, they decided to fold and did a U turn back, a walk and dodge, and a wrong way thar back home.

Dr. A.L. "Lefty" Allemander, PhD., gives advice to the dancelorn on a regular basis in this space. He says that as the troops return home, we should all replace our yellow ribbons with yellow rocks.

Dear Dr. Allemander: *I have noticed over the years that the only thing square dancers seem to enjoy as much as dancing, is eating. Are there any calls that combine these best of all possible worlds?*

IMA CHUBBY, Roundsville, Tas.

Dear Ima: Of course there are, and Dr. Allemander is astonished that you have never been at a dance where any of these were called. Surely someone has taught you the latest **PLUS EXPERIMENTALS**, "Load The Plate" or "Relay The Apple Pie"? At Mainstream there is the ever popular "Eight Chain Chew", and the Basic "All Eight Masticate".

There are also such standards as "Walk and Hog", "Spin Chain and Exchange the Recipes" as well as the other member of the 'Relay' family... "Relay The Cookie". When you reach the A2 Program you will be taught the classic refreshment figure "All 8 Dip The Chip" and the most useful "Cut the Cake".

Dr. A.L. "Lefty" Allemander gives advice to the dancelorn in this space on a regular basis. Watch for him at coffee time as you circle left around the goodie table.

Dear Dr. Allemander: Shakespeare created concerns over dancing on specific days when he gave us the famous quotation "Beware the Ides Of March". Is this day one to be wary of in our dancing calendar?

S.D. KATT, Na Na Ghoul, Vic.

DEAR S.D. Of course not. These lines were penned by William Shakespeare who was a strong advocate of Square Dancing at any time of the year.

For instance, in *Much Ado About Nothing*, we find the line "**There was a star danced and under that I was born.**" You may ask, "How Do we know He Meant Square Dancing?" Because in *Richard II* he wrote the line "**I see Thy Glory like a shooting star.**" This is a definite clear reference to the well know Square Dance call in the Basic Program.

We even know that Shakespeare did not like it when the square broke down. This is very obvious in the following lines from *Richard II*:

"How sour sweet music is When Time is broke And no proportion kept"

Another Square Dancing concept is mentioned in this line from *The Winter's Tale*:

**"When you do dance
I wish you a wave of the sea,
That you might ever do nothing but that"**

It is also well known that some of the most famous lines from Shakespeare's works were changed over the years because the people copying the manuscripts had poor handwriting skills. Here are how the lines were originally written:

"All the world's a square, And all the men and women Merely Dancers."

This one as well:

"Bubble, bubble, toil and trouble, Swing Thru and do it Double"

And of course this one:

"To square or not to square, That is the question"

And of course, Romeo spoke the words that describe how we all feel at the end of a square dance:

"Good night, good night! Parting is such sweet sorrow"

And there you have it from one of the leading lights in the Square Dancing Community, Dr. Al Le Mander, a man whose judgment is uncompromising, whose knowledge is unsurpassed and whose personality is unremarkable. Dr. Al told me that his favourite line from Shakespeare is: "**Lord, what fools these callers be**".

(The "Dr. Allemander" columns were originally written by Glenn Ickler back in the 1970's and 80's for the *New England Dancer Magazine*. Some have been updated to have a more current application, but the general themes are still the same and are universal. – Barry)

Why I Cling to Life

A Businessman's reply to a request for a donation.

“For the following reasons I am unable to send you a donation. I have been held up, held down, sandbagged, walked upon, sat upon, flattened out and squeezed by the Income Tax, the Super Tax, the Sales Tax, the Tobacco Tax, the Beer Tax, the Spirits Tax, the Road Tax, the Motor Tax, the GST Tax, and by every Society, Association, Organization, and Club that the inventive mind of man can think of to extract what I may or may not have in my possession – for the Red Cross, The Black Cross, the Blue Cross, the Ivory Cross, and the Double Cross, and for every hospital in town and country.

The Government has suspected, suspended, examined and re-examined, informed, inquired, required and commanded so that I don't know who I am, where I am, what I am, or why I am here at all. All I know is that I am supposed to be an inexhaustible supply of money for every need, desire, or hope of the human race, and because I will not go out and beg, borrow or steal money to give away, I am cursed, discussed, boycotted, talked to, talked about, lied to, lied about, held up, hung up, rung up, strung up, robbed and damn-near ruined. The only reason I am clinging to life at all is to see what the hell is going to happen next!”

PUZZLE TIME

At the Annual Caller's Roundup Special Dance, six callers showed up to demonstrate their talents. One of these callers was KEVIN. Each caller ended his tip with his favourite singing call. One of these was “My Way”. From the following clues you should be able to determine the favourite singing call of each caller and the tip in which he sang that number.

1 HOWARD and the caller who sang “I'll Get Over You” came in the same car, but they got lost on the way and arrived too late for the first two tips.

2 STEVE, who dislikes “Rockin In Rasoalie's Boat” because he thinks it is overdone, called the second tip after “I'll Get Over You” was sung, but immediately before ELAINE called her tip.

3 The six callers were: PETER, the one who sang “Summer Sounds”, the one who sang “Something Bout You Baby I Like”, the one who sang “Some Broken Hearts”, the one who called the fourth tip, and the one who called the fifth tip.

4 “Summer Sounds” was sung after BARRY's tip, but before “Something Bout You Baby I Like” was sung (not necessarily consecutively).

WHO SANG WHAT & IN WHICH TIP? (answers later in magazine)

Hypocrisy of the Roundalab "Phase System"

by Ed Foote (reprinted from American square Dance Magazine)

ROUNDALAB has put its various dance steps into lists, called "Phases." When people graduate from a round dance beginner's class, they have been exposed to all the steps in Phase 2, so they are ready to dance Phase 2 rounds. No one seems to know what Phase 1 is. We never hear this term. It seems to be anything that is prior to Phase 2.

Next comes Phase 3 with more steps, and on up to Phase 6, which is the highest program.

The rounds at most square dances (commonly referred to as "square dance level rounds") are Phase 2 and Phase 3, with an occasional Phase 4 included.

THE PROBLEM

The problem exists in that ROUNDALAB allows rounds that have one or two steps from the next Phase to be included in the previous Phase. This is what is known in Round Dancing as the "Plus" program. It means whatever the advertised phase level is "Plus" movements from the next higher phase level.

A Phase 2 round allows inclusion of a maximum of one or two Phase 3 steps. (If it has three or more Phase 3 steps, then it is called Phase 3.). This means that Phase 2 round may be

- a. Pure Phase 2, (no additional movements or additions to the program) or,
- b. Phase 2 + 1 (one movement from the phase 3 program) or,
- c. Phase 2 + 2 (two movements from the phase 3 program).

However; "Plus 1" or "Plus 2" in round dancing can be any steps from the next program. This means that the first round at Phase 2 can have two Phase 3 steps, then the next round can have one or two **different** Phase 3 steps, then the next round can have two more different steps, and so on.

What this means is that Phase 2 dancers, dancing anywhere outside of their own club where the Cuer knows their abilities, are required to learn most of the Phase 3 steps. If they do not know the next higher level, or at least most of the next higher-level steps, they will not be able to dance many of the rounds at the advertised Phase 2 level dance.

The same thing can happen at other Phases. You can have Phase 3 + 2, Phase 4 + 1 and so on. **So whatever Phase the dancers are doing, they had better know many of the steps from the next Phase.**

A COMPARISON.

Suppose a caller is hired to call a Plus dance. Just before the first tip he announces: "Although this is a Plus tip, I am going to toss in two Advanced calls," and he names them. Then, before the second tip he says: "In this tip I am going to use one Advanced call," and he names it, which is different from the two calls in the first tip. He keeps doing this throughout the night.

- Tip one Plus +2 (Swap Around and Cross Cloverleaf)
- Tip 2 Plus +1 (Cast A Shadow)
- Tip 3 Plus +2 (Horseshoe Turn and Mix)
- Tip 4 Plus +2 (Chain Reaction and Square Chain Thru)
- Tip 5 Plus +1 (Double/Triple star thru)

What do you think the response of the Plus dancers would be? The hall would be in an uproar! Dancers would be coming to the caller and yelling: "How dare you put Advanced calls into a Plus tip! We should not have to know Advanced in order to dance Plus."

Of course, the dancers would be right, and no excuse the caller might make could be justified. The club, or any club, would likely not hire that caller in the future, and the behaviour would probably be reported to the Ethics Committee of CALLERLAB.

But this is only hypothetical — something like this does not happen in the real world, right? Not true. **As we have seen, it happens all the time in round dancing.**

ASKING THE QUESTION.

The question is **WHY?** Why does the round dance community permit this mixing of programs, thereby forcing dancers to know much of the next program so they can dance the previous program? Why is round dancing not true to its programs the way square dancing is?

In an effort to learn the answers, I have talked with numerous round dance Cuers. What amazes me is that most of them think this situation is perfectly acceptable. The typical comments are: "It's always been done this way," or "We have to cue them the way they are written." One Cuer said: "It's wonderful, because it forces the dancers to learn the next Phase."

My question is: Where is ROUNDALAB on this issue?

Why do callers in CALLERLAB stick precisely to the advertised program, but members of ROUNDALAB have no problem with violating its advertised programs?

Why do we have years of Cuers not following advertised labels and years of writers intentionally writing material that blends across programs?

THE SOLUTION.

There is a simple three-part solution to this problem. Unfortunately, it is unlikely ever to be implemented.

1. **Round dancers need to begin complaining to Cuers who use Plus commands in their cuing.** This would bring pressure to bear, because Cuers would tell ROUNDALAB that this was occurring.
 - But this is unlikely to happen. Round dancers don't want to "rock the boat," they don't want to possibly upset a Cuer with whom they are friendly, and their attitude is: "We've lived with it this way, so we can continue doing so."
2. **ROUNDALAB needs to tell its members that in the future NO rounds should be written with Plus commands.** Also, ROUNDALAB should tell its members that if a new round is written with Plus commands, Cuers should not use that round.
 - But ROUNDALAB has never done this, so it is unlikely to do so now. ROUNDALAB has closed its eyes to the fact that a problem exists.
3. **ROUNDALAB needs to tell its members that in the future advertised Phases should be followed exactly, with NO "+1" or "+2" from the next Phase.** Also, if an existing dance has a Plus command in it, the Cuer should consider changing that command.
 - This will never happen, because of a ridiculous **unwritten** rule that exists in the minds of Cuers; namely, that once a round is written, not one command in that round can be changed.

If you suggest to a Cuer that a round dance would be better if a command were changed, that Cuer will look at you with shock, as though you have just insulted the flag, motherhood and apple pie, and as though the IRS would descend upon them should they to do so. Forget that the round as written is not copyrighted nor has any legal standing. Forget that the suggestion may be good, because it makes the dance easier to perform or understand. No, the fact is that Cuers are paranoid about changing anything from the way it was written.

SUMMARY. Regrettably, nothing is going to change because, as the Cuers say: "It's always been done this way," and the dancers don't seem to care because they let the Cuers get away with it.

Round dance participation is down in this country, and many areas have a severe shortage of Cuers. Maybe the dancers have finally gotten fed up with being forced to always learn the commands of the next Phase. Round dance leaders need to consider this.

By allowing the next Phase to bleed in to the advertised Phase, ROUNDALAB has long endorsed the idea that to dance any given Phase, you must learn many of the commands of the next Phase. Illogical, but that's the way it is. What a sad situation.

Pet Peeves – The silent voice

As a caller and a dancer there are certain aspects of what happens on the floor that I truly dislike. The following is one thing that I truly hate, along with many, many others. Many will talk in private and voice their complaint but usually they remain the silent minority who just accept what is happening. They don't like it, but don't want to say something that may create other problems:

PET PEEVE: Lengthy Promenades during hoedowns (patter calling).

At a National convention not too long ago, I was dancing with a bunch of friends on the Friday Night. The bracket (tip) was the usual marathon of Singing Call, Hoedown & Singing Call (*there will likely be more on “bracket structure” this later on*).

The caller who did the hoedown, was a well-known caller. He started off with a standard Opener Routine, that ended with an Allemande Left with corner, on the opposite side of the square (everyone half way from home), then had everyone do a Right & Left Grand (which put everyone exactly at their home positions) and then he called a Promenade. This meant that everyone had to walk around for a full 16 beats to get back to exactly where they started from. What a waste of time and energy! To make matters worse, he also used a number of routines that also finished with an Allemande Left at opposite side of the set, another Right & Left Grande, and another 16 beat Promenade!

This was done at least a half dozen times in the hoedown! What this means is that basically the dancers spent a third of the dance or more just doing “Right and left grand and Promenade”.

I think that we as callers owe the dancers more respect than this. I do understand that some callers have the idea that at Nationals they are wary of using any choreography that is out of the ordinary or unusual, but just using a lot of singing call routines in a hoedown is not necessarily fun for the dancers. The whole point of our hoedowns is to present material that is danceable, interesting, possibly challenging, and to give them a 'wow' factor of , “How did he do that”?

The only factors involved in the case mentioned is “**Why did he do that**”? I really don't see a great deal of point in presenting a hoedown that is just made up of simplistic routines, coupled with lots of Allemandes, Right & Left Grands, Circle Lefts, Thars, Weaves and Promenades.

At same convention I also danced another bracket where the caller, in his hoedown, literally used a rubber band method of sight calling where he just kept 4 dancers rotating on their side of the square the entire time. Mind you, he eventually broke it up with an Allemande Left, and you guessed it, another Right & Left Grand and a Promenade. He started off with a Heads Square Thru, then just worked with that Side couple for a whole lot of calls, screwing everyone into the ground by doing nothing but walk in a circle. He then proceeded to do the same thing with Sides as actives in the centre.

We do not necessarily have to go overboard with far out choreography, but we do need to look closely at the material we use. It is necessary always to keep the

dancers moving, continuously change temporary partners and moving the dancers all around the set. We have a huge amount of formations and calls that are available to us in the Basic Program, more at the Mainstream program and even more in the plus program. It is up to us to use those movements at every applicable level for the dancer's benefit with good, flowing, interesting choreography. The dancers want to have fun - they do not want to be bored or get dizzy from going around and around in circle.

Callers need to be aware of the material you use and be watchful of what it does to and for the dancers on the floor.

Editorial note:

This article mentions the silent Majority but even the silent minority needs a voice.

If you have a "Pet Peeve", we would love to hear from you. Tell us what your pet peeve is, and why. Outline what you think, and we would love to hear about it. Too often dancers do not want to say anything to callers and callers too often do not even know that the dancers do not really like one specific "pet peeve" thing they are doing in an overall great dance. This is your chance to let them know.

If you do not wish to have your name published, we will respect that and, like this article, post and publish it as a "general topic item"

What do you have as a pet peeve that you want to get off of your dancing chest? Some topic suggestions from dancers include:

- Hoedown length: how did 5-minute records turn into 8-10 minute hoedowns?
- New music is not necessarily good music. It doesn't attract the young folks.
- Can't sing it – then please don't try.
- Rush to Plus – why can't dancers dance the basics any more?
- Petti pants chafe my thighs. Why do we wear 1950s hoop skirts and crinolines calling them traditional? They started wearing them to get young ladies involved.
- Turn up the music, turn down the music etc – why do callers play with the volume controls during the song
- Why is there a Round-Up (grand march) at nearly every bracket during our Australian conventions? Don't the caller's know that 10 Round-ups to make squares is at least 2 full brackets we could be dancing rather than standing around waiting?
- Three songs in a bracket is too many, especially when the patter is more than 4 minutes long. Save that two-song thing for the end and shorten the patter.

We don't just want suggestions – we want your thoughts and your voice. Send it to us and tell us what your pet peeve is. You can bet, you are likely not alone.

You're Starting a What?

By Glenn Rogerson

Both our square dancing friends and our non-dancing friends thought we were crazy when we announced we were starting a club. The argument from the square dancers was; “We don’t need another club; square dancing is dwindling away”. **We did it anyway.**

First a little background. The most important thing you need to know about us, is that we both love a challenge. So, when we took up square dancing four years ago, we wanted a “fast-track”, we didn’t know we wanted it, or that we would have to build it. But we went “to check it out” in the spring (too late for lessons) and the caller, said “never mind, we’ll teach you on the fly”. So, this is how we learned:

- Six months of “on the fly” Mainstream,
- one round of “Angeling” Mainstream lessons,
- two sets of Plus lessons at the same time,
- six months of custom instruction in DBD/APD,
- 18 months of running Austin Plus Dancers,
- six months of custom A1/A2 instruction.

Here we are; four years later and we are really happy with our dancing, as I write this, we just came back from a very technical weekend of A2 and did very well, only four months after graduating A2.

Why start a Plus club? We didn’t plan to start a club. What we wanted was to learn better, more deeply. We were at the Plus level attending every weekend and dancing every “bonus tip” of Plus we could at MS dances. But it never felt like we were getting the focus we needed. And our friends seemed to feel the same way. So, we decided to get a square together and hire a caller to work with a single square in our dining room.

Planning was key! Before we ever put that first square together, I knew we needed a clear road map, so both we and the caller knew where we wanted to go. So, I resolved to come up with a list defining both the current state and the desired outcomes. The list was later extended when we converted to a club.

Basic Assumptions & Observations List:

1. Many dancers were never taught call definitions.
2. Most dancers don’t have necessary knowledge or skills to judge their abilities.
3. Most dancers don’t know how much callers “hold back” to “call to the floor”.
4. Most dancers don’t know what it’s like to dance at a high level or to better choreography.

5. Most dancers don't know what APD / DBD is and fear it.
6. There is no organized and accessible program to advance dancers after they graduate lessons. Dancers have been left to their own devices when it comes to gaining experience. They are told to go out and get "floor time".
7. Some dancers don't care to dance better, "good enough" is O.K.
8. Dancers cannot progress, dancing in squares that don't challenge them.
9. "Floor time" without instruction is a difficult and painful way to get experience.
10. Workshops have limited effectiveness they are infrequent, and lack focus.
11. "Angeling" at lessons has limited effectiveness as the level is always "beginner".
12. Square dance quality degrades because of the aforementioned causes.
13. Most dancers want to dance well.
14. Callers want to provide the best entertainment possible to dancers.
15. Dancers need to be taught about all aspects of square dancing to advance.
16. Callers can only get better if they have better dancers to work with.
17. Plus does not "stand alone", it includes Basic, Mainstream and APD / DBD.
18. A caller who likes to teach is worth their weight in gold.

The Chopped Livers. We all knew what we wanted was a "workshop program" that wasn't random but one that built on itself each week. So, we formed a square and found a like-minded caller in Dan Clairmont. One week he abandoned us for a prior engagement, and the running joke was that we were treated like "chopped liver", and so became our de-facto name.

We started with the basics, literally. We spent three weeks killing bad habits, and reinforcing MS definitions with APD, and we continued working MS definitions, even as we went through the whole Plus list using APD/DBD as a means to strengthen our knowledge of the definitions. This attention to detail and focused workshopping served us well when the Chopped Livers formed once again in our dining room to learn Advanced (A1/A2).

When word of our success got out, it was apparent that the need was more universal, and the pressure to turn it into a full-fledged club, became over-whelming. We knew we didn't want a traditional club structure, the old truism is: "If you want to kill something, send it to committee", so we organized as a couple run club called Austin Plus Dancers (APD).

Later, when we moved our attentions to Advanced, we turned it over to Dan and Gail to run as a caller run club. We also knew we wanted a club where "workshopping" was the norm, so we de-emphasized the social aspects and focused on the dancing. It isn't for everyone, there are dancers who still don't understand why we do APD, or why we don't do parties or themed dances. Many of these that do not understand what we were looking for in the club also do not understand why

we do computer assigned squares. Simply put, for us it facilitates better learning to split couples up.

The club still flourishes today under the following tenants and schedule:

Program Tenets:

- The “Program” must progress, the aim is not to hit any certain level and graduate, but to keep all dancers advancing.
- Instruction must address the root causes of problems.
- It will educate the dancers about all aspects of dancing, call definitions, etiquette, styling, organizations, elements of complexity, calling.
- APD/DBD is taught, not only as a means to itself, but more importantly to strengthen the dancer’s knowledge of the definitions.
- The “Program” will emphasize the “when in Rome” creed. Special care must be taken to not create Square Dance Snobs.
- Personal responsibility is emphasized.
- Workshop tips, study groups and dance tips are used to combine learning with practice/fun.
- The curriculum should advance as fast as the dancers can absorb it.

Schedule of Event’s. Originally, we didn’t offer lessons, we were meant to be the “next step” after lessons. But we have since relented to demand and offer lessons once a year.

The main events are the nine week workshops offered twice a year. They start, as we originally did, with fixing and strengthening MS definitions and then move into re-teaching the Plus curriculum with a focus on the deeper knowledge that comes with APD/DBD usage.

Were we crazy? For years, the pressure on dance quality has been in the downward direction. Call to the floor, graduate everyone regardless of ability, now call to a lower floor. No competition in town? The local caller relaxes and doesn’t improve nor do the dancers.

We believe that putting pressure on the community to improve the quality of the dance is the first step to bringing back the glory days of square dancing. Expect more from your dancers, give them the resources they need, and they will give you more.

Were we crazy? Maybe. Starting a club isn’t for the faint hearted, but we found a need we had and solved it for others as well. Most dancers in Austin, will tell you that the level of dancing and the strength of the community have both gotten better over the last two or three years ... even if they can’t tell you why.

Poets Corner

FRIENDS by Norm Gifford, Illinois (1970's)

I'm afraid to travel to other clubs 'cause I don't know anyone there.

I'm afraid I don't know all the calls; and might break down the square.

Well, everyone feels just the same, Each tip they're apprehensive.

But when the tip is over, their apprehension's gone.

They've met new friends to dance with, and the bond is really strong.

The next tip when you're up to dance, six friends are on the floor.

And when the tip is over, you have even more.

By the time the dance is over, you have many, many friends.

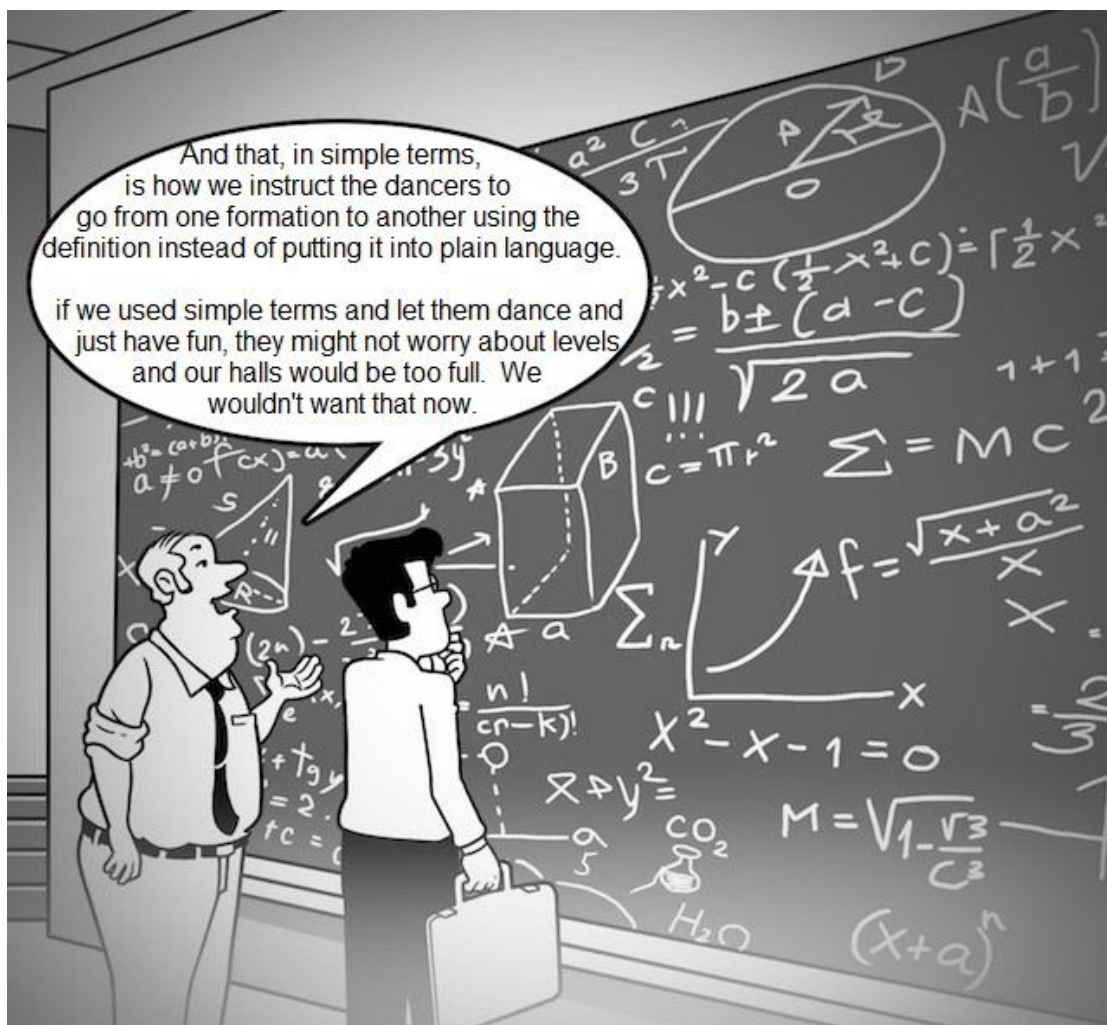
They wish you a safe journey home, and do come back again.

And best of all is when you're out, to shop or just to look,

You'll find that they are everywhere, your name is in their book

So let's go out and make some friends, for us and for our club

And find that dancing's really fun, for us, and everyone.



IN-DEPTH : Taking a deeper look at aspects of our activity

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

Just Let them dance!!

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

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

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

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

I am so sick of stop-and-go "dancing." If students never get the chance to feel the wind in their face, they think that it is normal, proper and that they need to stop after nearly every call to see where they are! They move way too slowly! **THIS IS THE FAULT OF THE TEACHER.** Deborah stated the reason for this is that the caller is "teaching", and not calling. She went on to say that the callers who are doing this are creating these "stop and go" drills rather than dancing. Although there are massive amounts of prompt teaching rather than calling, she gave two simple examples to clearly make the point as follows:

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

- If you taught it correctly and have explained the facing couple rule, the dancers should know that it is an automatic move on their part to create the wave momentarily in order to perform the ocean wave call,

2. Stop saying "Turn that Girl"!!!

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

like “Turn that girl” as a delivery habit, then you are timing the calls and the dance for yourself and not for the dancers.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mike Luna Commented: Teach and Walk through the Basics program and let them dance for a year. Then teach the Mainstream program and let them dance for a year. Then teach all positions Basics and Mainstream programs and let them dance for a year. That is when they will be ready to learn the Plus program; because you need to know all positions Basics and Mainstream before learning Plus. Then they are ready to learn the Plus then let them dance for a year then teach all positions Plus and let them dance for a year. Now

you have a strong dancing club that has been dancing with you for 5 years. And you probably added many other dancers throughout those years who have been square dancing for years. When you let them dance, your club will grow.

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

Johnny Preston commented: that Age (of the dancers) must be taken into consideration and that the entire current paradigm of square dancing is now flawed. We need a much more predictable and routine product to present to new people. Taken to its extent, square dancing can be as difficult, if not more so than a game of chess. That is fine for chess players. He also noted that Mainstream has 68 calls with an almost innumerable combination of sequences available and has to have some controls put on it at the beginning.

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

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

- Circle Left, Right and Left Thru, Courtesy Turn etc. are individual movements.
- Teach them, use them and let them dance them in combinations to build confidence and have fun.

- Do not dance it for them with your words.
- Basic is a level, learn it, dance it, enjoy it -movement by movement.
- Repeat the same process of teach, learn and dance to each movement and each, and every, level.

A good caller can fill an evening with fun and variety with only about 10-15 movements. On a very first night open introduction, you can get them dancing and fill an evening with less than 10 movements, have them moving and doing the commands without talking them through what to do on each command. More importantly they are enjoying it, and you can build on that enjoyment and confidence. You can use the movements this way and that (innumerable combinations as Johnny Preston noted) and you as a caller can have fun with them and let them have fun – but only if you let them dance and be dancers not students for the entire time.

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

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

Dancers are chess players (*[sorry Johnny, but the analogy fits here](#)*). They are the chess players that someone, somewhere and somehow has made interested in the game. They are the chess players that want to play and enjoy the game with friends and family and strangers for the pure enjoyment of the game. They do not want to be Grand Masters, or even teachers, but are happy to share their knowledge with friend and family and help them learn. They even know where you can get help to learn to play the game if you like it.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

□ **HEADS**, Right hand in, **SQUARE THRU FOUR** hands go all the way around to face the corner, **DOSADO**, step to an ocean wave, **SWING THRU**, half by the right, half by

the left, **SPIN THE TOP**, half by the right, the girls go three and the boys move up, do the **RIGHT AND LEFT THRU**, pull her by and turn that girl, lines of four **SQUARE THRU THREE** hands only and get ready with the left hand, **ALLEMANDE LEFT**, come back to your partner **RIGHT AND LEFT GRAND...**

- **HEADS** do the **RIGHT AND LEFT THRU** and turn that girl, same heads, **PASS THE OCEAN**, **EXTEND**, straight ahead to a wave, **SWING THRU** half right, half left, **GIRL FOLD** behind the boy, **PEEL THE TOP** – boy go out girls cast left $\frac{3}{4}$ and the boy move up to the end, do the **RIGHT AND LEFT THRU** and turn that girl, **SQUARE THRU 3** to the corner, **ALEMANDE LEFT**.

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

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

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

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

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

- The new dancer has now been dancing full Plus with the club for two years. They have attended (16 plus nights in total)

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

Likewise, that new caller has in reality only called about 16 single tips by himself – with the help of the club caller and there he is calling a “full Plus” tip.

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

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

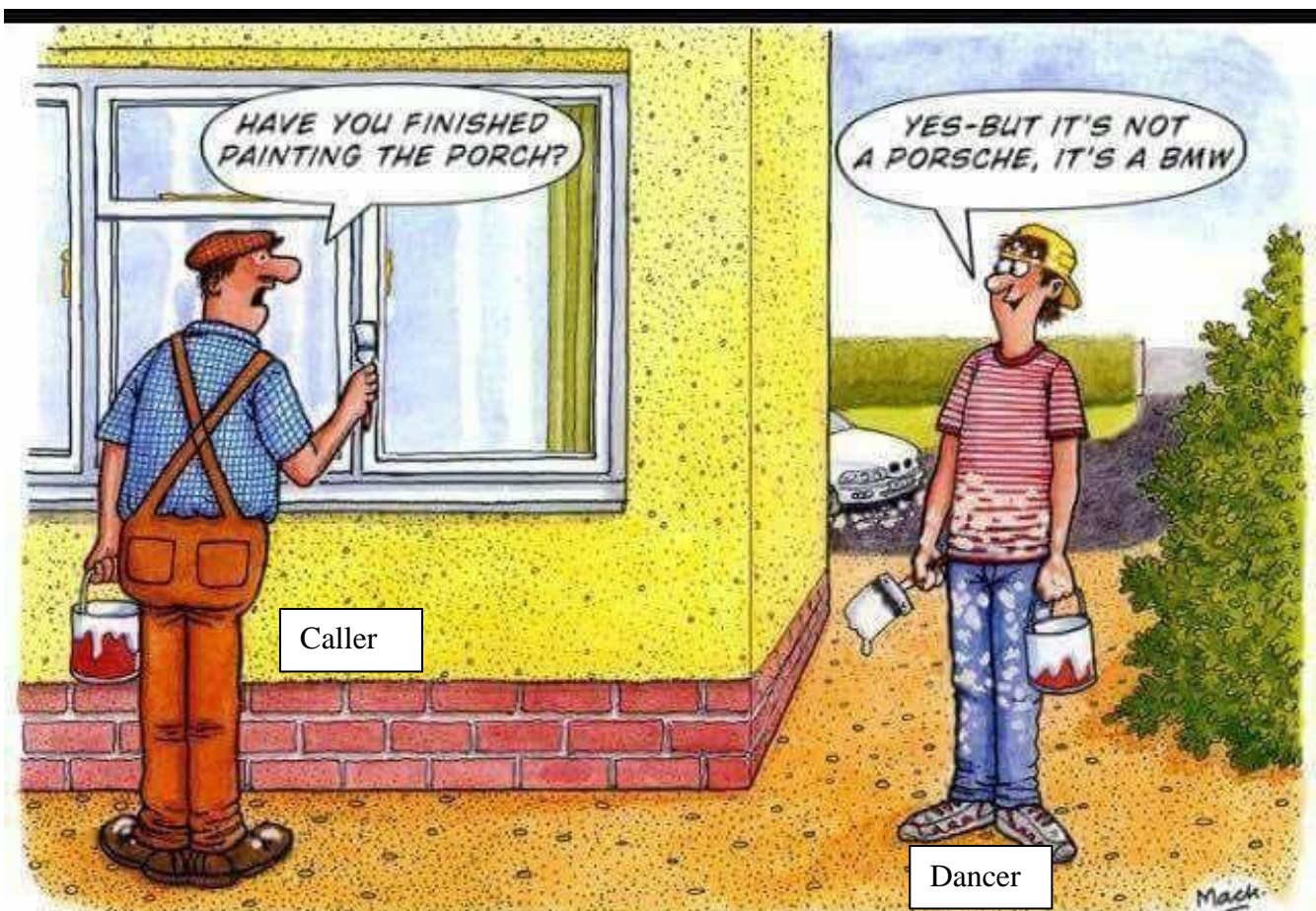
[Deborah Carroll-Jones](#), your Facebook post was excellent and I thank you for inspiring this article, albeit a little expanded from your likely initial intent.

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

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

=====

The power of good enunciation





CLOGGING IS HEALTHY

By Dewey & Bobby Paul, Dayton, Ohio, USA

This article appeared in the New England Square Dancer magazine many years ago, however the basic message is still the same.

Anyone who has ever clogged knows just how much fun it is, but what they might not show is just how healthy it is.

Clogging is a form of dance meets all the criteria of 'total exercise'. It provides the five essentials vital to a well-rounded exercise program. Total exercise should include stretching, toning, stress reduction, posture/coordination, as well as circulation/energy.

Clogging involves the use of all the large muscles of the body. Cloggers do a lot of pointing and flexing. This allows them to develop both muscular strength and muscular endurance. Cloggers also develop greater flexibility. This greater flexibility reduces their chances of injury while clogging or participating in other strenuous activities. Any activity that uses the large muscles and is done very smoothly and continuously is very effective for tuning and firming the muscles. Since firm muscles take up less space than flabby ones, you can obtain a better shape and form. When you clog, you use the muscles in front of the legs every time you point your toes in the direction of the floor. When the foot is in a flexed position, you use the muscles in the back of the legs. When your knees are slightly bent and you are transferring your weight from side to side, you are strengthening the broad surface muscles of the buttocks. Although the lower limbs receive the maximum benefits of clogging, you also tone and firm your abdominal muscles.

Clogging will aid in burning excess fat. When you clog, you take in more than the usual amount of oxygen. Taking in large amounts of oxygen means burning calories. This enables you to speed up the rate you burn fat and to rid the lungs of carbon dioxide. When clogging, natural continuous

breathing at moments of strain will make the difference between feeling exhausted and feeling invigorated. If you are extremely tired at the end, it may be because of the lack of oxygen in the body. You may be holding your breath while you try to figure out a difficult step. Because clogging is an aerobic activity (with oxygen), the body demands more than a normal amount of oxygen, therefore it is essential to breathe as deeply as possible. If you find yourself holding your breath, simply breathe deeply and try to relax.

Clogging will train the heart and lungs to work more efficiently, bringing more oxygen to the body and to the working muscles with less effort. The better condition you are in, the more effort you need to put into your clogging to give your heart and lungs a proper workout each time.

If you are serious about using clogging as a way to shape up, or as a way to stay in shape, you can look forward to a reduction in body fat, a decreased risk of heart attack, stroke and high blood pressure. You will notice an increased energy level and you will have more stamina. Clogging and other forms of aerobic exercise can greatly reduce your level of stress.

Don't ever think that you have to dance exactly the same way everyone else does. We all work with individually proportioned bodies. You have to progress at your own level and pace.

The important thing is to put maximum effort into your clogging. All dance movements begin in the centre of the body and move out. Always keep your body weight lifted and the waistline held tall. Breathe naturally and as freely as possible.

Pay attention to your instructor; feel good about doing what you are doing; relax and enjoy yourself!

PUZZLE PAGE ANSWERS:

1. BARRY W called "Some Broken Hearts"
2. KEVIN K called "Summer Sounds"
3. PETER H called "I'll Get Over You"
4. HOWARD C called "Rocking in Rosalie's Boat"
5. STEVE T called "My Way"
6. ELAINE D called "Something Bout You Baby I Like"

The above puzzle is based on an original idea presented in the New England Caller magazines over 30 years ago.

Finding The Right Caller For Your Club

by Debi Bliss

Every once in a while, it becomes necessary to find a new caller. Change of any type is difficult and finding a new caller is not always an easy task. Some areas are limited by the availability of callers but as long as your choice is more than just one there are a couple of things to keep in mind when deciding on a new caller.

1. **You are not going to make everybody happy** so get over that right away. I have yet to see a club who didn't have at least one member that threatened to quit if such-and-such caller was hired. Don't let this concern you, simply count this as a no vote that carries no more weight than any other vote. It may be in the best interest to lose one club member in order to make the club happier as a whole than to give in to the pressure from this one person only to find that others quietly slip away.
2. **Determine the characteristics of your club**. This is the time to take a good hard look at what kind of club you do have and decide if that is what you want or if it is time to make some changes. It's not enough to just say, "We are a Mainstream Club" or "We are a Plus Club" and then find a caller based on that one item.

Clubs have a personality of their own. I've labelled each of the three types but it is important to realize that no label is better than the next. People dance for different reasons and when dancers gather at a club with the same goals in mind then the only important issue is that they are having fun. You will even find that clubs are really a combination of characteristics, but generally there is one characteristic that describes them best. Once you have determined what your main characteristic is and how important additional characteristics are, you can begin to successfully find the caller that will fit your club.

- a. **Social Club-** This club is generally close-knit. They enjoy chatting with each other and it may even appear as if dancing is just something they do between visiting. Dancing for them is not supposed to be a challenge to the mind but a joy to the feet.

- b. **Workshop Club**- It's not that this club likes to workshop every tip. It just means that some type of workshop during the evening is important to them. Determine how much or how little you wish to workshop.
- c. **EA (Extended Application) Club** - This club finds their type of fun in mental exercises. They like to be stretched most of the evening. They like workshop in things not often seen on the regular dance floor and they enjoy the challenge of unusual setups.

Next, it is important to realize that callers also fit into one of the above labels. Callers call for various reasons but even the caller wants to have fun. Some call for pure simple fun and other call because they enjoy the mathematics of the dance.

Social clubs should look for a caller that enjoys mixing with them during breaks and socializing on a personal level. They may even place importance on the caller being available to attend functions with them beyond club nights. It is important here to find the caller that considers square dancing a big part of his social life. A good indication of this is the caller's partner. If the partner attends on a regular basis you will often find that they consider this to be their social life too. Another indication is how many weekend and festival events they attend as dancers. When interviewing a caller, you can ask these questions but remember that it is best to look at his past performance with other clubs (if you can). **Sometimes a caller may believe one thing during an interview and reality it might end up being something else.**

Workshop clubs need to find a caller that gets his pleasure from workshopping. It is important that the caller is also a capable teacher as teaching will be his major function in the club. Have him do a workshop tip and listen to the way he expresses himself. If he sounds exasperated (even in the slightest) it may only get worse over time. Often the caller is not exasperated with the dancers, simply frustrated at his inability to get his point across but knowing this does no good if it starts driving club members away. If you find his attitude demeaning or cross in any way you should take care in deciding if this is the caller for you. A good caller is not necessarily a good teacher.

EA clubs may do well to find a caller that calls a higher program than their club dances. It is this experience that gives the caller ideas to bring back to your club. He must be willing to find new material on a regular basis and not necessarily from the higher programs but from the Basic and Mainstream programs also. The best callers for this type of job are often the newer callers as their enthusiasm to explore new material will often match the clubs desire. His desire to teach is more important than his actual capabilities as the dancers are often quick to pick up on what the caller means.

It also may be important to look at the average age of your club and match it with a caller of the same generation. Choice of music, preferred speed and even choice of choreography does seem to run along the age lines though there are always exceptions to every rule. This shouldn't be your determining factor but don't overlook it altogether.

In addition to the above, I would strongly recommend that clubs have contracts with their club caller and I suggest contracts that are renewed once a year. Over the years, clubs can change in their desires and a written contract can be the opening for negotiations on either side. A club may find they want more or less workshop.

The caller may even find that he wants something different. Either can make this request at contract renewal time and if either party is not satisfied then the contract can simply NOT be renewed. A contract is a physical item that acknowledges that things do change over time and each party should have the right to look for the things they want from square dancing. Too often a negative feeling is left when a caller is fired or quits and it can easily be avoided with a contract.

And last but not least, **don't be afraid to try the new callers.** The interview might be a little tougher as there is no track record (or not much of one) to look back on but each of the different types of clubs could find that their perfect caller is a new caller. The important thing to look to is how much time and desire this new caller has to devote to homework. Is he interested in attending caller seminars?

The social club can afford to hire the new caller who is limited in his amount of time to do homework but the EA club will want a caller who is anxious about learning and practicing every chance he gets. Nevertheless, a new caller who isn't interested in homework will not make any club happy over the long run.



Cartoon printed with 'special thanks' to American square dance magazine and Corben Geis

ROUND DANCE GRADUATION

(to the tune of "MY WAY")

By Rosella Bosley, Baltimore, Maryland.

I came across this poem in a copy of the old New England Dancer magazine probably over 30 years ago. It is one of the cleverest (and most accurate creations ever!) The beauty of it is that it can also be made to apply to Square Dancing with a few small alterations (that I have added at the end for you to fit in).

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

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

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

(**) It seems ten years ago,
When first you learned to do "Left
Footers",
You fought her for the lead,
Now she goes where you want to put her!
To think, you've done all this
And tell her now, (not in a shy way) –
"I'll lead – you follow me –
Well do it my way!"

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

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

"You learned to Square Dance!"

Barry

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

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



The 61st ANSDC –10-14 Apr 2020

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

The Blue Mountains is a magical place. People from all over the world come to see the famous Three Sisters in Katoomba or ride the Scenic Railway, the steepest incline railway in the world. Scenic World also offers epic panoramas of wilderness, waterfalls and Jurassic-era temperate rainforest. Enjoy walking in the footsteps of Charles Darwin starting at Wentworth Falls, following Jamison Creek into the National Park. There is so much to see and do whether you are a thrill seeker or enjoy the quieter things in life.



Fresh air builds an appetite and the Blue Mountains offer a comprehensive range of dining options from fine restaurants, beautiful brunch spots and delectable delis to casual cafes. Actually, it's not just the air that makes the food taste better and the wine taste sweeter. It's the legion of highly trained local and international chefs and the fresh produce from nearby farms, orchards, rivers and streams.

The 61st Australian National Square Dance Convention is being held at the Blue Mountains Grammar School at Wentworth Falls. Set in a large expanse of rolling grasslands, the school shows all the beauty of a bygone era. A perfect match for the theme of this Convention. The school's main hall will be used as the Convention's secondary hall.



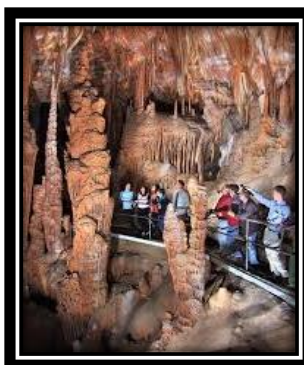
The convention main hall will be in the school's sports building. A large multi-storey building with twin basketball courts. There is also a large mezzanine level where the stalls will fit nicely giving the suppliers and shoppers a great view of the dancers.

Our theme is "Puttin' on the Ritz". So join the fun as we relive the glamour of the 1920's when the Blue Mountains became one of Australia's first tourist destination.

Come and join the 431 dancers who have already registered for this event! You will be entertained by some of the best callers/cuers in Australia as well as cuers from New Zealand and the United Kingdom and callers from Germany and the United States.



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



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Cheers Susanne Horvat

Publicity Manager

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

Editor's Final Words....At Least For Now

Well, that brings us to the end of this first issue. I hope that you have found something worthwhile or at least interesting and entertaining in this maiden edition.

I should note here again, that all editorial ideas and comments are mine alone, (unless otherwise indicated) and don't necessarily reflect the view held by any "normal people". (I am a Square Dance Caller after all.) I am always happy to include comments that may be different to mine. Please just email me at bjwonson@gmail.com.

I do not claim to know everything there is to know about any aspect of our great activity, nor do I claim that mine is the only opinion that is correct. All I can say is that I was walking down the mountain one day, carrying these two stone tablets.....(and well, you know the rest...LOL)

Cheers

Barry

