



American Callers' Association

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American Callers' Association Viewpoints

By
Ray Brigance
President

Remembering When or Looking Ahead

Dear Friends in Square Dancing: It is with the greatest of enthusiasm and optimism on behalf of the Executive Board of the American Callers Association that I would like to wish all square dancers and callers a very happy and prosperous 2007.

Too often at dances today do we hear someone say **remember when** we used to have 15 squares every Friday or Saturday night? Or **remember when** there used to be 150 squares at the State Convention; or **remember when** we would not think of starting a class unless there were at least 5 squares of new members; or **remember when** there were people competing with one another for a club or association office.

It seems that too much time and effort is spent on **remembering when**. Everyone would like to see square dancing be today what it was 25 or 35 years ago. **This is not going to happen overnight**. Square dancing has been on the decline for at least 20 years. There is no magic cure or silver bullet that can turn the decline in the number of dancers around. Until we all start **looking ahead**, this decline will continue. It has been the goal of American Callers Association for the past 12 years to **look ahead**, searching for ways to reduce the time and effort needed to bring new dancers into the activity by changing the activity to better fit the life style changes of the Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y dancers. We at American Callers Association are daily **looking ahead** by communicating with callers, dancers and organizations, to gather and share ideas and methods that have worked for them and publishing them in our American Callers' Association Newsletters and in American Square Dance magazine under the American Callers' Viewpoints. By doing this we hope to reverse the downward slide and bring square dancing back to being the great activity it should be like we once had.

This is something that cannot be accomplished by any one organization. We must all, dancers and callers, work together in this effort in order for it to work. The American Callers' Association is receiving suggestions and anecdotal success stories of square dance recruiting success from all over the square dance world. I would like to thank the many people who provide us with the "good recruiting" news and encourage any dancer, club, association, or caller to contact us and we will publish it. Our goal is to get the "success" accomplishments and ideas to you who are the life blood of square dancing.

If we do not start **looking ahead** for new ways then **remembering when**, will be the end of square dancing as we know it. Any individual, club, caller, or association who wishes to communicate his/her opinions on this subject or communicate their success story in recruiting is encouraged to contact the American Callers' Association at Loulet@aol.com or Dr. Patrick Demerath at pdemerath@troyst.edu.

A happy and prosperous year in 2007,

Ray

Good News

Merry Mixers square dance club of Huntsville Al will be have their 50th anniversary dance on April 14 2007 At the Barachah Gym 3011 Sparkman Dr Huntsville Al all callers and dancers are invited. Dance will be called by guest callers we will try to programm all callers. The dance starts at 7:00 P.M.-10:00 P.M. Lines & Rounds by guest Cuers.

Square Dancing on a TV Reality Show

By Herb Charatz
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This is an OPEN LETTER to American Callers, Callerlab and fellow dancers of every level. The decline of enrollment into our activity has, indeed, reached alarming proportions. Efforts by individual clubs to enroll new members are, apparently, not enough. Interest in square dancing can't be improved until our poor image is improved. I'm a firm believer that a major move to enlighten the American public to the advantages of square dancing is a must. The current trend of reality show, such as [bad text] Bacon and Kyra Sedgwick. The host would explain, of course, that the most challenging part of learning this national pastime is that there really is no dance to learn, and it does not require dancing talent. You learn, instead, responses to a list of calls, which the caller could later choose from, to choreograph a dance sequence; almost like the quarterback calling football signals.

The four couples will be introduced and it would be further noted that this is not a competition, but a team effort to dance through the sequence with which the caller challenges them, utilizing calls selected from a previously learned list. He would then introduce the caller; the one we have decided is the best to represent us, in skill and entertainment ability. Hoping the series runs a pre-determined number of shows, we could either have the same caller for all, or a different one each time.

Watching these popular couples go through the learning process should be interesting and entertaining. Each week the previously learned calls would be reviewed and the public would see how the learning process takes place and is built-upon. We could have an on-line website advertised for viewers to send their comments and also to do a little advertising on our own for potential future dancers.

An added feature, each week, could be a visit to a different, real-life dance taking place in different parts of the country, and also in other countries. Viewers would be shocked to visit active dance clubs in England, Germany, Denmark, or Japan, among many others. Some couples might be in full regalia and express their feelings about keeping to the traditional dress code. Others, however, might be dancing in casual clothes.

You see where I'm going with this - but I have no idea how to proceed from here..! Need your help. First of all, do you agree with me that this could work? If so, does anyone know how to go about making this suggestion to the right people in TV? Would it take all of us requesting it at the same time - inundating the powers that be with thousands of requests at the same time - or what????

We received this letter from Herb and like him we do not know the right people in TV to go to with this suggestion, But in an answer to Herb we stated that we would put his letter in our newsletter in the hope that someone could point him in the right direction. So if you can help, get in touch with Herb at the above email address. Good luck, we wish you the best.

REMEMBERING

After a long illness **Johnny Creel** of Metairie Louisiana passed away October 30, 2006. Johnny & Janie traveled all over the USA calling dances .Johnny will be missed. He was a fine man and a good square dance caller. We extend our deepest sympathy to Janie and the family.

We received a note from **John & Linda Saunders** that the daughter of **Dale & Carolyn McClary** passed away. We extend to Dale & Carolyn our deepest sympathy. Debra passed away just days before her 45th Birthday on Dec 2, 2006.

Special Thanks to

The Ledyard Squares Square Dance Club of Stonington, Connecticut for their generous gift to the American Callers. This club has disbanded and gave their remaining funds to help new callers. On behalf of all in square dancing, thank you.

Successful Method of teaching Square Dancing

This is a method that has been used by some callers in Pennsylvania for several years very successfully .We have put this list of calls and a letter explaining how they do it in the newsletter. You can go to our web page at www.americancallers.com and sign off on this method if you APPROVE or DISAPPROVE. Please read the letter on the back of the list before you decide. This is for you information you decide?

This teaching method was developed by caller/teacher Dan Prosser of Pennsylvania.

Teaching Order / 12 Sessions, 1 1/2 to 1 3/4 Hours Long, 11/2006 jdp

Session 1	T	Rt	Rt	R	Pass to the Center					Session 10	T	Rt	Rt	R
Bow to Partner/Corner					Wheel Around					Teacup Chain <i>(the Hook to help encourage them back after the Holidays)</i>				
Circle Left/Right					Flutterwheel									
Allemande Left					Reverse Flutterwheel									
Right and Left Grand					Session 5	T	Rt	Rt	R	Allemande Thar				
Couples Promenade					Chain Down the Line					Slip The Clutch				
Single File Promenade					Trade By					Shoot the Star				
Star Left/Right					Step to a Wave					All Around The Corner				
Dosado					Arm Trades (Right/Left)					See Saw				
Forward & Back										Zoom				
Star Promenade					Swing Thru					Cloverleaf				
Swing					Run (boys, girls, ends / centers)					1 st go L/R, Next go R/L				
Arm Turns					Tag The Line(in ,out, right / left)					Spin The Top				
Courtesy Turn					Fold (ends, centers, boys/girls)					Session 11	T	Rt	Rt	R
Two Ladies Chain					Couples Hinge									
Four Ladies Chain					Sweep 1/4									
Grand Square					Session 6	T	Rt	Rt	R	Recycle (waves only)				
Session 2	T	Rt	Rt	R	Dosado to a Wave					1/2 Tag				
Pass Thru					Wheel & Deal (out facing line)					Split/Box Circulate				
U-Turn Back					Wheel & Deal (two faced line)					Session 12	T	Rt	Rt	R
Backtrack (single file)					Double Pass Thru					Reverse Promenade				
Separate					Centers In									
Around 1, Around 2					Cast Off 3/4					Left Touch 1/4				
Come Down the Middle					Circulate (All 8)					Left Square Thru				
Split Two					Star Routes					Half Sashay				
Ladies Chain 3/4					Session 7	T	Rt	Rt	R	Wrong Way Grand				
California Twirl					Alamo Style					Turn Thru				
Weave The Ring					Balance(Alamo swing thru)					Spin Chain Thru				
Ladies In, Men Sashay					Star Thru or <i>Slide Thru</i>									
Session 3	T	Rt	Rt	R	Lead Right (Left Later)					Notes:				
Introduce the Long Lines Concept					Circle To A Line									
Ladies Chain & + 1/4 more of courtesy turn to form Two Faced Lines.					Session 8	T	Rt	Rt	R					
Circulate (Couples, Boys, Girls, Centers, Ends,					Hinge									
Trade (Boys, Girls, Centers, Ends & Couples					Column Circulate									
Bend The Line					Scout Back									
Slide Thru or <i>Star Thru</i>					Couples Hinge									
Veer Left/ (<u>Veer Right later</u>)					Touch 1/4									
Session 4	T	Rt	Rt	R	Pass The Ocean									
Rollaway					Extend									
Partner Trade					Session 9	T	Rt	Rt	R					
Square Thru/(4,3,2,5) <i>Right Hands</i>					Walk & Dodge									
Right & Left Thru					Dixie Style To A Wave									
					Left Swing Thru									
					Cross Run									
					Cross Fold									
					8 Chain Thru & 8 Chain									
					Lead Left									
					Veer Right									

T = Teach
Rt = Re-Teach
R = Review

Suggestion: to get dancers to see where they are going on a Wheel & Deal form two face lines. Couples Half Trade and Bend to face, Or Couples Hinge and Bend to face. From lines facing out Couples half Trade and bend to face the middle.

Suggestions to help make this teaching method successful.

This technique of teaching is not the answer; it is just part of an answer to recruiting New Dancers and building or rebuilding a Club. If people are allowed to have fun during the learning process we can have our cake and eat it too, everybody wins. To use cliché “think outside of the box” because what we have always done is not working. This is a method that can and does work. Please note this method of teaching does not encourage drilling the new dancers on a particular call. The dancers are merely taught the figure and dance it enough times that everyone is doing the call correctly. Then in many cases that is the only time during that dance session that they may dance that particular call. Calls with degrees of complexity will be taught one week, re-taught for the next two weeks and reviewed as needed. Singing Calls are a great tool for strengthening newly learned figures.

It is my strong suggestion to use the Long Line Concept for dancers the first tip of the evening. This encourages mixing and discourages cliques from forming. Even more important is that the weaker dancers do not end up in a square, all together, that first tip. Also, an added benefit is that the first tip of the session sets the tone for a person’s success that session. If they are with weaker dancers for all of that time their evening many times is a disaster. Also some new dancers tend to come in late for many different reasons and that requires the instructor to take time to put additional squares together. With the Long Lines all that is needed is for an Angel couple to drop out or jump on the end of one of the lines with the people that just came in and the dancing continues.

If a person is having trouble with a new call being taught or one that is being reviewed all the instructor has to do is move that person by using trades and circulates to a position with three other dancers that are successfully doing the call properly. When there are visitors it is also a great way to break the ice and get everyone acquainted quickly. If you use the lines in New Dancer Programs and even Workshops you will be amazed by the positive comments.

These lines lend themselves to the Square formation much more than the Caecilian Circles concept and depending on your room size the lines may fit better.

If there are too many people to form one set of lines in the head positions across the room, just make another set of lines behind them. To force the mix I often have the lines pass through at some time during the tip and say if you are facing someone pass through again and the others California Twirl.

You and the dancers never have to worry about partners and corners during this tip and many times people seem to dance a little better when they are not with their partner. Interesting isn’t it. You will find that the lines concept is an excellent review tool and their use is great for teaching new calls.

From time to time the dancers may end up with their partners and that is a great time to reinforce their success by commenting that, no one has made any mistakes so far, because if they notice, they all have their original partners back. But, at the end of the tip they will most probably not be with their original partner and that is okay.

Again, please remember that it is not good to drill the dancer with these calls but allow them to dance through them successfully and move on to something else. You will see by the third and fourth weeks that very little instruction if any is needed for most calls. Other calls will be danced successfully by just giving a little head cue as they dance through the figure.

Always remember KEEP IT FUN the people don’t have to come to your program but they will continue to come back week after week if they are having a good time.

These people are not accomplished dancers at the end of twelve weeks but if a Caller and Club are willing to work with them they will become accomplished dancers. This method allows many groups to sponsor two New Dancer Programs a year. It works and has been used successfully for over ten years. It has helped to build a Club of well over 100 members that dance 7 to 11 squares on 2nd and 4th Wednesdays.

Comments welcome. Dan Prosser, jdprosser@juno.com

Getting people to initially come to your New Dancer Program (we don’t use the words Square Dance Classes or Lessons) is a whole subject in its self. Here again what has worked many years ago usually does not work any more. If you would like information about how we recruit new dancers drop me an e-mail

Contra Page: The most recent issue or" the ACA Newsletter, October 2006, leads off with a neat two page article by Don Feenerty of the Heritage Dance Association. He describes his experiences at a county fair "square dance". My hat is off to Don for daring to present the dance as he experienced it - dirt floor and all - and for raising the question of what it might all mean for western square dancing. For my part I want to focus on a different "square dance", at a different time and a different place, but with the same question in mind. What might it all mean for today's western square dancing?

The time is the summer of 1949, the place, Jones Beach State Park on the south shore of Long Island, 30 miles East of New York City. A long boardwalk runs for miles between the ocean waves on one side and recreational facilities set among sand dunes on the other side. One of those facilities is a band shell and dance floor, the whole unit being surrounded by bleachers. From June through September live swing bands and hundreds of dancers, most of them being young, former W.W.II military personal, now raising families a few miles away in places like "Levittown", make for dancing excitement. But on Thursday nights, oh my, how different it is. The band is the Top Hands. Behind the mike is the most well known square dance caller on the East Coast, Ed Durlacher! For Diane and I, young teenagers, this is our square dance club. This is all there is, this is all we know, and this is all that we need.

It is interesting to compare Don Feenerty's experience of "square dancing" in 2006 with our experience 57 years earlier. The facilities couldn't be more different. Our dance floor was outdoors but it was smooth cement. The dance area - believe it or not - was chained off with limited entrances guarded by Jones Beach uniformed attendants. And there was thank you, a real dress code. No bare feet. No shorts, men or women. No slacks for the ladies. And there was no nonsense. When Ed spoke you paid attention or were escorted off the floor; and it happened more than once. That was not Don's experience, I am sure. But There are interesting similarities. Easy figures; short explanations; familiar music; much repetition of Dances, particularly favorites. And one other that Don mentioned, physical enthusiasm. I surely remember. We learned to swing, and swing, and swing, and swing some more. With all these thoughts in mind, I want to look at two special elements of the "Ed Durlacher" picture, one of them being "political" and the other being "technical".

Ed called in many places besides Jones Beach, Central Park in Manhattan being most notable. There he called to literally thousands. I never paid any money to go to a Durlacher dance. They were always public events with a sponsor footing the bill, mostly Pepsi Cola. He also produced a ton of records for schools etc., many of which I still have. It is herein that we have the "political" element. In Ed's day the biggest square dance name in the American West was Lloyd Shaw. Durlacher and Shaw played two Different tunes. Shaw was more intensely dance motivated. A healthy level of complication was part of His makeup. Ed was different. He was puritanical about keeping square dancing simple and keeping it focused on the music. It is this "simplicity element" and its relationship to the music that Diane and I inherited from Ed and for which we will always be grateful. We danced with his Harvest Moon Ball exhibition square dance group at the original Madison Square Garden in 1950. Nevertheless, our personal track as dancers in the post World War II square dance environment "went west" along with most everyone else. Al Brundage in Connecticut, Ed Gilmore at West Point, and finally, in 1961 when we moved to California, immersion in the Bob Osgood Sets in Order methodology that defined "Square Dancing" for everyone, including Easterners.

Still, there is a "but". The ghost of Ed Durlacher may still be around, waiting for the wheel to turn. Technically, Ed was quite extraordinary in how he fit his calling into his chosen music. "Breaks" beginning, middle, end - were done "contra style", the calls coming before the musical phrase. The dancers and the music became "one". "Figures" were done "Western style", Ed taking the music for himself and letting the dancers play catch-up. It sounds easy enough, but doing it skillfully is an art.

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FOLD Family

FOLD FAMILY: Starting formation-any two dancer formation in which the directed dancer has shoulder directly adjacent to the other dancer.

GENERAL RULE: Directed dancers 'step forward and move in a small semi-circle to end facing toward an adjacent dancer or position. The adjacent inactive dancer may be facing in any direction and does not move. If not specified, centers fold toward ends and vice versa. (a) BOYS FOLD (b) GIRLS FOLD (c) ENDS FOLD

(d) CENTERS FOLD: Directed active dancers fold toward the inactive dancers using the general rule. (e) CROSS FOLD Starting formation-line, two-faced line, or wave. The directed (active) dancers who must either both be centers or both be ends, fold toward the farthest inactive dancer by walking in a semi-circle to end facing toward that same dancer. When the active dancers are both facing the same direction, they move forward in a semi-circle, pass each other and fold toward the inactive dancer. Timing Fold.2'steps: Cross Fold 4 steps

ZERO BOX GET-OUTS

1.
SWING THRU...GIRLS CIRCULATE...BOYS TRADE...BOYS RUN...COUPLES CIRCULATE...BOYS FOLD...RIGHT & LEFT GRAND
2.
SWING THRU...BOYS TRADE...BOYS RUN...GIRLS CIRCULATE...BOYS FOLD...R.L.G.
3.
SWING THRU...BOYS TRADE...BOYS RUN...GIRLS CIRCULATE...GIRLS FOLD...TOUCH 1/4 & ROLL...RIGHT & LEFT GRAND
4.
SWING THRU...GIRLS CIRCULATE...BOYS CROSS FOLD...RIGHT & LEFT GRAND
5.
TOUCH 1/4...GIRLS FOLD...DOUBLE PASS THRU...FACE RIGHT...CHAIN DOWN THE LINEPASS THRU...WHEEL & DEAL...CENTERS BOX THE GNAT...ALL RIGHT & LEFT GRAND
6.
TOUCH 1/4...SPLIT CIRCULATE...BOYS FOLD...DOUBLE PASS THRU...FACE LEFT...FERRIS WHEEL...SWING THRU...BOYS TRADE...TURN THRU...LEFT ALLEMANDE
7.
STEP TO A WAVE...OUTFACERS FOLD...DOUBLE PASS THRU...CENTERS IN...CAST OFF 3/4...SLIDE THRU...LEFT ALLEMANDE
8.
SWING THRU...SWING THRU...BOYS CROSS FOLD...SLIDE THRU & ROLL STEP TO A WAVE...GIRLS TRADE...EXTEND...RIGHT & LEFT GRAND
9.
SWING THRU...CENTERS TRADE...EVERYONE FOLD & ROLL 2 TIMES RIGHT & LEFT GRAND

Another Everyone Fold - They Fold Left

SIDES SWING THRU...SPIN THE TOP...RECYCLE...PASS THRU..SWING THRU SCOOT BACK...SLIDE THRU...RIGHT & LEFT THRU...DIXIE STYLE TO WAVES BOYS TRADE...EVERYONE FOLD...TOUCH 1/4 & ROLL...MEET PARTNER...TOUCH 1/4 TO ALAMO STYLE...LEFT SWING THRU...LEFT SWING THRU...LEFT ALLEMANDE

Using OUTFACERS Fold

HEADS LEAD RIGHT...TOUCH 1/4...GIRLS FOLD...DOUBLE PASS THRU...FACE RIGHT...CHAIN DOWN THE LINE... PASS.THRU...WHEEL & DEAL...DOUBLE PASS THRU...LEADERS U TURBACK...DOSADO... SWING THRU... BOYS RUN... PASS THE OCEAN...OUTFACERS FOLD...DOUBLEPASS THRU LEADERS U TURN BACK...RIGHT & LEFT GRAND

Also Using OUTFACERS Fold

SIDES RIGHT & LEFT THRU...DIXIE STYLE TO L.H. WAVE... BOYS TRADE... LEFT SWING THRU...BOYS FOLD...Step Forward (Extend)...WALK & DODGE SWING THRU...SPIN THE TOP...SQUARE THRU 3/4...BEND THE LINE... PASS THE OCEAN... OUTFACERS FOLD... DOUBLE PASS THRU...FACE IN PASS THE OCEAN...BOYSRUN...BOYS CIRCULATE...PROMENADE HOME

Using ENDS Fold

HEADS PASS THRU...SEPARATE - AROUND ONE - LINES...PASS THRU... ENDS FOLD... SWING THRU...BOYS RUN...PASS THRU...WHEEL & DEAL... DOUBLE PASS THRU...CENTERS IN...CAST OFF 3/4...PASS THRU...ENDS FOLD...TOUCH 1/4...CENTERS TRADE...GIRLS RUN...TOUCH 1/4 & ROLL...SQUARE THRU...3/4 LEFT ALLEMANDE

