

American Callers' Assoc. Viewpoints  
By Patrick J. Demerath

Participation and Ownership is the Key

The American Callers' Association in its attempt to be of service to all callers, dancers, and associations has provided current, timely, and effective information on new dancer recruitment, winning ways to retain club dancers, and pitfalls that drive square dancers away. ACA really appreciates the positive comments, encouragement to continue, and contributions from callers and dancers all over North America and abroad to continue these initiatives. ACA will continue to provide information that will help the square dance community recruit, retain and retrieve square dancers as well as encourage the dancers to speak out on the cumbersome dance programs.

This article addresses pride in ownership and participation. It encourages people to take more of an active participation in their square dance associations and clubs. I would like to "thank" and "honor" Charles and Kitty Holley in Montgomery, Alabama, for the inspiration of this article and to encourage square dancers to "Rethink" their position and status in their square dancing activities.

Very recently Charlie Holley went through a serious cardiac heart surgery in Birmingham, Alabama. He recovered and is facing long-term therapeutic recovery, but the future looks great.

Charlie is an outstanding example of an "Unsung Hero" in square dancing. He started dancing in 1984. During these short 23 years of square dancing, Charlie has volunteered and held numerous leadership positions in square dancing. He was president of a square dance club in Prattville, Alabama. He was president of the Montgomery Area Square Dance Association in Montgomery, Alabama, for two consecutive terms. He was president of the Alabama Square and Round Dance Association for two consecutive terms. He served as a delegate to the United Square Dancers of America for nine years of which he was the Vice President for the Central Region. He served as president of United Square Dancers of America (USDA) which is an outstanding organization dedicated to watching out for all square dancers. He was a founding member and voting delegate for the Alliance of Round, Traditional and Square Dancing (ARTS). I would also like to recognize and thank Ms. Kitty Holley who has worked unselfishly and hard to support all of Charlie's efforts for the betterment of square dancing.

In recovering from major heart surgery and serving square dancing so well from the ACA perspective, it can be said the Charlie gave his all and heart to square dancing. His recent recover is nothing short of a miracle brought forth by prayer from square dancers, family and friends. It could be argued that square dancers helped give Charlie his healthy heart back.

One night I went to visit Charlie at his rehabilitation facility. What was supposed to be short visit lasted over three hours. Charlie brought up the subject of the decline in the number of square dancers. He also said there is a more serious decline in the number of people who will serve and/or hold office in clubs and associations. Square dancers are failing to realize that when they belong to a

square dance club or association that they also hold an ownership interest in that organization including the building, land, equipment, good will, etc.

What is the problem? Charlie believes that people are not interested and won't take an office in their organization or club, because they overlook their ownership responsibilities. Charlie is very passionate that square dancers need to create a "renewed pride" in their organization and do their share willingly to participate in the management of the organization. Charlie also believes that if we increase our pride for our clubs and associations that it will increase participation at all organizational levels. If you know Charlie personally, you will see that he is excited about serving again in an activity he loves so much as soon as he is strong enough. His excitement is contagious and encouraging.

Both Charlie and the American Callers' Association believe that if more dancers would rise up to the occasion, increase their pride in square dancing and serve in offices and assignments that this in itself would slow down the decline in the activity.

Any individual, club, caller, or association who wishes to communicate his/her opinions on this subject is encouraged to contact the American Callers' Association at [Loulet@aol.com](mailto:Loulet@aol.com) or Dr. Patrick Demerath at [pdemerath@troy.edu](mailto:pdemerath@troy.edu). Please visit our website and newsletters at [AmericanCallers.com/news](http://AmericanCallers.com/news). Until next time, happy dancing.