PRIDE CALLER SCHOOL

Presented by
Tony Oxendine Jack Pladdys
and Special Guest Coach Travis Cook

July 19-23, 2026
Pride Resort, Maggie Valley, NC



2026 PRIDE CALLER SCHOOL
July 19 – 23, 2026

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Welcome to the 2026 Pride Caller School

Tony, Jack, and Travis are honored and excited you have joined us for this enriching experience. Over the next five days you'll receive over 40 hours of formal instruction, calling practice, and personalized one-on-one critique sessions. We also have some social activities planned to help you relax and connect with your fellow students, "talk shop", and develop lifelong personal and business relationships.

This groundbreaking school is designed to develop the two to five year caller into an experienced leader of the activity through calling, teaching, and program management skills. Don't hesitate to ask questions and provide feedback. We want this to be the best and most rewarding caller school experience you have ever had.

2026 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Sunday 7 - 10 pm
Introductions
Mechanics of Choreography
After Party @ 9 with Q&A

Monday 9 am - 4 pm
Methods of Choreography
Calling Practice
Lunch on site
Using Modules with a Purpose
Calling Practice

Monday 7 - 10 pm
Sight Calling
Calling Practice
After Party @ 9 with Q&A

Tuesday 9 am - 4 pm
Smooth Dancing, Body Flow, Timing
Calling Practice
Lunch on site
Singing Calls / Voice / Music
Calling Practice

Tuesday 7 - 10 pm
Calling Practice
After Party @ 9 with Q&A

Wednesday 9 am - 4 pm
Teaching
Calling Practice
Lunch on site
Programming / Showmanship
Calling Practice

Wednesday 7 - 10 pm
Square Dance Parties
Calling Practice
After Party @ 9 with Q&A

Thursday 9 am - 4 pm
Calling Practice using assigned teaching plan
Lunch on site
Leadership, Business Side, Ethics
Calling Practice using assigned teaching plan

Thursday 7 – 10 pm
Graduation
Dance called by students
After Party @ 9 with Q&A

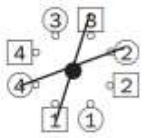
Mechanics of Choreography

To be a good mechanic, a caller must learn what's "under the hood" and how the square dance "engine" works. The apprentice auto mechanic knows enough to complete simpler tasks like changing spark plugs and oil or swapping out an air filter. As they continue to learn, soon they are doing brake jobs and surfacing rotors, rebuilding calipers and changing timing. With time, study, and experience it isn't long before they are doing full engine rebuilds. The same is true for the square dance caller. We start with the basic mechanics of choreography and grow from there. Once we gain a simple understanding, we can use the tools we've got and prepare and call a tip. With time, study, and experience…we dive deeper into the nuts and bolts and truly become masters at the craft. So let's get started!

SYMMETRY / ASYMMETRY

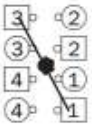
The principle of symmetry states: In a symmetric set a line drawn from any dancer through the flagpole center of the set will also intersect that dancer's diagonal opposite, or mirror image dancer. Also, any symmetric call or choreography will always direct opposites to do corresponding and equal movements. An additional characteristic of symmetric choreography is balance. There are five types of balance that are always present in a symmetric square:

1. Numerical balance: There are always four dancers on each side.
2. Gender balance: There are always two boys and two girls on each side
3. Diagonally opposite balance: Two dancers who are diagonally opposite in the squared set will always be diagonally opposite each other.
4. Partner relationship balance: Diagonally opposite dancers will always have the same relationship with their current partner. If the #1 man is with his Corner, then the #3 man is also with his Corner.
5. Formation balance: The four-dancer formation will be the same on both sides. If the caller sees a Right-Hand wave facing the Side walls on the left side of the square, there will also be a Right-Hand wave facing Side walls on the right side of the square.



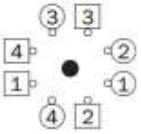
This illustration shows that Head Boys (#1, #3) are symmetric opposites. So are Head Girls, Side Boys, and Side Girls.

Example: *Heads Lead Right and Circle to a Line*



This is symmetric choreography because it causes all symmetric opposites to do the same thing. Notice that you can draw a straight line through the flagpole center of the set between any pair of symmetric opposites.

Example: *Couple #1 Box the Gnat with your corners and square your set that way*



This is not symmetric choreography: Gent #1 did something that his symmetric opposite (Gent #3) did not do. The set is no longer symmetric.

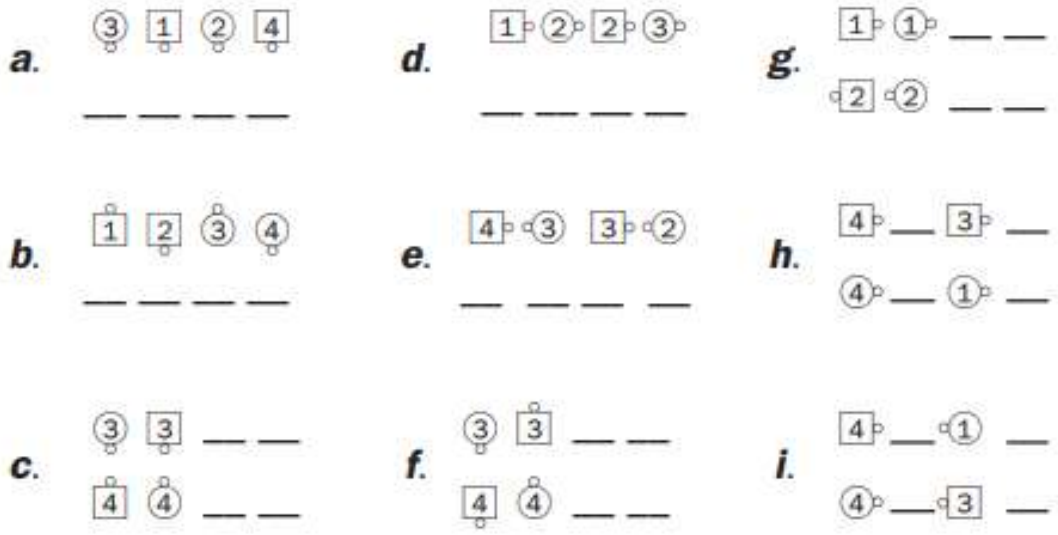
SYMMETRY / ASSYMETRY (cont)

Any set that lacks any of these five types of balance is asymmetric. Although almost all our choreography today is symmetric, it is important that a caller be able to recognize if the set becomes asymmetric, whether deliberately or by accident. Here are three examples:

1. A traditional "visiting couple" square dance figure. One couple "visits" each other couple in the square (one at a time) with the visiting pattern, then returning that couple back home.
2. The caller intentionally calls something that occurs on only one side of the square (example: Couples 1 and 2 do a Right and Left Thru). Resolving this situation requires a repeat of the original call, or another equivalent call.
3. Dancer error makes the square accidentally asymmetric. Callers who understand the five types of balance will easily recognize when they see: five dancers on one side of the square, three girls in a line with one boy (or vice versa), a two-faced line on one side and a wave on the other. (When this happens, there are some sequences that will automatically cure *some* asymmetric issues. You can experiment with "Tag the Line", but there are others you can research for use.)

The newer caller should stick with Symmetric choreography. Asymmetric requires the trust of the dancers as well as the ability to nurture them with cues and helper words which is a skill newer callers have yet to master.

Exercise: *Assume symmetric choreography and fill in the missing dancers:*



FORMATION, ARRANGEMENT, SEQUENCE AND RELATIONSHIP (FASR)

1. **FORMATION**

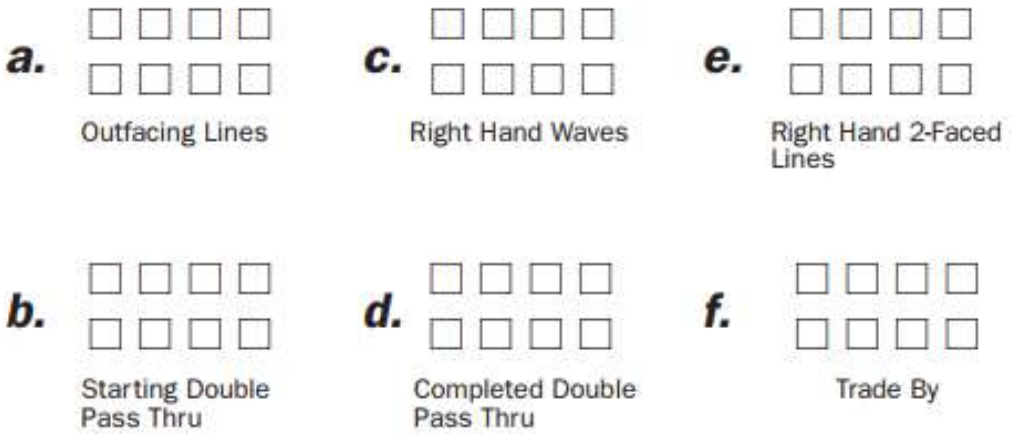
Formations are the backbone of the anatomy of choreography. CALLERLAB has named over 75 different formations. (See the Formation Charts in Appendix). Each has the two distinct characteristics of Geometry and Facing Direction.

a. **GEOMETRY**: This is the term that describes the shape or design of the set as it is formed by the physical location of the dancers. The geometry of the square set is clear - it is square. In a 2 by 4 general line, a rectangular shape is formed by several popular formations such as facing lines, 8 Chain Thru, parallel waves and columns. Diamonds and 1/4 Tag formations have similar geometry. More exotic shapes include O, Butterfly, Galaxy, Hourglass, etc.

b. **FACING DIRECTION:** This characteristic of a formation is critical. For example, many formations are created from a 2 by 4 rectangle by simply changing the direction the dancers are facing. From facing lines simple facing commands can establish waves, 8 Chain Thru, Two Faced Lines, Columns, Trade By, Double Pass Thru, etc. For many right-handed formations there is a corresponding left-handed formation. These are different formations - not just different arrangements within a formation.

The term *Position* refers to a particular position within a formation. Typically, formations have these types of positions: Ends, Centers, Very Centers, Leaders, Trailers, Beaus, Belles, Outsides, Insides, Points, In-Facers, Out-Facers, etc.

Exercise: *Add a facing direction to create the following formations:*



2. ARRANGEMENT

This term defines the six different boy-girl placements that are possible in any symmetric formation. CALLERLAB has numbered these different arrangements that can occur in the ten most popular formations. (See the Arrangement Chart in the Appendix).

It is important for the caller to know and understand the differences between these different arrangements and the effect they could and do have on their choreography. Some figures can be done from a specific formation and arrangement but not from the same formation and a different arrangement. An example: From an 8 Chain Thru formation with a "0" boy-girl arrangement (normal couples) a right and left thru is possible. From an 8 Chain Thru formation with any other arrangement a Right and Left Thru cannot legally be done at before the Plus program.

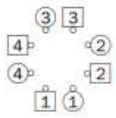
"0"	Normal Couples	BGBG
"1/2"	Half Sashayed Couples	GBGB
"1"	Boys on Left	BBGG
"2"	Girls on Left	GGBB
"3"	Normal Couple on Left	BGGB
"4"	Half Sashayed Couple on Left	GBBG

3. SEQUENCE

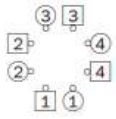
When the dancers square up, we number them as couples #1, #2, #3, #4 as we move counter-clockwise around the square. In symmetric choreography, the four men and the four women will always be aligned (separately) in either a 1-2-3-4 or a 4-3-2-1 sequence as we view them in the same counter-clockwise direction. With symmetric choreography, there are only four possible sequence states:

	BOYS	GIRLS	SEQUENCE STATE
1.	IN	IN	Both In sequence
2.	Out	Out	Both Out of sequence
3.	In	Out	Boys In and Girls Out
4.	Out	In	Boys Out and Girls In

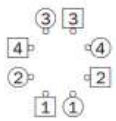
Sequence can be the most difficult of the four elements for the caller to identify. Typically, sight callers determine sequence by checking the relative position of a key (sometimes called primary) dancer and their corner. Be aware that there are some formations where sequence is not identifiable (example tidal formations). In those cases, call something to change the formation before trying to determine sequence.



Notice if we go counter-clockwise around a squared set, the boys (and girls) are numbered 1-2-3-4-1. Both the boys and girls are in sequence.



If the Sides do a Right and Left Thru, the boys and girls are numbered 1-4-3-2-1 (counter-clockwise). Both the boys and girls are out of sequence.



If the Sides Flutterwheel, the boys are numbered 1-2-3-4-1 and the girls are numbered 1-4-3-2-1. The boys are in sequence and the girls are out of sequence.

For most callers, sequence is only important at the time of, or in the process of, resolution.

4. RELATIONSHIP

The last element of the FAS**R** is **Relationship**. This focuses on the four possible boy-girl pairings that can be established. Relationship recognition requires the caller to have noted four adjacent key dancers (usually two adjacent couples). There are the same key dancers needed for determining Sequence.

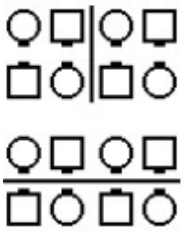
At the beginning of the square dance tip, all partners are together. During the tip there will be temporary pairings throughout the series of calls. There are four possible pairings for any given dancer. For example, Boy #1 can be paired with his own Partner, Right Hand Lady, Opposite Lady, or Corner. For the purposes of Relationship, we are referring to these four pairings as they existing from a squared set with original partners.

The Relationship Pairing rule states that *"whenever boy-girl pairings are establish, dancers will always be paired such that each boy is either **adjacent with**, or **across from**, the **same relative girl**."* These two states are defined as:

1. The boys are in the ***SAME*** paired state – meaning they are all ***adjacent*** to the same relative girl.
2. The boys are in a ***MIXED*** paired state – meaning they are all ***across*** from the same relative girl.

The pairing state of a symmetric square is always either Same or Mixed. Hint: If boys do not all have the same relative girl as a temporary partner (Mixed), a Two-Ladies Chain (or equivalent) will result in all the boys having the same relative girl as a temporary partner.

A new caller should stay focused on recognizing Partner and Corner Pairings. Choosing key dancers you know personally, or are dressed to match, can help you as you learn to recognize the Relationship pairings.
Once you have chosen two adjacent couples as your key dancers, how do you look at the square when looking for pairings? For demonstration purposes, we will look at facing lines.



With facing lines (or any general 2 x 4 formation), there are four possible collections of four adjacent dancers for the caller to view. From the caller's viewpoint, they can be described as the left four, the right four, the near four, or the far four. Any one of these four collections will work.

Some hints for keeping your Relationships in control!

Four person calls will not change the group pairing. As long as **no dancers move to the other group of four,** the group type won't change. It doesn't matter if the shape of the group changes or the sequence change, or the arrangement changes; the group pairing will remain.

When you move two dancers from each group to another group, one of two things will happen:

1. If the dancers moved are the group pair (ex Boy w/Partner), the group type won't change.
2. Any other two dancers (including two boys or two girls) will change the group to the opposite group type: Partner Group to Opposite Group (and vice versa) and Corner Group to Opposite Lady Group (and vice versa).

Relationships…A Deeper Dive

As stated above, with any general 2 x 4 formation, there are four possible collections of four adjacent dancers to view. Left, Right, Near and Far. So where do you look? What are you looking for? What you're looking for often depends on where you look. Is there a right or wrong way?

One caller coach likes to ask the question: "What do YOU see?" That is especially important when it comes to Relationships. Some might naturally see the line, while others might naturally see the box. If one caller is looking at the Left four and another caller is looking at the near four, they just might see different things! If it's a Mixed State, they absolutely WILL see different things. Even more confusing, they MIGHT see different things even if they are both looking at the near four. Let's dive deeper…

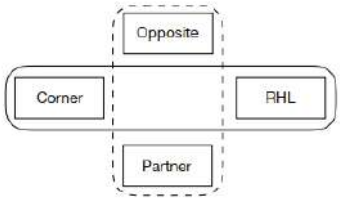
We can all agree that when the square is in a Same paired state, what the caller sees will be the same whether they are looking at the box or the line. All four adjacent couples are in the same paired relationship. That paired relationship is what you will see.

Here's where it gets dicey. This isn't "Apprentice" material. (The "Apprentice" material is simply that when the facing dancers are in the same paired relationship, the adjacent dancers are not, it is "Mixed.")

When the square is in a Mixed paired state, those looking at the facing dancers (the left or right box) will see the same thing. All facing dancers have the same paired relationship. No debates, just fact.

What the caller sees when looking at the near or far group (the line) is entirely dependent on HOW they are looking at that line. If they are looking at ***adjacent pairings***, the chart below shows the four Mixed relationship possibilities. There are only four! The adjacent pairings will not be the same, but they WILL be related. If one adjacent pair has their partner, the other in the same line will have their opposite. Symmetry makes sure of that! Similarly, if one adjacent pair has their Corner, the other in the line will have their Right-Hand Lady.

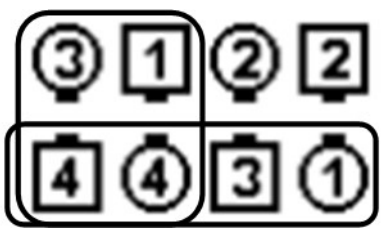
State	Conditions When Looking at Adjacent Dancers	
Same Relationship	All four pairings have the same relationship.	All with Partner
		All with Opposite
		All with Corner
		All boys with Right-Hand Lady
Mixed Relationship	Two pairings are with Corner, and the other two pairings are Boy and his Right-Hand Lady.	Head boys with Corner Side boys with Right-Hand Lady
		Head boys with Right-Hand Lady Side boys with Corner
	Two pairings are with Partner, and the other two pairings are with the Opposite.	Head boys with Partner Side boys with Opposite
		Head boys with Opposite Side boys with Partner

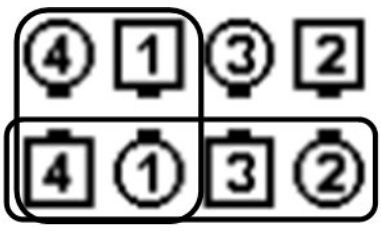


Only opposite group types can co-exist in the same line with Mixed pairings. Partner with Opposite and Corner with Right-Hand Lady.

But there's one more way to look at it! The diagram on the left below shows a Mixed state with a Corner relationship pairing. All facing dancers have a Corner relationship. What if, instead of looking at the *adjacent dancers* in the line, **we look at the line as a whole.** The answer we get is a very different one. If you look at the line as a whole, it has the exact opposite pairing as the box. If the box is a Corner relationship, each man will find his Right-Hand Lady somewhere down the line (but NOT adjacent).

The same holds true with the Partner Relationship pairing. As you look down the line, each man will find his Opposite lady.





Corner Relationship Mixed Pairing Partner Relationship Mixed Pairing

It takes a lot of time and study to digest and understand the nuance of the many ways you can look at (and recognize) Relationships in a square. Once you do understand how they relate to each other and change as you move the dancers, you can be intentional with your calling and when working your resolutions.

When you know your four key dancers, you can easily determine relationship with three easy algorithms. For newer callers this may be easier when dancers are paired as normal couples.

1. If **all four of your known dancers are in the same group**, you have a **Partner Group**. If none of your known dancers are in one group of four, look in the other group and all four should be there. This can also be described as both couples paired.
2. If **three of your known dancers are in the same group**, you have either a **Corner Group** or a **Right-Hand Lady Group**. If the known Corner is in the same group of four, you have a Corner group. If not, you have a Right-Hand Lady Group. This can also be described as one couple paired, one not paired.
3. If **two of your known dancers are in the same group**, you have either a **Partner Group or an Opposite Group**. If the two known dancers are original partners, you have a Partner group (your other known dancers will be in the other foursome). If the two known dancers are not partner, you have an Opposite Group.

THE TOTAL FASR STATE

It should be clear at this point that the total set-up of a square can be described via the FASR route at any given snapshot point in a routine. There are four set-ups that are so common that names have been assigned to them:

1. CORNER BOX: This is the CALLERLAB approved term for the FASR that exists after either Heads or Sides Square Thru
2. PARTNER LINE: This is another CALLERLAB approved term that defines the FASR that exists after Heads or Sides Lead Right and Circle to a Line.
3. LEAD RIGHT BOX: CALLERLAB uses this term to identify the FASR that exists after either Heads or Sides Lead Right.
4. RIGHT HAND LADY BOX OUT OF SEQUENCE: CALLERLAB uses this term to identify the FASR that exists after either Heads or Sides do a ½ Square Thru. (This was formerly known as an Across the Street Box.)

SUMMARY

The concept of Symmetry, along with a basic understanding of FASR allows a caller to communicate with other callers regarding choreography. Familiarity with these four major parts of square dance set-ups improves choreographic understanding for any caller, new or experience. It also lays the foundation for a deeper understanding of both Arrangements and Relationships and using them intentionally with your choreography and resolutions.

To the newer callers: please remember that diving into the weeds of this too soon can be confusing and frustrating. While you're an "Apprentice" be satisfied with understand the basics of FASR. You only need the basics to get started. You need to know what formation you are in and whether you have a normal arrangement. New callers often get bitten by calling something that created a half-sashay line unintentionally. Watch for those things. Find quick ways to resolve that situation so you can get out of it when needed. Work with a mentor. Don't beat yourself up. You don't need to rebuild a full engine right now. You're just working on changing the oil, and maybe the wiper blades. That is more than good enough as you are starting out!

TERMS YOU WILL WANT TO KNOW (To help you communicate with other callers and with your own note-taking)

P	Partner
C	Corner
O	Opposite
R	Right Hand Lady
PL	Partner Line
CL	Corner Line
OL	Opposite Line
RL	Right Hand Lady Line
PLO	Partner Line Out of Sequence
CLO	Corner Lady Line Out of Sequence
OLO	Opposite Lady Line Out of Sequence
RLO	Right Hand Lady Out of Sequence

METHODS OF CALLING

There are five basic systems of calling:

1. READING
2. MEMORY
3. MENTAL IMAGE
4. MODULE
5. SIGHT RESOLUTION (Extemporaneous)
6. RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT (CRaMS)

1. READING
Reading is defined as a system in which the presentation of the square dance calls is delivered by reading a prepared “script” of choreography. While not recommended by most caller-coaches, it is a recognized system of calling that may be necessary for some callers. There are quite a few highly successful callers who “read” their material that they have written.

2. MEMORY
A “Memory Caller” is defined as a caller who memorizes a total dance routine from home to home. He then constructs a patter tip by combining various complete dance routines to create the dance experience. While this technique of calling was once common, total memory callers are now quite rare. It can be quite daunting to memorize complete sequences from 10-40 calls. This technique is not recommended by most caller-coaches.

3. MENTAL IMAGE
A system where-by the caller follows the dancers in his mind and resolves the square as desired. In actual practice, the caller basically follows one key dancer in the square. Mental Image techniques then make it possible for a caller to resolve the square by knowing where (what position) to move the key dancer at the appropriate time. There is a specific order in learning this system. It would be wise to secure a book, (Don Beck’s “Out Of Sight” is excellent) or specific instruction in this method.

The following is An Overview of Mental Image Choreography per Don Beck, Chilmark, MA.

“Mental Image choreography refers to a method of choreographic management. The degree of spontaneity that it affords you as a caller in creating sequences as you go along, is somewhere between modular calling and sight calling. Unlike sight calling, however, you do not have to memorize who started with whom, nor do you have to locate and manipulate these moving targets, in a dancing square, to resolve. Unlike modules, you do not have to memorize groupings of calls, and be restricted to calling sequences committed to memory. Here is an overview of one mental image technique. First, let's dispel the myth that you must follow eight dancers in your mind and then sight call them back to partners and corners (or even the four dancers a sight caller follows). Although being able to do this would accomplish what we want, it would be terribly difficult, if not impossible for most of us. Just like a sight caller or a module caller, you must know what formation the square is in at all times, e.g. do we have lines, waves, etc. and you must know the arrangement of the formation, i.e. are couples normal, half sashayed, or same sex, etc. In addition, you must follow the location of one and only one key dancer through the changing formations. The number one man is frequently chosen as the key dancer, but any of the eight dancers will do. Following the position of this key dancer does not usually add an additional burden, but actually makes following the formation/arrangement easier. Unfortunately, as you must realize, just following an active dancer is not enough to allow you to resolve, but here's where the mental image technique really begins. As long as you do not exchange partners or flip flop the square, when you move the active dancer to where (s)he would be in a zero box (i.e. have heads Square Thru [assuming the active dancer is a head]), then all seven of the other dancers will also be ready to do an Allemande Left. The key term above is “do not exchange

partners." About 2/3s of the calls we commonly use do not exchange partners. (These are called O-type calls or Os. Ones that do are called X-type calls or Xs.) The clue is to know which ones do, and each time you use one, call another one (any other one) to cancel its effect. In addition, you must be aware that when calling Xs, you must call one and then cancel it in the same location in the square, or you must cancel it in a different location in the square plus be aware of how that moves the spot to which you must dance the active dancer before you can call an Allemande Left. This may sound complicated, but when learning it step by step (as taught in Don Beck's book, Out of Sight), it is quite logical, and when you have learned many steps, you can generalize them so that there are really very few rules to remember. As well as being academically very interesting, being able to use Mental Image is a powerful tool in a caller's arsenal. Even a sight caller will appreciate being able to ad-lib his singing call figures when memorized corners change every sequence. Think of what you can do in a guest spot when everyone comes in club costume and they all look alike for a tip or two, until you learn faces. There are many other ways that mental image calling can help also; use technical zeros with confidence; know instantly if a square is in sequence or out; ad-lib six couple choreography; etc. Learning mental image calling is well worth the time it takes."

4. MODULE CALLING

"Modules" are defined as a series of one or more calls that take the dancers from one known FASR State to some other known FASR State. To use the Modular Method of Choreographic Control, a caller memorizes a number of such modules and calls them, one after the other in building block fashion. Since the caller knows the FASR State that exist at both the beginning and the end of each of the modules that he or she has memorized, the caller is always "in control". When one module is finished, another is simply selected that begins at the same FASR State that the dancers have after the preceding module. When it is time to resolve the square, the caller simply selects a module that will bring the dancers back to home. Modules are broken down into the following category:

1**. GET-IN**: This is a series of one or more calls that take the dancers from their Home positions to a particular FASR State. "Heads Square Thru" is therefore a "Get-In" module because the caller knows that it takes the dancers from Home to a Corner-Box (in sequence).

2. **GET-OUT**: This is a series of one or more calls that takes the dancers from a particular FASR State back to Home.
From a Partner-Line (in sequence), "Slide Thru, Square Thru 3/4, Allemande Left, Promenade Home" is a "Get-Out" module because it takes the dancers from a Partner-Line to Home positions.

3. **CONVERSION**: This a series of one or more calls that take the dancers from one known FASR State to some other FASR State also known by the caller. The two most useful conversion modules are known as the "Magic Modules" They are as follows:

***To convert a Partner Line (in sequence) to a Corner Box (in sequence)**
Touch ¼ - All Eight Circulate – Boys Run

***To Convert a Corner Box (in sequence) to a Partner Line (in sequence)**
Swing Thru – Girls Circulate – Boys Trade – Boys Run – Bend the Line

4. **EQUIVALENT**: This is a series of one or more calls that achieves the choreographic equivalent of some other call (or series of calls). The series "Heads Star Thru, California Twirl" is equivalent to "Heads Square Thru" or Heads Flutterwheel, Sweep !/4, Pass Thru" since each of these brings the dancers from their Home position (known FASR State) to a Corner-Box (in sequence) (another known FASR State).

5. **ZERO**: This is a series of one or more calls that takes the dancers from a known FASR State to the SAME FASR State, thereby producing a "zero" choreographic effect. Zeros are sometimes regarded as a special form of Equivalent module. Zeros fall into several different categories which are listed

below. It is important if uses zeros to understand the difference between these and which ones are being used and their effect on the dancers.

a. **GEOGRAPHIC ZERO**: If the zero being used brings the dancers back to their original footprints, it is considered to be a geographic zero. The series "Heads Right and Left Thru, Star Thru, Slide Thru" would be a geographic zero because the dancers are returned to their original footprints.

b. **TRUE ZERO**: A series of calls that returns the dancers to the same FASR State without effecting the ending position of the original actives (Heads or Sides). While every Geographic Zero is a True Zero, not all True Zeros are Geographic Zeros. It is not necessary for every True Zero to return the dancers to their original footprints. Eight Chain Four is an example of a True Zero which rotates the dancers 180 degrees.

c. **FRACTIONAL ZERO**: A series of calls which must be called two or more times in order to return the dancers to the same FASR. The following series from Facing Lines is a good example: - Pass Thru, Wheel and Deal, Double Pass Thru, Center In, Cast Off 3/4. This series of calls must be called three times in order to bring the dancers back to the same FASR and thus this series of calls is called a 1/3 Zero. From an Eight Chain Thru Formation, the calls - Square Thru 3/4, Trade By -becomes a 1/2 zero since this series of calls must be called twice to return the dancers to the same FASR. The following fractional zero categories have been identified: 1/4, 1/2, 1/3, 1/6, 1/12.

d. **TECHNICAL ZERO**: A series of calls which brings the dancers back to the same FASR but also interchanges the ending position of the original Heads and Sides. Technical Zeros are often referred to a "Sometimes Zeros" since they only produce a zero effect in two of the four possible sequence states. (See chapter on Mechanics) If a series of calls zeros out from a set-up in which the Sequence of both boys and girls is either clockwise or counter-clockwise, the same series of calls will NOT zero out in the other two Sequence states and vice versa. From a Corner-Box (in sequence) or from a Right Hand Lady Box (out of sequence), the series - Star Thru, Pass Thru, Bend the Line, Star Thru – produces a zero effect. The same combination from a Lead to the Right Box does not produce a zero effect but rather a four ladies chain effect. Similarly, from a Lead to the Right Box a - Pass Thru, Trade By- produces a zero effect. It produces a Four Ladies Chain effect when called from a Corner-Box (in sequence) or a Right Hand Lady Box (out of sequence). With that in mind then, a Technical Zero is a series of calls which does several things to the square:

1. It always interchanges the position of the Heads and Sides

2. It usually (but not always) changes the ends and centers, or…

3. It often (but not always) changes the in-facers and out-facers

4. In the two sequence states when a Technical Zero does not zero out, it accomplishes a four ladies chain effect.

5. If a series of calls that make a Technical Zero is called twice, the combination is a True Zero.

The most common Technical Zero is the Invert and Rotate Module. It starts from any Corner-Box (in sequence) and is as follows:

Star Thru – Pass Thru – Bend the Line – Star Thru

USING THE MODULE METHOD (CHICKEN PLUCKER)

The most effective way to use the techniques of modular choreography is to insert one or more of the above modules into a memorized set-piece dance routine. The most often used for this purpose is called "**CHICKEN PLUCKER**" and is shown below:

Heads Square Thru - Right and Left Thru
Pass Thru – Trade By - Right and Left Thru
Pass Thru – Trade By - Left Allemande

A caller can begin to substitute Equivalents for just about every call in the routine or insert zeros combinations at any point in the routine. They are generally used after the initial heads square thru or after the Right and Left Thru, Dive Thru, Pass Thru. At these points it is easy to insert a get-out routine to return to an allemande left or to home.

The primary advantage of the Module Method is that since the modules are interchangeable, they may be used to achieve choreographic variety without loss of caller "control". Each of the modules may be designed to achieve a particular choreographic effect (call applications, formation/arrangement variations, choreographic "gimmicks", etc.) and they thus facilitate a caller's programming operations. A major disadvantage of the modular method is that the caller must rely on sequences that must be totally memorized, and this is a limiting factor. It is, nonetheless, the fastest way for a new caller to learn to call patter calls in a controlled way and it is recommended that beginning callers learn this method before progressing into sight calling.

5. SIGHT RESOLUTION (EXTEMPERANEOUS)

GENERAL

Sight calling is generally recognized as the most versatile and flexible of all the calling methods. It provides the ability to create extemporaneously the particular kind of choreography that a caller might need for any and all calling assignments. If the ability or preferences of the dancers require an adjustment of the caller's program or a change in the degree of difficulty that is built into the dance patterns, such alterations can be made instantly without putting at risk the successful resolution of the square. Sight callers are also able to incorporate new calls or new ideas into their programs quickly and easily. While this staff urges every student caller to learn how to sight call, it is a good idea to undertake the study of sight calling only after the student thoroughly understands the mechanics of square dance choreography (described in a previous section of this syllabus) and only after the student is able to practice effectively the basic skills of modular calling (Chicken Plucker). It should also be noted that the effective practice of sight calling techniques can only be accomplished by a caller who has a complete and thorough knowledge of the square dance calls s/he is using.

The sight calling process consists of two essential procedures - **RESOLUTION** and **EXTEMPORANEOUS CALLING**. They are equally important. In a typical routine, a sight caller improvises a series of calls designed to accomplish or contribute to some portion of the caller's program objectives (Extemporaneous calling). When that is completed, the caller returns the dancers back to their original home positions (Resolution).

SIGHT RESOLUTION

Resolution is the easiest part of the sight calling process because it only requires a caller to learn and apply a simple resolution recipe or formula. Students should learn resolution techniques first so that, when they subsequently study the far more difficult techniques of extemporaneous calling, they will be secure in the knowledge that no matter what happens while they experiment with improvised choreography, they will always be able to accomplish a successful resolution.

PILOT SQUARES AND KEY DANCERS

Sight callers accomplish a successful resolution by monitoring the relative positions of four key dancers in one or more pilot squares. Modern square dancing is almost totally symmetric; i.e. the actions that occur in one half of the square are identically danced in the other half. This characteristic enables a sight caller to track only four dancers to control the actions of all eight effectively. This means that when, at the conclusion of a routine, a sight caller has successfully maneuvered the four key dancers back to their original home positions, s/he will have also brought the other four dancers back to their home spots.

The first step in any resolution process is the careful selection of pilot squares and the equally careful selection of four key dancers in each of the pilot squares. The following guidelines are useful:

1. Choose only those squares with the most competent dancers. Any square containing a known weak dancer should be avoided.

2. Whenever possible, select more than one pilot square in case the first pilot square breaks down.

3. Select pilot squares in various locations in the hall - not only those that are up front in the hall.

4. Guidelines for the selection of the four key dancers ensure that a sight caller is provided with all of the information that is necessary to accomplish a successful resolution. To exploit the symmetry of the set, the four key dancers must be adjacent (not opposites), to assure proper pairings, they should have original partners and to assure correct sequence, two of the key dancers must be original corners. Choosing two adjacent (side-by-side) couples in a squared-up set satisfies all of these requirements.

5. It is helpful for a sight caller to identify the selected couples not simply as couples 1 and 4 (1 & 2, or 2 & 3 or 3 & 4) but also a particular key man and his corner plus their respective partners. This focuses the caller's attention on the all-important corner relationship of the two key couples.

6. Whenever possible, selection of the four key dancers should be based on the caller's prior awareness of partner relationships. Avoid squares in which known partners are not dancing together. It is easier to remember that the key couples are the Smiths and the Browns than it is to recall that Mary Smith is paired with Sam Brown and that Sue Jones is paired with Tom Green.

7. In situations where the caller is unable to identify prior partner relationships, it is often possible to determine such relationships by selecting couples with matching costumes, identical badges or similar physical characteristics (tall, short, heavy, thin etc.).

8. To guard against a lapse of memory, it is always a good idea for a caller to place a slip of paper on the table with the amplifier upon which to record, at the beginning of the tip before s/he starts to call, the identities of the selected key dancers.

9. There will, on occasion, be times when a sight caller is unable to identify one or more "safe" squares to use as pilots. In such cases, it is a good idea for a sight caller to have some other method of control to fall back on (Modules, Mental image etc.).

RESOLUTIONS TECHNIQUES

When, after calling extemporaneously, a sight caller is ready to resolve the square, typically s/he will use a clearly defined resolution procedure to move the dancer's home. Numerous formulas have been developed to accomplish this goal and most of them have been published in various magazine articles, callers' note services, calling textbooks and other training literature. These formulas typically fall into one of three categories as shown below:

1. **One Couple Sight:** The CALLERLAB approved name of this technique describes its primary advantage - it allows the caller to create a limited amount of improvised choreography for all eight dancers while tracking only the actions of a single couple. To use this technique, a caller establishes a beginning FASR Set-Up from which it is possible to call an accurate Allemande Left (usually a Corner-Box (in sequence) or a Partner Line (in sequence) or from which the caller "owns" a memorized Get-Out module. After noting the precise physical location (footprints) of one key couple in either half of the set, the caller can create any improvised combination of calls as long as none of the dancers are moved out of their geographic half of the square. The caller may then resolve the set by simply moving the key couple back to its beginning FASR footprints. With the key dancers back in their footprints, the other six will also be in theirs and the caller will have, in effect, improvised a geographic zero module. This one couple technique was first described by Jack Lasry. He called it the "Burnt Image Method" because it requires a caller to burn the image of the key couple's footprints onto the floor.

2. **Two Couple Sight:** This CALLERLAB approved term defines a simple extension of the one couple method noted above. It differs from the One Couple technique in only two respects: the caller must monitor two couples and, instead of requiring a caller to keep each of the dancers in his/her original geographic half of the set, s/he is permitted to move the dancers all around the square providing only that the two key couples always remain in the same foursome. It is as though the two key couples were confined inside a large, loose rubber band. When ready to resolve, the caller simply realigns the four rubber band dancers into a configuration that is identical to the one that existed at the beginning of the FASR state. Jack Lasry named this technique "Isolated Sight" and is sometimes also noted as the "Rubber Band Method". Because these two methods exclude the use of calls that move the dancers out of their original foursomes, (Circulates, Spin Chain Thru, etc.) few callers use either method as their primary means of choreographic control. These systems, however, may serve as valuable transition exercises to facilitate a modular caller's progression into totally unrestricted sight calling techniques.

3. **Unrestricted Sight Calling (Four Couple Sight): This** resolution technique provides a caller with the freedom to create or improvise symmetric choreography without limitations. It places no restrictions on the allowable calls. Because of this freedom, CALLERLAB has identified this system as "Four Couple Sight". However, a caller is still only required to keep track of the actions of two key couples in the pilot square. After selecting the key dancers and after calling extemporaneously, there are many resolution processes that a caller may use. There are many Sight Resolution Concepts available at the CALLERLAB Knowledge Database. Here is one developed at a GSI School by Bear Miller (one advantage is that it uses terminology from the section on Modules:

- Pick two adjacent couples.
- Identify the Corner Relationship between the couples.
- Dance the square with normal non-asymmetrical calling.
- Bring them to a "0" (normal) arrangement Eight Chain Thru, Facing Lines, or Parallel Waves.
- Depending on how you look at them (4-0 or 0-4, key people in your arrangement or 3-1, 1-3, or 2-2), our goal is to rearrange and focus on 3-1 or 1-3.

• You can use either simple Magic Module to convert the 4-0, 0-4, or 2-2 to a 3-1.

• Once you a have a 3-1, put them into an Eight Chain Thru Formation. Of the dancers you picked out, there will be 1 couple within the “3”. Pair that couple. If not already paired, you can call Swing Thru, Boys Run, Bend the Line, Star Thru to get them paired.

a) If the corner is in your group and the paired couple is on the outside, call Allemande Left.

b) If the paired couple is on the inside, call Star Thru, Slide Thru, Allemande Left!

c) If the Corner is not in your group and the paired couple is outside, then you are “Across the Street”, a 1/2 Chicken Plucker from your corner. Note in this case, if the paired couple is on the inside, then you have already done the first Right & Left Thru and only need to call Pass Thru, Trade By, Allemande Left!

• If at any point you cannot see the number of people, remember you can invert and rotate to change your viewing angle.

• Remember you should use “Equivalents” for any of the above listed sequences to provide variety. Also, most successful sight callers prefer, instead, to call a previously planned (memorized) Get-Out Module that serves either to support their program goals or to add a touch of showmanship to their choreography.

EXTEMPORANEOUS CALLING/FORMATION MANAGEMENT

It is not enough to know how to resolve the set accurately. A caller must also know how to improvise effectively the choreography that is called before the resolution process begins. A primary skill of every sight caller is the ability to create extemporaneously a dance that not only flows smoothly but which also achieves the choreographic goals of the caller's pre-planned programs. These techniques are directly contingent upon a sight caller's knowledge and understanding of how calls formations and arrangements interact with one another. These techniques have lately come to be *known as* the techniques of FORMATION MANAGEMENT and they involve the following considerations:

1. **Knowledge of calls**: Once again, students are urged to study square dance calls and to complete the "Analyzing a Call" Sheets for each call in their repertoires, This entails
memorizing call definitions, starting and ending formations and arrangements, as well as studying each call's timing and flow requirements.

2. **Knowledge of Formations and Arrangements**: Sight callers need the ability to establish quickly, easily and without guesswork - any and all formation/arrangements their choreographic game plan requires. They also need to know as many call options as possible when the dancers are in those FASRs. An effective sight caller is never surprised by the formation/arrangement consequences of any call s/he might use and always knows at least one call that is legal and comfortable from any given dancer FASR. The following suggestions will facilitate the study of formation/arrangements and how to manage them:

a. **Formation Awareness**: Students should study the pictograms in the Formation Charts in the Appendix. A caller cannot manage formations until and unless s/he knows precisely how they are constructed and in what arrangements they occur.

b. **Creating Formations and Arrangements**: To acquire this skill, students work first with dolls and checkers. In the beginning, learning how to establish formations and arrangements will generally involve the memorization of various modules that serve to produce the desired formation/arrangements from various other formations/arrangements. It is suggested that

students concentrate on one formation at a time - many begin with Facing Lines of Four. When a student caller has learned how to set up all six arrangements in Facing Lines, s/he is then only a Touch 1/4 away from all six Right Hand Column arrangements. Similar modular constructions may then be developed to produce the six arrangements in any other desired formation. While experienced sight callers are generally able to identify each formation/arrangement as it emerges, and while they can also see how to create any given formation/arrangement, from any point in an improvised routine, they typically learned how to do this by first memorizing a variety of modular formation set-up routines.

c. **Knowledge of Call Options**: Closely related to the ability to predict and identify formation/arrangements in an on-going routine is the ability to identify quickly not only the calls that are allowable in each emerging formation/arrangement but also those that are most likely to support or enhance a caller's program goals. A useful exercise for the student caller is to make a list of the calls that can be called from each of the pictograms - preferably with some comments about each call's timing, flow, degree of difficulty and the theme or program support potential.

d. **Conversion/Normalization:** Formation Management skills are also used to facilitate a sight caller's resolution process. Every resolution formula requires at least one step in which it is necessary, from whatever FASR set-up a caller's improvised choreography may have created, for a caller to place the dancers into some "0" or normal formation/arrangement. This means that a sight caller needs the ability not only to establish a wide range of formations in all of their possible arrangements, but also the ability to convert them, in a controlled and knowledgeable manner, into a "0" (normal) arrangement whenever the need arises.

Extemporaneous calling and formation management skills are much harder to learn than the step-by-step formulas for sight resolution. While the components and tools of formation management may be studied at home, an acceptable proficiency in the actual practice of these skill can only be achieved with "on-mike" practice and repetition. Effective choreographic improvisation encompasses such hard-to-define qualities as creativity, originality, choreographic showmanship and the ability to invent (or remember) vast amounts of choreographic variety. Acquiring these abilities is a formidable task but while their acquisition must obviously take a considerable amount of time and effort, the process is not at all difficult and the results are well worth the effort.

SUMMARY

The ability to improvise choreography instantly is one of extemporaneous calling's greatest assets. It can sometimes also be a serious liability. An ability to create choreography and an easy ability to resolve the square does not eliminate the requirement for callers to pre-plan carefully (program their dances) for each and every dance they call. Every dance needs an overall game plan and every tip and every routine within that tip should, in one way or another, contribute to it. Sight callers must always keep that in mind.

RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT (CRaMS)

For decades, many callers have focused on Formation, Arrangement and Sequence while tracking dancers as they move through a sequence. Although formation and arrangement are easy to see, sequence is not – especially "on the fly" since many calls will change the sequence of some or all dancers.
There are specific techniques that can be used to resolve a square using just formation, arrangement and sequence, but these techniques may require several steps to reach the final desired result. The complexity of those techniques leads many callers to "hunt for corners", trying one call after another until the dancers fall into a recognizable FASR.

With this focus on Formation, Arrangement and Sequence the fourth leg of the nomenclature system, Relationship, has generally been ignored. But it turns out that the relationships of the dancers can be easier for many callers to understand and see while a square is in motion, and the principles of using relationships while calling can be learned in just a few minutes. Once relationships are recognizable, the state of the square is easily identified in almost any FASR at all.

A few simple "cookbook" rules allow a caller to consciously change the relationships at will, giving the caller a great deal of control over the state of the square. CRaMS incorporates relationship choreography as one of its fundamental tools, and the information on relationship calling often takes up the most time in a CRaMS presentation. But CRaMS, as a system, focuses on solving a wider problem: Callers that emphasize extemporaneous choreography while not being able to predict the results of their choreography.

Although the callers may believe inventing sequences "on the fly" leads to unpredictable and fun dance sequences, it oftentimes has just the opposite effect: stop and go choreography, poor body flow, repetitive calls while hunting for corners and sequences that last (literally) for minutes without coming to conclusion. While the caller may be having fun, many times the dancers are not enjoying it as much as the caller would like. To improve matters, CRaMS incorporates several types of choreography tools: themes, modules, targeted use of sight calling (or "recognized calling"), controlled use of relationships, and memorized get-ins and get-outs. When these tools are all used together, extemporaneous calling can be taken to a much higher level of skill.

The CRaMS mantra is:

Get 'Em In, Maneuver the dancers into a particular FASR from which it is possible to call the programmed choreography.

Get 'Em Going, Call the programmed choreography, ending in a FASR for which the caller owns a memorized get-out

Get 'Em Out, Call the Get-Out.
Get the dancers into a known relationship station, incorporate themes and modules to dance them about the square without losing control, and get them back out (resolve) quickly. Using this approach, a typical sequence might last only 20 seconds; and the square might be resolved ten or fifteen times during a single hash tip.

CRaMS also recognizes that the weakest point in resolving a square through sight resolution is usually the dancers: If the caller's pilot square (or squares) make a mistake, s/he's generally unable to resolve. By keeping track of the relationship station (more specifically, by putting dancers into one station and keeping them there until it's time to resolve), callers can have far more success in resolving even if a pilot square breaks down.

SMOOTH DANCING AND BODY FLOW

Smoothness in square dancing is difficult to discuss, as it means different things to different people. Assume a measurement of 1-10, 1 being completely awkward and 10 being perfectly smooth. Most dancers and callers can agree that nothing in Square Dancing is perfectly smooth and that there are many things that should be avoided completely. So, while 1 and 10 are easily agreed upon, 2 thru 9 becomes much hazier due to personal choice and subjectivity.

Since no real agreement will ever be reached, it's best to look at the many factors that influence the sensation of Smooth Dancing. Controlling any of these factors in different ways will impact the dancer's interpretation of the level of smoothness.

The biggest impact on smoothness is understanding the dancers flow at any given time during the sequence and utilizing it effectively. Scientifically, this is referred to as Kinesiology**,** or the study of body movement, and includes consideration of people and how their physical characteristics affect the way they move. Some different aspects of kinesiology that relate to square dancing include:

Body Flow or Movement: As a caller, understanding all aspects of how a call functions (FASR), and what calls can be done prior to, and after a call, come with the territory. But caller's need to also understand a body's momentum as it flows from call to call. For example, while the call Reverse Flutterwheel can be completed after a Right and Left Thru, a good understanding of Body Flow, tells you that the two should not be called together in that order.

Most smoothness is attributed to "wind in your face" style of dancing, a forward walking type of motion. to truly make it a dance, other motion needs to be included, for example:

- Forward and Back – a smooth transition from moving forward to backing up.
- Rock/Recover – A sideways forward and back if you will, with a change of weight
- Change of Direction – A switch between a Clockwise and Counterclockwise Flow

Hand Availability: Dancers need to utilize some type of hand touching through most dance moves. While placing calls so that an alternating hand motion is a good rule of thumb, we must focus on not just the last hand used, but whether a hand is AVAILABLE to be used, even twice in succession.

For example, consider the calls Star Thru, Right and Left Thru. Even though the man's position would utilize the right and twice, after the Star Thru the hand is right where it needs to be for the next call, even though it's being used twice. Similarly, a call like Scootback, uses the same hand twice within its own definition, yet is fine.

Even non-hand calls that repeat shoulder passes can be different. Weave the Ring, utilizes alternating shoulders as it moves through the call, yet the sequence Pass Thru, Trade By uses two right shoulders. Both are considered comfortable and danceable.

Overflow: Callers also need to be aware of overflow, or repetitive motion in same direction without relief. This can happen on a small scale or a larger one. Callers should generally try and stay away from sequences that cause more than a 3/4 or 270 degree turn in any one direction. For example, Spin the Top followed by Fan the Top has the center dancers turning 3/4 in the middle twice.

One also needs to be conscious of overflow on a larger scale. Callers tend to work mostly in a clockwise fashion if left unchecked. While the circle is bigger, the feeling of being on a racetrack is still there. Take for example following sequence: Heads Lead Right, Veer Left, Couples Circulate, Wheel and Deal, Veer Left, Couples Circulate. For the heads this is a 540-degree rotation and for the side man, it's a cardio workout. Callers need to be aware of the direction of the flow, and include changes of directions, if for nothing else, then to "unwind" the dancers.

Counter Dancing: This term used when two dancers interact with one another. Utilizing the other dancer as a form of a "counter-weight" to balance each other. Examples, include Swing, Turn Thru, or the trailing dancers on a Scootback. When teaching, remember that square dancing should be a dance experience, not a touch hands and avoid and evade experience. The interaction and counterweight help the smoothness of the dance as well as the enjoyment.

Another aspect of counter dancing is the ability of inactive dancers to help or assist the active dancers in their task. For example, the sequence Heads Separate Around One to a Line is much smoother if the Side dancers step forward as the Heads pass by, then slide apart and slightly back to accommodate the Heads arrival behind them to make the line.

Environment: A crowded dance floor can make dancing difficult and inhibit a dancer's ability to dance smoothly. Likewise, an acoustically bad hall, or a poorly sounded one, will cause dancers to faulter as they try to understand what they're being asked to do

Timing: Discussed elsewhere, timing is broken down into 3 parts – Command Time, Lead Time, and Execution Time. The goal of good timing is to allow the dancer *just enough* time to achieve a seamless transition from one movement to the next, while keeping everyone moving to the beat of the music. Too soon? They're running to catch up. Too Late? They stop after every call. Good timing has the dancer as if on a treadmill, just walking to the beat of the music – one step, one beat.

Tempo: The beats per minute or speed of the chosen music. The choice of tempo, while ultimately up to the caller, should be influenced by many factors. For Example:

- What are the floor conditions? Sticky or Slippery?
- How are the acoustics? Easy or difficult to hear?
- What is the average age of the dancers? Experience level?
- Are there vocal conditions, like accents at play that may slow comprehension?

All these factors should help you determine where the BPM mark should be set, as well as what music selections should be utilized.

Musical Selection: Musical selection can help or hinder the illusion of smoothness. Consider different ballroom styles of dance – a waltz versus a tango, or a foxtrot versus a jive. Music selection can mean the difference between a bouncy step versus a shuffle step, which influence the perception and ability to dance smoothly.

Dancer Anticipation: Dancers themselves will affect the illusion of smoothness in a sequence of calls. Sometimes these are setup intentionally, other times there more underlying reasons as to why. The three main ways we understand anticipation are:

> **Encouraged:** Callers will set up future calls based on rhyming patterns. For instance, from a Static Square, the caller starts with Heads Square Thru Four. If the caller then says "Make a …" most dancers will form a Right-handed Star without further prompting.
>
> **Conditioned:** This is more of a societal conditioning. For example, many singing calls begin with a Circle Left. If at the beginning of a song the caller says "Circle…" most dancers have already taken off in a clockwise direction. If the caller then says "… to the Right" – dancers will need to stop abruptly and head in the other direction. Understanding what is standard and what they are conditioned to already expect, can help a caller create smoothness for the dancer.
>
> **Instinctive:** Existing body momentum or flow, will cause dancers to do certain things. Let's go back to the sequence "Right and Left Thru, Reverse Flutterwheel". The sequence has such bad flow, that most dancers will assume the caller made an error. Some will subconsciously do

a regular Flutterwheel instead as that's the proper flow. Most won't even realize they didn't do as the caller asked, because they just followed the flow and assumed they were correct.
Another instinctive move is to work with who you're facing. Which is why a sequence of "Pass to the Center, Partner Trade", besides being two trades of the outside dancers, cause the inside dancers to try and work with the dancers in front of them rather than next to them.

Dancer Execution: Another reason that things may not seem smooth to a dancer, is their familiarity to the calls, or sequence of calls that they are presented with. There are several factors that can affect the dancer accuracy.

Familiarity: Dancers may not be familiar with the calls at hand. This could be due to a multitude of varied reasons. Perhaps it's a listed call that is not utilized very often. Or maybe the calls are being utilized from an unfamiliar FASR. Both items can cause hesitation on the dancer's part, leading to a feeling of being unsmooth.

Regional Differences/Training: Like a language dialect, dancers find ways to add embellishments to many standardized calls. These flourishes can occasionally get in the way of what would normally be accepted as a smooth sequence of calls. For example, from a ½ Tidal Wave, the sequence "Grand Swing Thru, Right and Left Thru" is smooth. However, it is less smooth for dancers who use a forearm grip while in a wave, then for dancers who use some form of a hand grip.

Summary: Callers need to try to understand the multitude of factors that influence the illusion of smoothness while dancing. Even tried and true routines can feel different in different environments with different dancers. The competent caller will work within all given factors to give their dancers the smoothest possible experience on the dance floor.

TIMING



Ideal timing exists when nothing is allowed to impede or interfere with the progressively forward momentum of the dancer's body movement. It exists when all the dancers in a moving square are able to blend easily and comfortably from one dance action to the next -- when the physical transition from one movement to the next occurs in a smooth-flowing and unhurried manner. No caller can hope to accomplish this without consistently maintaining visual contact with the dancers.

Timing is a difficult thing to define. It involves three distinct variables and requires a great deal of judgment by the caller. One must understand the four-beat phrase of the music, the number of beats for the dancer to complete the action and the degree of difficulty of the choreography to be executed. All of these variables affect the timing of the dance routine.

An experienced caller may often be able to accurately predict the amount of time that the dancers will need in order to comfortably execute a square dance command. While it may even be possible for an experienced caller to boast that s/he can call a reasonably well-timed patter presentation while blindfolded (or with his/her eyes glued to written notes), it is, nevertheless, also true that a modern caller's on-the-spot timing judgments are subject to so many unpredictable and unexpected influences, that it would be foolhardy for him/her to attempt to call a dance without, at all times, monitoring the dancers.

Good timing depends upon a caller's ability to both recognize and react to three very fundamental timing variables:

1. **Command Time**: The number of beats necessary to give a command.
2. **Lead Time**: The number of beats necessary for dancers to react to a call.
3. **Execution Time**: The number of beats for the dancers to actually execute the call.

COMMAND TIME

Command Time is simply the time it takes to say the call you want the dancers to perform. While some calls are short and precise, others take almost as long to say as they do to perform (e.g., in the Mainstream Program, “Dixie Style to an Ocean Wave”) The caller must have the next Command ready to say or the dancers will be stopped, waiting for directions. This kind of stop-start dancing is very tiring for the dancers.

LEAD TIME



The dancer's reaction time to a given command is usually instantaneous. There are, however, a number of predictable instances where it could be slightly delayed. A dancer's response to an unfamiliar command will obviously be slower than the response to a familiar one. This is why a caller must carefully adjust his/her timing patterns when calling to beginners or when teaching a new movement to experienced dancers. S/He knows that their reaction to the new command will be somewhat slower and s/he must adjust his/her timing patterns to accommodate their predictably slower reaction times.

Most dancers also require an extra beat or two of music when responding to an unexpected or “surprise” command (“1st couple left, next couple LEFT!” ... or “There's your corner... do a Right & Left Thru!”) Such commands are deliberately designed to catch the dancers off their guard and a caller who uses such shock-value commands must also provide the dancers with an appropriate amount of recovery time. A caller who uses them repeatedly during any evening’s performance should be publicly flogged for employing such lousy judgment.

The temperature in the hall or the lateness of the hour may also affect dancer reaction time. If the evening is hot and humid, the dancers will sometimes drag their heels. And the die-hards still on the floor at the 2 a.m. after party, are seldom as alert as they were earlier in the evening.

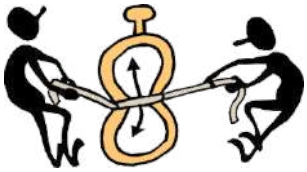
EXECUTION TIME

To ensure good timing, a caller must always know the precise number of beats or dancing steps that the dancers will need to perform each and every command that s/he calls.

The caller -- not the dancers -- should control the timing. Many dancers have a tendency to rush or "clip" the timing and, while a caller should be aware of this inclination, s/he should neither accommodate it nor be pressured by it. S/He should, instead, make it a point to always allow an adequate number of beats for every movement … even though the dancers, by rushing, may sometimes get to where they're going sooner than they should. A caller who adjusts to his/her dancers' clipped timing compounds the problem rather than solves it!

There are, on the other hand, a number of situations in which it is proper for a caller to accommodate or make allowances for variations in the dancers' execution time:

Distance can often be a critical factor. A command for the Head couples, from a static square, to do a Right & Left Thru, takes more time to complete than it takes them to do a Right & Left Thru after a "Wheel Around" from promenading couples.



Dancer momentum or inertia should also be considered. Are they stationary or moving? The Swing Thru in "Head Couples Swing Thru" (from a static square) takes longer than the Swing Thru in "Head Couples Square Thru and then Swing Thru with the outside two," because from a Static Square it takes two steps for the dancers to get together.

Execution time in a crowded hall may sometimes be shorter -- or longer -- than execution in a hall that is not crowded. Crowding the dancers together makes distances shorter and this can shorten execution time. The same jam-packed dancers, however, may sometimes need extra time to do a call as they dodge each other's elbows and try to keep out of each other's way.

Be aware also of the general age of your dancers. A young people's group is able to execute calls more rapidly than an older group. This is not meant as a put-down -- it's simply a fact, Jack. Call too slow to teens and you'll bore them, call too quickly to an older group and you'll exhaust them by 9 p.m. Watch your dancers and use your judgment.

Consider too, the condition of the floor. A slick floor, or a sticky, tacky floor may also increase the amount of time it takes to perform a call's actions.

Timing is a balancing act between these three elements. Timing is also affected by the following:

- A complete knowledge of the choreography to be called … ***Definitions.***
- An ability to watch the dancers and know where they are going…***Formation Awareness***.
- An understanding of body flow … ***Kinesiology.***
- A **Choreographic Plan**
- Knowledge of how to use **music** as a timing tool.

Timing is as much a "feel" as it is a mechanical ability to count the number of beats. It also includes body flow and hand usage. Timing is a little like money…in that you spend it just before you make it.

How A Caller Develops Good Timing



Good timing is based upon a caller's ability to deliver each command while the dancers are actually finishing the actions of the previous command. The caller must generally stay one or two beats “in front” of his/her dancers. Dancers do not appreciate abrupt changes of direction from one call to another, nor standing awaiting the next command. They grow tired, restless and the stress level of their dancing experience increases … which proportionately decreases the caller’s popularity.

A caller learns timing by concentrating on the direction-giving command words and by placing those key words in exactly the right place in the correct 4-beat phrase. Learning how to time correctly requires practice with real dancers and it is, for the most part, a trial-and-error process.

Timing is not acquired while at the office or driving in your car. It can only be accomplished by calling to ‘live’ dancers. It requires patience, along with much practice. It is one of the last skills that a new caller will acquire.

A student caller should avoid worrying about non-directional “filler” words or colorful phrases until s/he has mastered the art and science of good timing. When s/he can get the dancers moving smoothly through the actions of a routine, s/he may then add fillers and catch phrases to add character and personality to his/her presentation. Filler words should never interfere with good timing. However, Fill-In Patter adds a lot of color to calling IF done correctly. Callers should get a book of fill-in patter and practice, practice, practice!

Study and learn the CALLERLAB Timing Chart for every call.

NOTHING takes the place of practice. For newer callers, get a square together and practice, practice, practice. If you cannot get a square, get two couples to practice and practice.

SINGING CALLS

Since the early 1970's there has been a generally accepted format for square dance recordings that follows a simple pattern, this being; INTRO (4, 8 or 16 beats), seven by 64 beat MODULES and the TAG or "OUTRO" (4, 8 or 16 beats). The MODULE elements of the recording are usually arranged as: a non-partner changing OPENER, two partner changing (either corner or right hand lady progressive) FIGURES, non-partner changing MIDDLE BREAK, two more partner changing FIGURES and then the non-partner changing CLOSER.

Prior to 1970 this arrangement was not uncommon but was by no means the standard. The other types of arrangements were many and diverse and paid much closer attention to the original arrangement of the song in question. Some examples of these would be four by 80 beat figures, four by 96 beat figures, four by 80 beat figures with a 64 beat middle break and a 72 beat closer etc. etc. Indeed any and every combination was acceptable provided that it comprised 8 beat phrases, ran between 2½ to 4½ minutes (approximately) and provided four partner changes such that all the boys could dance with all the girls but end up with their own partner.

OPENERS, MIDDLE BREAKS AND CLOSERS

While there are no defined rules, of which I am aware, for the composition of the Opener/Middle Break/Closer module, I am going to suggest a few guidelines that would seem to be applicable, based upon common practices. These would be:

1. Either all eight dancers or four of the same sex should usually be working at the same time. E.g. Circle Left (involving everybody) or Four Ladies Chain or Four Boys Promenade.

2. You should try to make use of the "longer" calls to allow large portions of the original song to be "sung" by the caller. e.g. Weave the Ring or Right and Left Grand.

3. The sequence should allow a full 16 beat promenade so that the last two bars of the verse or chorus can be sung in their entirety.

4. Where practical the choreography should be chosen to compliment and fit the structure of the music and not compete (or "fight") with the tune.

By following these guidelines it is possible to establish a "comfortable", "easily achieved" routine that provides little or no challenge for the dancers but instead offers the chance to relax and enjoy the music.

However, with a little bit of thought and imagination it is certainly possible to extend the range of choreographic patterns used, to avoid repetition and over-use of the more mundane combinations. Bear in mind, however, that there are only a few calls that lend themselves to effective use of the original lyrics of the song; if you wish to sing-a-long!

COMMON OPENERS/MIDDLE BREAKS/CLOSERS

As you will no doubt be aware, there are very few unusual "Breaks" used on modern singing calls. This is, I feel, a shame. Indeed, if you were to look at the majority of records produced in the last few years they would provide you with a fairly small repertoire of modules.

Of this small number there are a few which appear to have become the standard, perhaps with the intention that the "choreographic meat" would be in the figures ... *But* if you look at the figures carefully, these quite often don't appear to include much more than the standard "trusted and tried" choreographic material. Although, out of fairness, a few producers/artists do seem to make the effort and offer a bit of innovative and therefore interesting (while achievable and enjoyable) choreographic material.

A few examples of "standard" breaks would be:

Grand Square (reverse) Four Ladies Chain (and back) Promenade	Grand Square (reverse) Allemande Left and Weave the Ring (or Right and Left Grand) Swing and Promenade	Grand Square (reverse) Four Ladies/Men Promenade Swing and Promenade
Four Ladies Chain Rollaway & Circle Left Rollaway & Circle Left Allemande Left and Weave the Ring (or Right and Left Grand) Swing and Promenade	Four Ladies Chain (and back) Circle Left Allemande Left and Weave the Ring (or Right and Left Grand) Swing and Promenade	Four Ladies/Men Promenade Swing Circle Left Allemande Left and Weave the Ring (or Right and Left Grand) Swing and Promenade

And the most common of all, the standard "Circle Left" break:-

Circle Left Allemande Left Do Sa Do (or Turn Partner Right) Allemande Left and Weave the Ring (or Right and Left Grand) Swing and Promenade	This particular figure always intrigues me. While I have to be honest and admit that I use it quite often, I wonder how many people, especially callers, realize that it doesn't work! If you time it out you will see that it only provides an 8 beat promenade and thus the whole figure only runs for 56 beats. *The circle left is a full circuit, allemande left/do sa do/allemande left does not move dancers away from their home position, weave the ring will mean that they meet on the opposite side, swing does not change this, thus they only have to promenade half to get home!*

Compare this with the following:

Circle Left Allemande Left Do Sa Do four Men Star by the Left Turn Thru Allemande Left Swing and Promenade	This figure allows a full promenade. *The circle left is a full circuit, allemande left/do sa do does not move dancers away from their home position, Men Star Left will bring the dancers back to their point of origin, Turn Thru/Allemande Left does not change this location, Swing does not affect location either, thus the dancers now have a full promenade to get back home!*

While this break does not allow the "weave the ring" part of the song to be used it does time out correctly and it is quite easy to deliver the calls more musically by aligning them to the structure of the music. Although, in general, it is not wise to "sing" the calls - but rather to "chant" them - i.e. deliver them in a clear direct manner such that they are obviously instructions, rather than the lyrics of the song.

The common breaks, mentioned above, do represent the "safe" and "comfortable" route and it is fair to say that for some groups or in certain situations these are the most appropriate.

STANDARD CIRCLE LEFT BREAK

The standard "Circle Left" break is one of the most common used by callers. Some callers do make a special point of not using it because it is technically incorrect. However, it is one of those anomalies that occur from time to time within the square dance activity; like certain "poor" body flow combinations, it has become acceptable because of its constant use. Dancers, as a rule, are prepared to "make use of" the spare time available and modify the execution of the calls (or add extra calls e.g. a swing or whirl) to make the choreography "dance" effectively. This is what happens; whether or not it is a good thing - is another consideration entirely. It raises the question as to whether we should take steps to try and discourage this break from being used.

My opinion would be to "leave well alone" and continue using the figure, as to try to implement such a fundamental change to our normal practices would meet with considerable resistance, from both dancers and callers. You still have the right to choose not to use this module if you wish.

It is also worth noting that the use of Do Sa Do after the Weave the Ring, before the Swing - creates an uncomfortable "flow" combination; this used to be quite common on some of the earlier "standard format break" singing calls - thus "Swing and Promenade" has become the normal combination

Examples of a few less common but quite frequently used breaks are:

Walk Around Your Corner Do Pa So Allemande Thar Slip the Clutch Allemande Left and Weave the Ring (or Right and Left Grand) Swing and Promenade	Allemande left - Alamo Style Swing Thru X 2 Turn the Partner Right (not Turn Thru!) Allemande Left and Weave the Ring (or Right and Left Grand) Swing and Promenade	Four Ladies Chain ¾ Four Ladies Chain across Sides Face Grand Square - just eight steps Allemande Left and Weave the Ring (or Right and Left Grand) Swing and Promenade

Four Ladies Chain ¾ Rollaway Circle Left (sing for 8 beats!) Allemande Left and Weave the Ring (or Right and Left Grand) Swing and Promenade	Allemande left - to an Allemande Thar Shoot the Star - to an Allemande thar Shoot the Star Right and left Grand Swing and Promenade	Allemande left - to an Allemande Thar Shoot the Star - full turn right to the Partner - pull by Allemande Left Right and left Grand Swing and Promenade

I would expect that if you looked at a fair selection of singing calls, you would find these breaks on about one out of every twenty records. These take a little more work to use effectively with the song structure and certainly fit some records more effectively than others. However, they are well worth considering. If you continue to look at current releases you will, no doubt, discover the occasional original and innovative break, unfortunately these tend to be few and far between.

So - assuming that you want to - how can you make the breaks more interesting? You might decide to listen to some of the older singing calls, either in your own collection or from the local caller association's library or perhaps in the company of your calling friends. There are many ingenious ideas to be "researched" by this method. Take care, however, to check figures from older recordings; ensure that they flow well and time out correctly and if they involve unusual choreographic combinations - it might be an idea to forewarn and possibly even workshop these with your group rather than just calling them "cold"

Some breaks that you might discover, on older records - for example - could include:

Allemande Left Ladies Star Right Men Single File Promenade Allemande Left Men Star Right Ladies Single File Promenade Allemande Left Turn Partner by the Right Arm Allemande Left Right and Left Grand Do Sa Do Swing and Promenade	Face your Corner Star Thru Circle Left Do Pa So Allemande Thar Shoot the Star Do Sa Do Box the Gnat Right Pull By Allemande Left Promenade	The first of these breaks is the "Triple Allemande" figure that was quite popular as both a singing call and a Patter call opener - it will require a little care if you decide to use it; it would help if you remind the dancers on each Allemande Left that they should use the same Corner. The second break is from Tommy Cavanagh's recording of "Roll Out The Barrel". If you wish to use this you will have to practice carefully to fit the calls to the musical structure; it will work better with some tunes than others
Allemande Left Right and Left Grand Do Sa Do Promenade Grand Square (reverse)	This break is so simple it is quite ingenious. It allows the full second 32 beats of the song to be sung without a break. This provides a framework for the callers, who have the habit of ignoring the "Swing and Promenade" calls from the Weave The Ring figures, to be able to sing through the second 32 beats without upsetting anybody! Of course if we want to be really pedantic, then we should be telling the dancers to "reverse" after the first 16 steps of the Grand Square - but how often do you hear that these days ...?	

I am afraid to admit it but I feel that the reason that we tend to use the simple, uninspired breaks is due almost entirely to "laziness" on our part. It is true to say that most record companies do nothing to encourage us to be inventive, which is unfortunate. It could be argued that the singing call has become less and less an important part of the program; certainly we seem to have longer patter calls in which we amuse, test and provide challenge to the dancers and it may be that as a consequence of this the singing call has become devalued.

Many callers do not use singing calls at all in any program above Plus, which is - I feel - a shame. You can certainly provide interesting singing call choreography at any program, if you are prepared to put in the effort; the choice is yours. I am aware that dancers do not seem to favor the idea of singing call tips, in fact some of those for whom I call on a regular basis would feel cheated if they did not have a patter portion in every tip!

However, once you have decided that the standard break modules are monotonous and need to be reworked, then you could simply sit down and write some more inspired modules - bearing in mind the general principles mentioned at 1, 2, 3 and 4 above. Perhaps then, with more interesting breaks (and figures), dancers may be asking for more singing calls - perhaps at the expense of shorter patters!

"SINGING THROUGH" AND IGNORING CALLS

There is a habit that has become quite common; to sing the last four lines of the song i.e. from the start of the "weave the ring" through to the end - without providing any further calls, thus expecting the dancers to automatically carry out the "swing" and "promenade"; I know some people abhor this habit.

Out of fairness, this habit is not limited to the "circle left" figure; it often gets used following any "weave the ring" call. I have mixed feelings about this idea and would certainly not use it if I felt it might cause offence. However, it is quite often possible to call along these lines and still "squeeze" in the missing calls - but it does take practice!

FIGURES

When it comes to the choreographic content of singing call figures the potential for original and innovative material is far greater. In essence, singing call figures are simple choreographic modules such as you may create during the patter part of the tip. The only difference being that these modules have to achieve certain dancer changes, are time bounded and must be geographically correct - to allow the full 16 beat promenade. As mentioned above - with the breaks - I am going to suggest a few guidelines that would seem to be applicable, based upon common practices. These would be:

1. Usually the figure will commence with opposite couples working i.e. Heads or Sides, in much the same manner as a patter call; as soon as possible all the dancers will be involved in the action.

2. The choreography will allow either a corner or a right hand lady progression. Be careful not to unintentionally mix these - as you will find that the dancers will notice and the singing call might end up with people with the wrong partner!

3. The sequence should allow a full 16 beat promenade so that the last two bars of the verse or chorus can be sung in their entirety (this requires that the "swing" and "promenade" takes place in the gentleman's home quadrant).

1. Where practical the choreography should be chosen to compliment and fit the structure of the music and not compete (or "fight") with the tune.

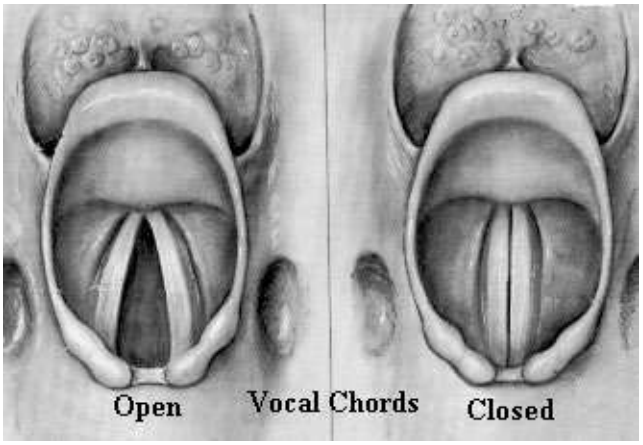
Singing call figures can be as exciting or as simple as you wish, they can feature particular calls (including unusual uses) and provide a more structured time bounded framework for the execution of calls.

There are really no limits to the potential of singing call figures, within the constraints mentioned above. I would recommend that initially you write and memorize figures but that you should not be afraid to "hash" the choreography i.e. sight call the figures; this is a skill that will take time to develop but can provide tremendous freedom to the caller and help to enhance all aspects of the individual's performance. Don't be afraid to consider the use of "One Couple sight", "Two Couple Sight" etc. patter calling techniques as a means of expanding your singing calling skills.

VOICE

WHAT IS YOUR VOICE

What is that thing in your throat that allows us all to communicate? The technical name is Larynx. The Larynx or vocal cords are made of muscles and ligaments, one on each side of the exit of the Trachea (windpipe). They are like two heavy rubber bands attached to the sides of the windpipe. When we desire to communicate we cause these muscles to tighten and then, by exhaling in a controlled manner we cause the muscles to vibrate, which results in a vibrating column of air coming out of the mouth and nose. We use our tongue, mouth and nasal passages to shape this column of air into words or pleasing musical sounds. Like a violin, the tighter we stretch the vocal cords the higher the sound becomes - in other words we change the pitch. The sound is made louder by causing the vocal cords to vibrate with greater amplitude by passing a greater volume of air over them in a given time.



What causes people to sound different? Women sound different than men because they are usually of a slighter build, that is, muscles and bone structure are not as heavy as a man's, therefore the vocal cords are lighter in structure. If we examine a violin we note that the high notes are derived from the thin wires, while the low notes are obtained by a heavy double or even triple wound wire. Every cord or wire has a resonant frequency, which is determined by its tension, length and diameter, and it is the length, diameter and natural tension of the vocal cords that determine what sound our voice will have. The resonant cavities found in our head and chest produces other sound differences. The unevenness or difference in shape of individual vocal cords causes secondary frequencies to be imposed on the main frequency. This results in a harmony (in most cases) of sounds being emitted. This combined sound is recognized as a specific individual's voice. The voice pattern is so characteristic of each person that law enforcement agencies can use it as reliably as fingerprints for identification purposes.

CARE OF YOUR VOICE

Your voice is comparable to a musical instrument similar to the Stradivarius violin and is just as temperamental if it is not treated properly.

Callers often use styles of calling that can be very detrimental if used too often, the rasping, clouding, imitating of others, and going above or below your normal comfortable range. These can all result in strain, over extension and undue tension on the vocal cords. I like to look upon these things as showmanship and as such should be used sparingly and only when your voice is fully warmed up.

Many callers smoke - of all the habits, smoking is the worst thing a person can do to their vocal cords. Not only does smoking harm the vocal cords but it will cut down on your lung capacity and breath control. Smoking will, over a period of time cause the Cilia in the lungs to die or lose the ability to clear phlegm from the lungs, which will result in other lung problems.

I used to smoke 2 to 3 packs a day. After quitting, and recovering from the effects of smoking, I found that I had gained a half octave in range, twenty pounds in weight, and did not suffer from a sore or dry throat as frequently.

One thing that is in Square dancing's favor is the swing to the non - smoking society. This has had a favorable impact on square dancing for both the caller and the dancer.

The practice of drinking hot or cold liquids during a dance can also cause problems. You never see an athlete putting cold or hot compresses on a muscle until after damage is done. Heat causes a muscle to relax and encourages the blood to circulate right to the surface while cold will cause the muscle to contract or stiffen and the blood to flow slower and further down from the surface. Preferably you should drink water at room temperature or slightly higher. You should stay away from food and sweet liquids during a calling session unless you have an adequate break so as to enable your vocal cords to recover. Like an athlete you should warm up your vocal cords before you call a dance by running up and down the scale a few times before you call. This can be done on the way to a dance.

In the early years of square dancing, halls were dusty and most of our seasoned callers learned, thru necessity, to breath through their nose so as to prevent the dust from clogging the vocal cords and lungs. The fine hair in the nasal passages make a very good filter and it is advisable to learn to breathe through one's nose if at all possible. Other forms of pollution are hard to avoid. Some people have allergies; this may cause many different problems.

VOCAL CORD DAMAGE

Every once in a while you hear of callers developing nodes on their vocal cords - these are like calluses on your hands - and they are caused by the same thing. When you irritate your body continually in one spot it will develop calluses. Nodes are the mark of stress on your vocal cords. They can be bad enough that you could lose your singing voice permanently. Nodes can be removed by laser surgery but it is better to stop what is causing the irritation and let them heal naturally. If you think you have this problem, see a specialist.

Laryngitis is another common result of over use of the vocal cords (it can also be caused by infection). When you over extend a rubber band it either breaks or loses its elasticity. The same thing can happen to your vocal cords. They seldom break but they can lose their ability to regain their shape. When this happens it takes a long time for them to

heal. Be careful how loud you shout at the wife, the children or the dancers - not necessarily in that order. The use of a good microphone and good equipment will enable you to call and not damage your voice. Talking in a noisy group of people can cause more damage to your vocal chords than an evening of calling.

LEARNING TO USE YOUR VOICE

Many good callers are not great singers but then very few great singers are good callers. The best place to learn to sing is from a qualified voice teacher. These lessons will pay for themselves many times over in your calling career. Try, if you have the time, to join a choir or choral group of some sort. This will not only help you learn to use you voice, but may give you a potential source of new dancers.

Listen to the callers you enjoy dancing to. Try to use the things you like about his/her voice style and presentation.

We all have four voices we use.

1. The Emotional Voice
2. The Talking Voice.
3. The Singing Voice.
4. The Body Voice.

The Emotional voice breaks down into many sub groups some of which are:

1. The happy voice
2. The sad or unhappy voice.
3. The commanding or domineering voice.
4. The pleading voice.
5. The sexy voice.
6. The angry voice.

The emotional voice is used in all the other voices and is probable the most effective mood setting device a caller can use. Your personal mood comes thru to the dancer as soon as you start to move, talk or sing. So callers should be able to project the mood they want the dancer to feel during one song or the whole evening by the use of the Talking Voice, The Singing Voice and the Body Voice. The best place to learn about these voices is in a little theater or drama group. Public speaking groups also teach you about the proper use of your voice.

Try taping your voice, then listen to it. Does it portray the emotion you wish to express? Watch the television greats. How do they portray the emotions they desire? These things come under the classification of showmanship, but they are your voice to the dancer. The proper use of these voices tells the dancers how you are enjoying their participation of your evening with them.

CALLING

We have talked about voices in general. Now we should talk about the things in calling that you need, to make use of these voices.

Calling requires clarity, good diction and projection of your voice. Singing does not always require that the words be precise and fully clear. The singer will often "milk" the

good notes that occur at the end of a musical or verbal phrase, these are often vowels and this results in long eeeeeeee's, ooooooo's, aaaaaaa's and sometimes uuuuuuu's. This may cause loss of the musical phrasing and breath control.

The dictionary defines clarity as the quality or state of being clear, and diction as the art of enunciating correctly and effectively. The caller must sound both the consonants and vowels clearly and precisely. Consonants usually are used as starters, ends or middle dividers in the words of the English language. The vowels are used to give the English language its roundness of sound.

The sounds bee, bay, bah, boe, boo, tee, tay, tah, toe, too, gee, gah, gay, goo, goe should be practiced until, when taped, they can be distinguished easily. Try saying them backwards as well. You should also practice square dance terms such as thar/star/square, square thru/star thru, left/lets, circle right/circulate/circle eight, end/in, dopaso and dosado.

Practice reading into a microphone, tape it and play it back. Does it sound clear? Does it display feeling? Does it sound as if you are talking directly to one person? Try the same reading with a piece of patter music. Can you be understood, even with the musical background? Try reading a call, but use the music as a timing device. Try to pitch your voice with the music.

You can see that clarity and diction run together.

Vocal projection means to put your voice out to your audience clearly and distinctly with sufficient volume to be understood. The volume comes from your microphone and amplifier. However if you do not allow your voice to exit from your mouth or chest, no one will hear it. Men as a rule like to feel that deep rumbling voice way down in the chest, while women put more of their voice up into the nasal passages. Both the chest and the nasal passages are essential to a full-bodied voice. To be heard and understood the voice must come out of the mouth and nose. The so-called nasal sound is actually a lack of sound issuing from your nose.

The practice of humming is a good way to get your voice to rise out of your chest. When you hum you should feel the resonance in your head not in your chest. The best way to project your voice when calling is to think about talking or singing to someone about six feet away and having them fully understand what you are saying. Let your microphone and amplifier do the rest.

BREATHING

Correct breathing is essential to calling. If you breathe too shallow, you may find yourself gasping for breath at the end of each musical phrase. The proper method of breathing is best observed in a small baby. They do what is called tummy or belly breathing. We normally try to breathe the way we were taught in school, stand straight, tummy in and chest out. When we use just our chest to breath we only use the upper portion of our lungs. When we allow our tummy to expand when we take in a breath, we can increase our lung capacity about 2 1/2 times.

MUSIC FOR CALLERS

Blatantly stolen from a greeting card:

Socrates said, “To be is to do.” Sartre said, “To do is to be.” Sinatra said, “Do-be-do-be-doo.”

While we don’t want to dismiss any wisdom from the great philosophers; Sinatra was right.

Why?

Because Sinatra understood the power of music.

Music is probably the single most important item in the caller's repertoire, and not simply because we need music to dance. Obviously, without music there is no dance. But there is also an intangible power in music that cannot be matched by mechanics, methods, choreography, or even the best showman (or woman) on the stage.

Music touches lives and reaches inside the soul, sometimes consciously, and often without notice. Ever had an earworm? How did it get there? Why is a soundtrack so important to a motion picture? Why do advertisers use music in commercials? Why does hearing a certain song instantly transport you to a place or time in your life? Why does hearing a certain melody bring back feelings and emotions you thought were long-forgotten?

Why? Why? Why?

Because there is great power in music. Those who truly understand that, can use it to their advantage.

SQUARE DANCE MUSIC ELEMENTS

There are three basic elements we’ll address for square dance music: Rhythm, Melody, and Harmony.

Rhythm

When we speak of “rhythm” in the context of square dance, we’re talking about basic dance rhythms. There are dozens of dance rhythms outside of square dancing (waltz, two-step, cha-cha, etc.), but for our purposes we will use wider umbrellas for rhythms and narrow it down to four. A list of music examples for each will be made available in a separate handout during the music presentation at the school.

Boom Chuck

This is easily identified by the distinct down (boom) and up (chuck) featured in every beat of the music. Most of the early square dance music releases were down in this boom-chuck style, and featured bluegrass style instruments. More currently produced square dance music takes advantage of the danceability of this rhythm, while using less traditional/bluegrass instrumentation. This rhythm makes it very clear to the dancer when to step (boom) and lift (chuck) their feet.

4/4 (also known as shuffle, or thump)

This rhythm is characterized by a heavy downbeat on every beat of music, often described as a "thump," with the expectation that the dancer will step on each of these downbeats. This rhythm can be equally as effective in getting dancers to move their feet, but much depends on what else is happening with the music and rhythm tracks of the song.

Cha Cha

This rhythm is a subset of the 4/4 category but has been used effectively by producers more widely in current years. While the downbeat is still present on every beat, there are other rhythmic factors that create a more Latin feel.

6/8 (also known as jig)

6/8 is a very different rhythm than the others and requires a shifting in the way the calls are delivered. This rhythm is very danceable, and frequently used for Contra dancing. It is not as widely used in square dancing, but can be very effective in changing up the feel of your dance.

Melody

In very simple terms, the melody of a song is simply the way the notes are arranged to create a musical pattern. It is largely the element that makes a song familiar. Melodies that everyone knows are songs like "Happy Birthday," and "Auld Lang Syne." The same melody can be used for multiple songs, such as "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star," and the "Alphabet" song.

Harmony

The simplest description of harmony, is any note sung in conjunction with the melody that enhances and broadens the overall sound in a pleasing way. Some people are blessed with the ability to easily hear (and sing) a harmonic note, while others find it much more difficult. The good news is two-fold: First, not everyone needs to be a harmony singer. Someone needs to sing the lead for there to be harmony. Second, even if harmony does not come naturally, it can be learned with time and effort.

HOW A CALLER USES MUSIC

So, now we know that music has power. We know about the various dance rhythms. We know the difference between melody and harmony. Now what? Following are some ideas to help you make music work for you.

Song Selection – With so many music choices available to you, how do you choose? What is good and bad is almost completely subjective, because music is art, not science. While there are some hard and fast facts about music (such as pitch), the fact that some people are tone deaf (and therefore can't tell the difference) makes even that point up for debate. So here are some points to consider:

1. Do you personally connect to the music/song? If not, let it go. If you don't connect to it, you can't sell it.
2. How does the range of the song compare to your own vocal range. (A range can be simply defined as the lowest note, the highest note, and all the notes in between.)
3. How strong is your singing voice? Does this song require more than you have in your current skill set? Play to your own strengths.
4. Is the track pitched in the best place to make you be the best you can be. We have tools to make adjustments to the pitch, and some producers are providing a choice of range with your purchase. Play to your vocal sweet spot. You'll know you've found it when you both feel and sound better as you sing.

Phrasing

This can be most easily defined in terms of a singing call. Nearly all singing calls consist of seven sections of 64 beats, with an intro at the beginning and a short tag at the end. Those 64-beat sections can be further broken down in eight sections of eight beats. Singing call figures should be used to take advantage of the phrasing (and melody) of the song.

With so many choices for hoedown/patter music, the subject of phrasing busts wide open. The most important thing here is to **KNOW YOUR MUSIC!** The caller who knows their music unlocks the power of that music. Where are the hooks? Where are starts and stops of a phrase? Where is the killer drum fill or guitar solo? When you know the answers to these questions, and you can recognize where you are in the music…now you can play right into those hooks with your choreography and delivery. When you work to **know your music**, then your music and work for you.

WHERE DOES A CALLER FIND MUSIC?

You should always be looking and listening for music, because a particular song can be found on your car radio, in the grocery store, on a commercial, at a dance, watching square dance videos on YouTube or Facebook, or a hundred other places. Specifically speaking, here is a list of places to find square dance music to purchase.

1. Music for Callers Website – www.musicforcallers.com – This site and owned and managed by Music Producers. Most current producers/labels can be found here with links to each individual label site, along with a searchable database that allows your to search for a particular song, artist, caller, or release date. This site is a constant work in process and updated regularly with new and current information. The site offers a subscription services that provides a monthly email to let you know about new releases.

2. Dosado Music – www.dosadomusic.com – This site is managed by Patty Greene and is the host for a number of labels, including some that are not found on the site above. The site offers a subscription services that provides a monthly email to let you know about new releases.

3. Another Beat – www.another-beat.net – This site is based in Europe and managed by Carsten Nielsen. Again, there are some labels who sell exclusively at this site. The site offers a subscription services that provides a monthly email to let you know about new releases.

4. A&S Records – www.asrecords.com – This site is managed by Bob and Marie Shiver and is one of the few that still sell vinyl records.

OWN YOUR MUSIC

It should go without saying, but always make sure the music you use has been legally purchased by you in a way that has compensated the music producer.

Music is a HUGE subject, and we have only touched the surface with these few pages. Most importantly, make the power of music work for you. Use it to take advantage of a dance theme. Use it to set a tone for a tip. When you are going to use complex choreography, simplify your music. When you are providing wind-in-the-face dancing, give the dancers music to match.

Most importantly, connect to your music, and you will unleash the magic that will connect it (and YOU) to the dancers

TEACHING

Teaching dancers, particularly new dancers, is one of the most challenging and yet, rewarding aspects of the caller's job. Like leadership, teaching "goes with the territory". Whether or not a caller ever conducts a beginners' class (and we hope all callers do), s/he will often be in a teaching position. It may be answering a dancer's question about the proper execution of a figure, teaching a quarterly selection or doing a workshop. Therefore, a caller needs to have knowledge of how people learn, what we teach and how to teach - i.e. techniques and tricks of the trade. Furthermore, a good teacher needs to have an in depth knowledge of the subject to be taught and the ability to communicate that knowledge.

For most people, learning occurs in a number of different ways. Some can observe a square dance movement and do it almost immediately. Others may have to read the explanation of the movement. The teacher must be sensitive to the needs of the students and make the best possible use of all the processes by which people learn.

If people are to learn from observation, then what they are observing must be done correctly without distracting flourishes and at a speed that permits critical viewing. Thus, while demonstrations square can be a very effective teaching tool, they need to be planned and rehearsed. Participating dancers need to be cautioned to dance correctly with proper styling, flow and courtesies. The observing students should be coached on what to look for and how the various parts of the dance flow together. New dancers will learn some of the gimmicks and poor dancing all too soon without having a square of angels demonstrate in class.

Some people learn best by reading. The teacher needs to make sure the students have proper reading material such as definitions of calls, styling etc. Much of this material is available through CALLERLAB. It is not enough simply to have the students read. The teacher should reinforcement through other means and periodically should check understanding and retention through some sort of feedback or practical application.

Although listening is, perhaps, the least effective process by which people learn, many do learn that way. In most teaching situations we tend to overuse the lecture, and often the words of the lecturer go into the student's notebook without ever having passed through the student's head. In teaching dancers to dance, we must first teach them to listen. Then we must choose carefully the words we use to describe the dance movements. Picture words, comparisons and emphatic commands are more apt to hold the students' attention than a droning presentation of strange material. We must remember that new dancers, in particular, are learning not only a new motor skill but also a new language.

It is generally agreed that the most effective learning process is through experience and repetition. As a matter of fact, the behaviorist learning theory says that we do not directly observe learning but, instead, observe a change in behavior as a result of experience. Learning is defined in those terms: change in behavior as a result of experience. People learn more quickly when they are involved and when they are doing what the teacher has been talking about. If that experience is successful and satisfying, then learning speed increases and retention improves.

Not all people learn at the same speed. Assuming that they do can lead to failure. Some need only a few repetitions, while others may need many, including, at times, extra help outside of a structured class. If one teaches to the fast learners, s/he may lose the slow ones. If s/he teaches to the slow learners, the fast ones may become bored and quit. That is one of the greatest challenges for a teacher and sometimes requires tough decisions. Also, one class may not learn at the same speed as another for any number of complicated reasons, and no class learns at the same speed each night that it convenes. Too many things can interfere with the learning process. Teachers should never assume that because something has been "taught" it has been "learned" by the students. That assumption has to be checked carefully by requiring the students to demonstrate. In all cases, however, students should not be allowed to practice errors.

One often hears about the "building block" approach to teaching. The process is called transfer and simply means moving form the simple to the complex, from the known to the unknown. Thus, if a dancer knows Right and Left Grand, it should not be difficult to teach Weave the Ring. Sometimes one's experience outside of square dancing can also provide a positive stepping stone; e.g. the geometric patterns of a square might be readily understood by a draftsman. On the other hand, not all transfer is positive. Sometimes a former experience gets in the way of learning something new. We find this when left-handed people have difficulty with our predominately right-handed movements.

Most new dancers come to a square dance class with feelings of inadequacy, shyness and fear of failure. They have to be made to feel wanted, worthy and at ease. They need to be motivated. It is not enough to say, "Square dancing is fun." The teacher must find ways to prove it from the beginning. It is an accepted principle that learning depends a great deal upon motivation. The better job we do of motivating our students, the more likely they are to learn. Success is a great motivator. People enjoy doing what they do well. Therefore the teacher needs to give the students successful experiences by keeping their attention, asking them to do those things that are within their capabilities and rewarding them with positive feed-back such as "well-done", "nice job" etc.

When teaching new dancers to square dance, it is not enough to teach only the various square dance basics. If they are to be complete, competent dancers, they need to know courtesy, styling, smoothness, customs and traditions, proper dress, club responsibilities and much more. Often these subjects can be covered at a sit-down session when dancers may be tired and not in a frame of mind to learn more steps. The partner also can play an important role in addressing such subjects as proper dress.

Good teaching requires a great deal of preparation. The teacher must prepare to be sure s/he has the necessary knowledge for the task ahead. Detailed but flexible lesson plans are a must with definite goals established for each night, each week and each season. Facilities must be prepared. Lighting, heat, dance surface, sound, access to drinking water, lavatories etc. can all affect the outcome of a class. If "angels" are going to help with the class, they need to be prepared so that they dance properly, do not try to assume the teaching role and dance with but not for the class members. Of course, the students need to be prepared. They need to have their questions answered, "What am I getting into?" They need some motivation.

There is much written material on teaching techniques and tricks of the trade. One who is about to teach people to square dance should avail him/herself of this material as well as anything useful s/he can research from fellow callers and teachers. The perfect way to teach a Square Thru probably has not yet been discovered. You may find it, so don't be afraid to try new things. The various types of circles (single, facing, tandem etc.) are basic tools for teaching square dance movements. Almost all of the movements on the CALLERLAB Mainstream list can be done in a two-couple set-up. The National Association for Public Continuing and Adult Education has published "Tested Techniques for Teachers of Adults". Many are pertinent to the teacher of square dancers, and the list can be found in the syllabus appendix.

In your teaching- accentuate the positive - keep it light - and know when to quit. Remember that people enjoy doing that which they do well. Well-taught, competent dancers enjoy dancing more and stay in the activity longer**.**

TEACHING TECHNIQUES

PREPARATION

- Program
- Hall (Floor, sound, etc.)
- Help (Door, refreshments, angels, taw.)
- Class information.

  You are wasting time if you give numerous verbal announcements. (Basic books, lists, class times, dates, etc.)

PRESENTATION

- Leave your troubles outside the hall.
- Review (give them time to warm up).
- Mark program as necessary from review.
- A two-hour session represents only 1 1/2 hours of dancing and instruction time. Don't waste your student’s time.
- Know your material (trouble spots).
- Short sequences (don't clutter).
- Don't teach material because YOU need it.
- Don't waste time showing off.
- Control your breaks and your ego
- Control your floor time. (15 to 20 min. max)
- Don’t reward tardiness or absenteeism at the expense of the class.
- Give individual help between tips.
- Observe floor for "overload."
- Treat every failure as if you caused it. (You probably did.)
- Think like a beginner.
- Maintain class attention at all times. (You are the teacher.)
- Self-control. (If you can't control yourself, how can you control a class?)
- Reward with sincere praise.

- Don’t scold individuals.
- Try not to embarrass anyone.
- Humor helps, but laugh at yourself, or with them. **Never at them.**
- Don't allow a problem student to hurt the class
- Don't use phrases like "when you are a dancer.” They are dancers after their first step on the floor. Also, don’t say, “grab that lady." (Remember that gentlemen don't grab ladies.)
- Remember the objective is to teach them to dance, not just to provide more people and revenue for a club.
- Your appearance is the example they will follow.
- Let them laugh.
- Don't teach something you will have to "unteach" later.
- Don't teach material that they will never use after graduation.
- Teach etiquette and philosophy. (You have a responsibility to the square dancing activity.)
- Don't allow bad dancing habits to be introduced by your helpers.

POST-MORTEM

- Are there any students to be contacted, who were not present?
- Did any student leave abruptly?
- How many dropouts did YOU cause tonight?
- Make a note of where you can improve on a performance.
- Ask your partner if there were any complaints. Did she/he notice anything in your performance that could use improvement?
- Are there any individual problems? (Alcohol, personal hygiene, etc.?)
- Objectively evaluate your performance.

Teaching Adults To Square Dance

By Herb Egender

With a new square dance season close at hand and classes starting soon, it is an appropriate time to think again about teaching, or more importantly - effective teaching. During my research in preparation for a session on teaching at a forthcoming callers' school, I ran across a publication of the National Assoc. for Public Continuing and Adult Education. That organization has compiled information from many years of a newsletter dealing with teaching adults and has published "Tested Techniques for Teaching of Adults". There are a number of salient points that apply to those who teach adults to square dance.

The publication states that there are three ways in which adult students are different: 1) they bring to the learning situation a greater background of life experience; 2) research shows that the ability of older adults to learn does not change with the years, but they may not learn as rapidly as they once did; and 3) most adult students are in the class because they chose to be there, not because they have to be.

Several guiding principles were included in the publication:

- The student is more likely to learn a piece of information or master a particular skill if he knows "what's in it for him".

- The student needs to know what he really wants from the course.
- Both adults and children bring their emotions with them to class.
- Activity on the part of the student is essential to learning.
- The experience and knowledge a student brings with him should be used to help him learn.
- A learning experience that is interesting, vivid and intense is remembered longest.
- Some capsule clues to working with adults:
    - Short units of work give them a happy feeling of mastery and success that brings them back for more.
    - Important points should be repeated frequently. (Is a commercial run just one time on TV?)
    - Remember the importance of frequent, short breaks for older adults; they tend to tire more easily.
    - In learning new skills or information, older adults often have to break old, rigid patterns of though or attitude.
    - Adults often have feelings of insecurity and fear of competition with younger people in the class. Praise often. Minimize errors. Avoid sarcasm or ridicule. Be positive.

SHOWMANSHIP

Showmanship is more than just visual effectiveness on stage. It's also highly individual and a very personal part of calling. What may work for one caller may not work for another and many feel it cannot really be taught. Watch how other callers put on "their show" and develop your own style and personality. It is part of the journey you take as you learn and enjoy the art of calling.

Showman: A person having flair for the dramatic or visual effectiveness.

Style: The way in which something is said or done, and not what is said or done.

Preparation:

1. Prior to the dance:

    a) Work with the club, sponsoring individuals, or organizations to publicize the event.

    b) Know if it's a themed dance and prepare your dance material accordingly.

    c) Know the facility and "research" the sound.

    d) Let officers know you are in town.

    e) Be there early to greet the dancers.

    f) Personal appearance, demeaner, presence, and confidence are important.

2. At the dance - One night event, classes, festivals, and shared programs.

    a) Off stage.

        1. Establish rapport with dancers right away when you enter the hall.

        2. Continue to gain rapport with dancers between tips. Get to know names.

        3. Make eye contact on and off the stage to really connect with others.

        4. When you are not calling, the show continues.

    a) On stage.

        1. Use of stage and equipment. Get the dancers interacting with you.

        2. Choreo elements: Gimmicks, experimental, get outs, themed tips. Set the tone early.

3. Singing calls: Variety of music, use of emphasis words, vocal modulations, and key changes.
4. Delivery variations: Holding notes, growling, whispering, yodeling, falsetto, and prompting.

5. Special recorded variations: Instrumental solos, hand claps, special sound effects and silence.

b) After the dance.

1. Leave them wanting more and not dragging themselves out the door.

2. Thank them for being there and for inviting you too.

3. Let them leave smiling and singing.

4. Attend or contribute to after party activities, if applicable.

c) Developing style-showmanship: Creating a public image.

1. Evaluate your own potential. Be consistent with your own personality and style.

2. Evaluate others and their styles. If working with callers, make the effort to include them in the “show.”.

3. Be genuine, unique and yourself.

4. Make sure the dancers win. If they are not dancing, there is no “show”.

Conclusion.

One of the best pieces of advice given to a new caller is “It’s not what you call, but how you call it!”. Presentation, if good enough can considerably augment the material you are using. Remember while you are performing you should also be entertaining. People will expect some sort of show. Basically, there are three main areas of showmanship:

MUSICAL SHOWMANSHIP

Develop an individual style and approach to music both in
selection and use. Look at how you might enhance an otherwise ordinary singing call to make it
more exciting or at the least more interesting. Listen to the original song for ideas. Chapter 2 gives more detailed information on the elements of Music and how these may be used as showmanship tools.

CHOREOGRAPHIC SHOWMANSHIP

Use of choreographic styles and get outs that impress can add to your presentation. There are many gimmick ideas which you may wish to consider but remember too many

gimmicks can actually damage the show. A few (two or three) presented sparingly can augment and enhance your presentation.

THEATRICAL SHOWMANSHIP

This includes your stage persona which is what or who you become on stage: A wise cracking humorist, a crooning heart throb, a source of wisdom and enigma, or the best friend anyone ever had. You may feel inclined to take ideas from another caller, but be careful that you do not become a carbon copy. There is only a small subtle but none the less, important difference between a showman and a show-off. Know when to stop. A showman will succeed, a show-off will be shunned and avoided.

Never underestimate the importance of developing your skill in all areas of showmanship. No
matter how well you do something, you could always do it better! However, be careful to recognize when you have reached the point beyond which any further effort would produce only a low improvement and might result in diminishing your overall performance. Don't try to "gild the lily".

In general terms, showmanship and presentation are what will very often determine the degree of success or failure you achieve. I have heard many times the comment that, "a certain caller has everything, except the ability to present the material effectively." Consider professional entertainers/showmen - especially those that appeal to you personally. Analyze what they do and see how you might alter your show to make it more attractive and entertaining.

OFF STAGE PERSONA

Theatrical showmanship also extends to your off stage and after party personality. Ensure that these are socially acceptable and do not serve to let you down. Be sensitive to peoples' needs and above all, their own perception of their own importance. Make sure you treat them as human beings, learn their names, and avoid the "Superstar - I am too important, to take the time to talk to you" - Big-Head" trap.

- Be polite and courteous when you leave the stage.
- Be sensitive to what people say and how they feel.
- Take the time to talk to people and use their first name (try reading the badge!)
- NEVER use the wrong name!
- People like to be remembered!

A GOOD SHOWMAN will appear to remember, recognize, and value the presence of each dancer.

"AFTER PARTY" PERSONA

If asked, be prepared to join in the "After-party."

1. Prepare in advance and have something ready.

2. Pick material carefully so as not to offend.

3. Do not dominate the show and give way to any natural "Comic / Raconteur / Musician etc.

4. It is a more social than formal function. Remember to mix and mingle and if possible, take the time to speak to everyone.

5. If it is a smaller group, don't out-stay your welcome. Your willingness to join in and socialize at an after party will often be counted as one of your best characteristics.

BE CAREFUL! - do not do anything to damage your personal integrity. Your conduct at an after
party will be scrutinized by those attending and if you were to become involved with anything of a questionable nature it will return to haunt you!

APPEARANCE

An especially important factor is your general appearance. How you clothe yourself etc. You should always pay attention to the way you appear. CALLERLAB has a recommended Dress Code. Be familiar with what it suggests and why. There are possibly a few callers who can get away with a slovenly or outrageous appearance, but many dancers will find this unacceptable. In most cases a "professional" image is associated with a "smart", "well groomed" appearance.

CONCLUSION

Showmanship is a very individual and personal part of calling that should fit your personality and what you are comfortable with. Be very sensitive to what people say and feel. Build up a list of what “TO DO” and what “NOT TO DO.” Compliments fade fast. Insults injure infinitely and are never forgotten and rarely forgiven.

PROGRAMMING

Benjamin Franklin once wrote – “If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail”. This philosophy is very apropos to our calling. Programming is nothing more than planning, so it is very easy to slightly alter Mr. Franklin’s sage advice. “If you fail to program, you are planning to fail”.

Many define programming as part of the "art" of calling square dances. This is only partially true. Programming can also be described as the “science” of calling. The term “art” implies that one needs to be talented in order to program properly. One does not need to be artistically talented to properly program a square dance. Programming, like any other science, can be learned.

There are two aspects to calling. Part of the job is technical dealing with choreographic resolution, timing, rhythm and teaching accuracy. Another part of the caller's task is artistic dealing with showmanship, musical style and choreographic creativity. Programming, which is the decisions about WHAT to call and WHEN to call it, falls more into the artistic side of things than into the technical side. As with most art, however, the successful presentation depends on technical mastery. Before a caller can exercise control over the dance program, he/she must be able to manage the technical tasks effortlessly. One of the goals of good programming is to offer a dance experience that is satisfying to the people on the floor. We have a variety of tools to work with in reaching this goal and how the tools are used will depend to a large extent on the attitude or dance philosophy of the caller. Usually, we have a full evening in which to achieve the goal, but programming shorter or longer times must also be considered. These shorter or longer times include the single tip performance at a festival and the season-long program that club callers provide for groups they call to regularly. There is even the very short programming interval that we call "microprogramming." This refers to the steady flow of decisions that the caller makes about each call that is used.

Since the attitude of the caller affects how all the programming tools will be used - let's consider that topic first. The issues underlying the caller's attitude have to do with how the caller understands the needs and interests of the dancers. This understanding varies widely among successful callers. For many years, many believed that the dancers want to be challenged - to be kept on the brink of failure most of the time. The belief was that the excitement of "solving the puzzle" - by getting to their corner successfully for the left allemande is a necessary element of the square dance experience. Nowadays, however, this mindset is slowly being phased out. The consensus among most is that the majority of today’s dancers are looking for variety rather than complexity.

There is also a growing contingent that believes that the important component of the square dance experience is the movement, as a team; in time with the music through flowing dance actions and that the complexity of the dance pattern matters little if the action "feels" good. Still other callers put their faith in the importance of sociability. These callers believe square dancing to be a means of bringing people together so they can enjoy each other’s company and that the dancing should not intrude on the sociability.

The answer, probably, lies in some combination of all of the above. It is certain that no one dance program can be perfect for all of these dancers. The caller must decide exactly what kind of, and how much “variety" to offer in the dance program - what will be the balance of challenge, dancing, and sociability.

The tools of programming can be divided into two types. There are the choreographic tools which include the CALLERLAB program, the degree of difficulty of the dance patterns, how much variety to offer and how many choreographic surprises to provide. There are also presentation tools such as singing vs. patter, workshop vs. dancing, delivery style and music selection. The choreographic tools are easier to describe than the presentation tools because they tend to be more technical whereas presentation tends to be more about showmanship.

In making choreographic decisions the caller must first know the dance level. Dancers, at different levels, expect different types of choreography. For most beginner dancers, the choreographic content of a program is less important than the presentation of it. Callers can use repetitive dance patterns - IF they are presented well. More experienced dancers, typically enjoy a more diverse choreographic presentation.

There are, in the ranks of callers, some very good singers who can "sell" a song so well you hardly notice the figures. Other callers, who may not be so vocally gifted, are able to “sell” a song by their choice of music, and their use of that music.

Other callers are great teachers and make the learning of something new so much fun that their customers don't notice they haven't been dancing. When a program is identified as a "workshop" the dancers expect to stop dancing while the caller explains the action. At dances the expectation is, usually, that the caller will use dance patterns that most people can execute without additional instruction.

Another part of the presentation is the music. There is a wide range of musical styles available to callers for both patter and singing calls. Many callers give little thought to the music they use other than to pick what they like. It is important to use a variety of rhythms and genres. It is a common mistake, nowadays, to over-use “alternative” types of music. Many, if not most, of this type of music is recorded in 4/4 rhythm. An entire evening of the same rhythm can make for a very boring dance. This can be true for both patter music and singing calls. Recently there was an article that explained that most people’s favorite genre of music is the music that was played on the radio when they were seniors in high school. It is to a caller’s benefit to look out on the dance floor and determine what age groups are present. This will go a long way in helping to determine the type of music and titles. Remember, however, that **variety is the spice of life**.

The above tools are very important in our programming presentation. The "bottom line", however, is how to use these tools. It's possible to pick up the mike and start calling without any plan for what to call - and many callers do just that. Some even get away with it and call a pretty good dance - Sometimes. More often the resulting dance lacks interest and variety and is likely to cause more dancer "breakdowns" than the caller would like. The way to avoid these problems is to plan ahead. Think about the dance before hand. Write out a program plan based on the expected dancer ability/experience. It's easier to change from a plan that isn't quite right than it is to create a plan during the dance.

"Theming" a tip is a great tool to accomplish the above. Take a call (or calls) and feature that call in the tip. Take the time to write out a couple of get-outs using the theme call. You will be amazed at how this will help the general dance level of your club or special dance. The call that you featured in the early tips can be used all evening long. More importantly, this will give you tools that will last a lifetime.

Below are some sequences that feature the call Cross Run. Cross Run is a call that is not used as much as many of the other calls – making it a perfect call to feature. All of the sequences are Geographic Zeros, and start from a Corner Box. Some are more difficult than others. These are by no means the only way to use Cross Run. Dance these sequences with your checkers so that you can figure out how you can best present them. Remember…….Never start off with complex material, and ALWAYS let them win.

Swing Thru
Boys Trade
Everybody Cross Run - Twice
Slide Thru - Twice

Swing Thru
Boys Cross Run
Girls Trade
Boys Cross Run
Boys Run
Bend the Line
Slide Thru

Swing Thru
Girls Cross Run
Girls Run
Bend the Line
Slide Thru

Swing Thru
Boys Run
Girls Cross Run
Boys Cross Run
Chain Down the Line

Pass the Ocean
**Swing Thru
Boys Run
Girls Cross Run
Boys Cross Run
Chain Down the Line
Slide Thru

Right and Left Thru
Veer Left
Everybody Cross Run -
Boys Twice
Bend the Line
Slide Thru

Swing Thru
Boys Cross Run

Chain Down the Line
Pass the Ocean
**Swing Thru
Boys Cross Run
Chain Down the Line
Slide Thru

Swing Thru
Boys Trade
Boys Run
Girls Cross Run
Boys Cross Run
Bend the Line
Slide Thru

This is just using one call. Imagine how your calling would improve if you did this for each call on the Mainstream Program……..

There can be multiple programming scenarios. Some (but not all) are:

- Classes
- Club Dance
- Special Dance
- Convention

Square dance clubs need new dancers in order to survive, and the only way to get new dancers is through lessons. Classes are the backbone of the club At first glance, one may ask, "How do you program a class- It's just teaching?". If you approach classes as if they are "just teaching", you're missing out on a great retainment tool. Classes need to be educational, but they also need to be FUN. Fun, while a relative term, does not just happen. You, as a caller, need to have a written lesson plan. You need to know the trouble points in each call, and you need to have a solution for this trouble point. While CALLERLAB does have a suggested teaching order, it may not work for you. You need to use a teaching order that you can present well.

In addition to a prepared teaching order, do you have singing calls that use the calls that are taught that evening? If not, you should have. Most callers cannot "wing" singing calls in this manner. Take the time and write out some nice flowing choreography for the calls that you are teaching – and do this from the first night on.

Properly preparing for your club dance each week or month means that you have to have new material each dance. Most of us have difficulty trying to be too creative "on the fly". Most successful callers plan their club dance in advance. Here's where theme tips become crucial. A great mantra regarding theming is "Each Sequence – Each Tip – Each Time".

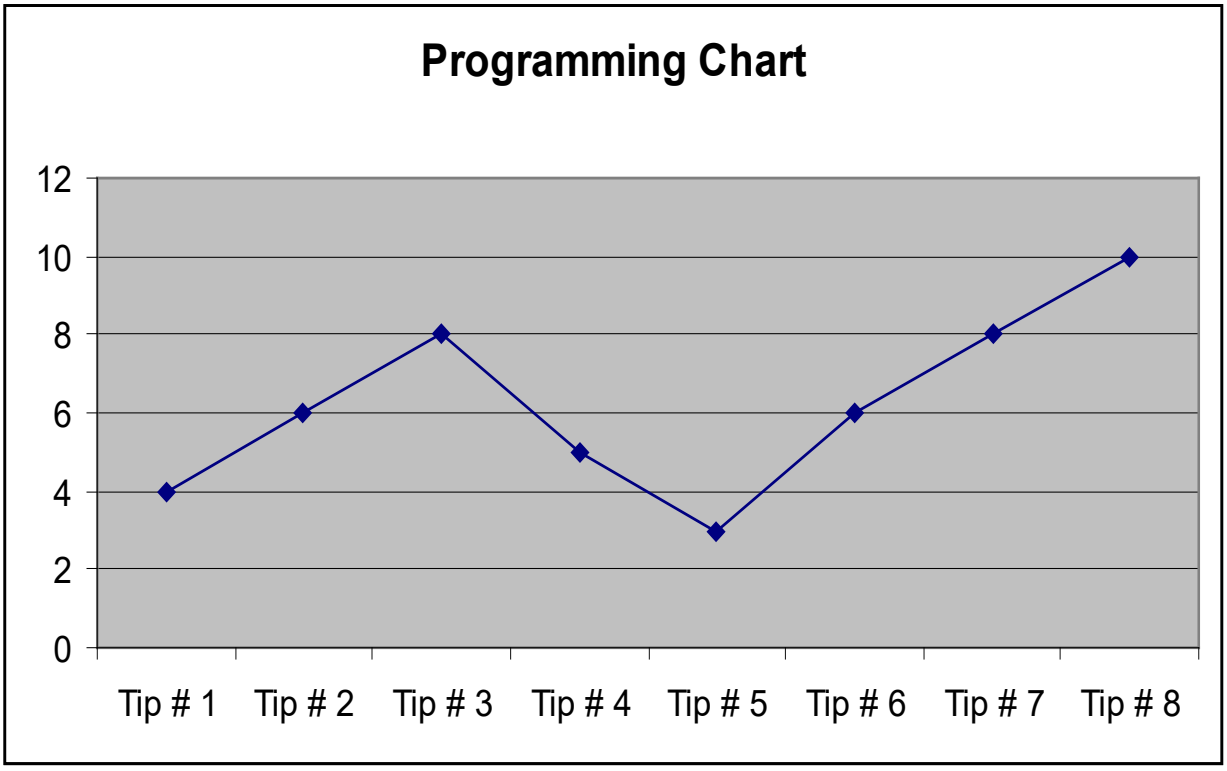
Music, or rather, your music choice is an integral part of a successful dance program. For teaching tips use music that has a distinct dance beat. Most agree that 2/4 rhythm is best for teaching. Instrumentation is important as well. Try to use music with a simple melody – kind of like "elevator" music. The dancers need to hear the beat and not get too caught up in melodies. Very melodic or "busy" tunes tend to cause the dancers to listen to the music rather than the caller. Very melodic music is best used for "wind in the face dancing".

The theme tip concept is a great tool for special dances as well. We all get in the "swing thru – boy run" syndrome when we're not careful. Dancers dance by feel. Many times, the dancers don't know why they enjoyed a particular dance. They just know that it "felt" good. Most dancers don't know the difference between the various rhythms. They just know that some tips felt different. This is something we all need to strive for – That each tip "feels" different for the dancers. We can achieve this feeling with choreography, but also with our music.

You, as a caller, need to be able to take the dancers on a "journey" at each dance. Dancers need to experience emotional highs and lows throughout the dance. Very few callers can "put the dancers on the ceiling" and keep them there all night. Even when this is possible, the dancers leave the dance tired. We should always have the dancers leave the hall wanting one more tip.

To achieve this, your dance needs to have these highs and lows. Many professionals number their patter music and singing calls (maybe 1-10) based on how they want to influence the dancer's mood or enthusiasm level.

Below is a blueprint for an eight-tip dance – Using a (1 – 10) enthusiasm/mood scale.



Tip #1 (4)

- Allow the dancers to become accustomed to your voice
  - Even though this may be a club dance, the dancers still need to become acclimated to subtle differences (slick floor, speaker placement, what kind of day they had, etc.)
- Nice flowing modules to establish trust
- Nice rhythmic patter music – Many prefer 2/4 rhythm for the first tip
- Smooth Singing call

Tip #2 (6)

- Up tempo patter – Maybe 4/4 rhythm
- Set the mood for the dance
- Introduction of first theme call
- Up tempo singing call using theme call in the figures

Tip #3 (8)

- Up tempo patter – Maybe 4/4 rhythm
- Use previous theme call
- Introduce new theme call(s)
- Even more up tempo song to boost the dancers enthusiasm

Tip 4 (5)

- Use music to bring the dancers down a bit from previous tip
- Use previous theme calls
- Introduce new theme call(s)
- Nice ballad singing call

Tip #5 (3)

- Smooth music
- Wind in their face tip
- Dance the previous theme calls
- Smooth Ballad singing call

Tip 6 (6)

- Lively patter tune
- Start to bring the dancers enthusiasm/mood up
- Use previous theme calls
- Introduce new theme call(s)
- Up Tempo Singing call

Tip 7 (8)

- Livelier singing call
- Keep increasing dancer enthusiasm/mood
- Use previous theme calls
- No new theme call
- Up tempo singing call

Tip 8 (10)

- Showcase tip
- Maybe two singing calls

EVERY successful caller, and EVERY successful dance, follows a blueprint.

LEADERSHIP

It may seem odd to have a handout on Leadership in a caller's curriculum. Many would argue that it isn't an important topic to discuss, but I believe it is just as important as how to resolve a square or deliver a singing call. The reality is, the minute you picked up a mic and decided to call dances, cue rounds, prompt line dances, or to teach a class, you stepped into an important leadership role in your dance community.

Many of us do not consider ourselves leaders, but we are. In the role as a dance professional, people will be watching and observing how you carry yourself and how you treat the people around you. It doesn't matter if you have a big personality or are a quiet introvert, or whether you call to a thousand dancers at a festival or to one square in your hometown. As leaders of the activity, people look up to us. They are observing, emulating, modeling their behavior off of yours. They will look to you for guidance, for social cues on how to act, for things to do and not do.

We have a responsibility to the people in our groups to act with integrity and treat people with kindness and respect. We have a responsibility to model good behavior and be an example to our officers and our members. It is just as important as what level we are calling, the music, and all the other mechanics. Our job as a leader and caller, as I see it, is to make sure that we provide the attendees a positive, uplifting few hours, and that we entertain to the best of my ability and send them out the door feeling a bit better than when they walked in. Do NOT underestimate the influence that we have within our groups and our square dance family.

Several years ago, Patrick Schwerdtfeger gave a keynote address at a CALLERLAB convention and spoke about leadership and what qualities are important in an effective leader. He suggested that it's simply kindness, respect, consideration, and attitude. He emphasized that kindness was the one simple quality that is underrated. I happen to agree.

Here are some things to consider that will help make you an effective leader:

We are each on our own path and have our own mark to leave on the world, and highly effective leaders understand this and extend grace to the people around them. Effective leaders don't compare themselves to others, and don't knock others down to feel better about themselves.

Effective leaders lead by example. They understand that when you tell someone something, it might not be as well-received as when you show something. You can set the tone for your group by setting an example of how to treat others, respect the people who walk through the door, and behaving well.

Leadership entails communication. Not just speaking but allowing for both speaking and listening. A good leader should do their best to listen to our dancers and officers and not be dismissive. Be willing to listen to other opinions with an open mind and consider that someone may have an idea that just might work.

Many leadership programs repeatedly state that we are only as good as our word. If we say we're going to do something, then we need to do it. If we cannot do something, better to say no, and find someone else or recommend another resource, than to let things slide. Honesty and integrity are two key leadership traits.

Great leadership is not setting yourself apart from others – it's getting in the trenches and taking action, building relationships, developing others and making decisions. At the end of the day, only action produces results. If your dancers believe that you have their best interests in mind, they will follow your lead.

A highly effective leader should view situations they may be called upon to mediate from both sides of the issue. Making unbiased judgments will gain trustworthiness and belief from the people you lead. Be ready to sacrifice your own agendas for the benefits of everyone.

When it comes to leading people, the golden rule is among the most important principles. Your skills and experience might land you in a leadership position but they are not what is going to make you a great effective leader. An inner awareness of who you are, coupled with a desire to treat others well, is a powerful thing. Leaders who embrace the golden rule are able to direct, guide and inspire those around them.

During your career, mistakes are going to happen. The quicker we own up to them and take responsibility, the quicker we can come up with a solution and move on to the next thing. Too often, as leaders in the activity we are expected to always have the answers and always be right–but the reality is that we aren't always right, even though well-meaning. The most effective leaders are the those who will own up to them them–because they know their mistakes have taught them invaluable lessons, and they've come to see them as opportunities to learn.

Effective leaders pay attention to their people and let them know how important they are by genuinely caring about helping them succeed. You should comfortable enough with yourself and your role in your group to take the focus off of you and shine the spotlight on others. Making people feel important is especially important to successful leadership.

You don't have to be best friends and spill your guts with every single dancer. In fact, I would suggest that you remember to maintain your professionalism at all times and keep your inner circle manageable. As leaders, we meet so many people in passing that it would be impossible to remember every single person and be in ongoing relationship with them. Part of our job is to behave authentically and consistently no matter where you are or who you are with. At the end of the day, we should treat people with respect, so that after a stranger crosses our path, they don't avoid crossing it in the future.

What kind of energy are YOU, as a leader, putting out there? If you don't like the way you are treated by others, consider how you treat others. A general rule is that when you treat others well, people will treat you well. If you are generous towards others, people will tend to be generous towards you. If you are compassionate towards others, people will tend to be compassionate towards you. If you are harsh towards others, people will tend to be harsh towards you. The way you perceive others will go a long way towards the way they perceive you.

At the end of the day, it doesn't matter if you have a big personality or a quiet presence – you can drive positive change and effectively lead by leveraging your own personal strengths, whatever they may be, and empowering the people around you to work with you to grow this activity.

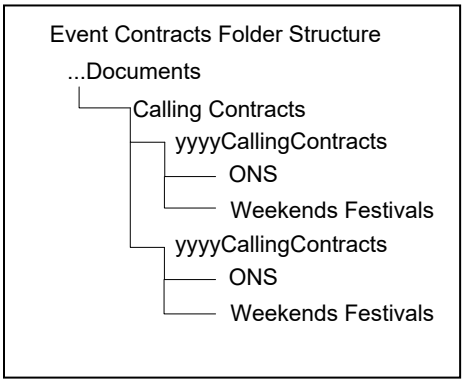
BUSINESS SIDE OF CALLING

INTRODUCTION

Square dance calling can be a business or a hobby. Perhaps in the past many callers became involved in calling purely for the fun of it and gave little thought to the business side of the activity. Today, being paid is at least a part of the incentive for making the investment in time and money that is required. Many callers come into the business with very little knowledge of the costs involved. Some have the mistaken idea that they can make a lot of money calling. Therefore, it is important that callers be knowledgeable in the business practices involved in the calling business. It is also important that callers have a realistic expectation about the profit potential of calling. Because money is involved, taxes are involved. Failure to abide by the tax rules can bring severe consequences. Poor business practices can seriously damage the career of an otherwise talented caller.

FILES AND RECORDS

There are records you need to keep, more so than just keeping track of business income and expenses. You need a calendar that goes out at least 3 years that contains all your bookings. It is very important that you do not double book calling dates. Double booking destroys your business reputation and impairs future bookings. Your calendar can be electronic or hard copy. Keep a hard copy calendar as a master calendar and use an electronic calendar as a backup. When out of town, if you book a date in the future, always specify it is tentative pending verification with your master calendar. Once you are certain there are no conflicts, immediately firm up and confirm the date and details with the hiring person or entity. Keep copies of all event contracts for a period no less than five years.



So much business is done by email and PDF attachments that you should carefully back up email files every few months. Keep copies of any PDF contracts in your Documents folder on your computer. Whichever email client you use to do your email, create a separate file folder that contains all email related to booking events. On your computer, under the Documents folder, we recommend a file/folder structure like this one. Some clubs and festival managers prefer paper contracts. When you purchase a printer for your business, pick one that has scanning capabilities. Paper contracts can be scanned into PDF file format and stored digitally on your computer.

Since most contracts come through email these days, make printed copies of the contracts which are usually in PDF file format. Keep printed copies of the PDF contracts for the clubs that you call for and take the respective copies to the events so that there are no sudden and unexpected changes to the terms of the agreement at the time of the

event. This happens more often than we think and is usually the result of different people overseeing things by the time the contract date comes around. When differences come up, some careful discussion, clarifications and sometimes renegotiations at the dance normally resolve the situation.

LICENSES AND INSURANCE

Licenses for calling are often restricted to Performing Rights Organization licensing. If we run the business using our own name, there is no need for Fictitious Name Filings in our counties or other county related tax filings. However, it is always prudent to investigate the need for local or county tax filings and licensing.

BMI (*Broadcast Music, Inc.*), ASCAP (*American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers*), and SESAC (*Society of European Songwriters, Authors, and Composers*) expect any performers using copyrighted music to pay royalties for the use of the music. Some karaoke performers have gotten into big trouble with these organizations for not doing so. The fines and penalties are large. We avoid this situation by buying an annual license from these organizations that covers us for using copyrighted music at our dances. If we belong to CALLERLAB or the American Callers Association, these license fees are included in our annual dues. Many clubs and festival organizations are now stipulating in their contracts with callers that the caller is licensed with BMI/ASCAP/SESAC prior to performing for the club or the festival.

CERTIFICATES OF INSURANCE

Liability insurance is also included with our dues at CALLERLAB or the American Callers Association and is very important. This insurance protects against lawsuits that may arise out of incidents occurring at events we sponsor or where we provide calling services. This may give you additional incentive to consider membership in either of these organizations.

In addition to music licensing, we are often required to provide facilities with a certificate of (liability) insurance that protects the facility from any liability that might occur during the event. This is specific to events we run and sponsor where we are renting the dance facility. The facility is added to our liability policy as a named insured for the duration of the event. A phone call or email to our liability insurance carrier or agent is all it takes to get a copy of this certificate which usually needs to be in the hands of the facility owner/manager prior to the event. If we are hired by a club to call an event, there is generally no need for us to provide a certificate of insurance. If on the other hand we accept a position presenting square dancing in a public or private school environment, a certificate of insurance will be required.

FEDERAL AND STATE TAXES AND RECORDS

Tax authorities require that adequate records be kept. At a minimum this means complete, detailed records of both income and expenses. A receipt for everything that is spent, including things paid for by check, is adequate as long as the receipt is dated, the purpose is stated or obvious, and the vendor is clearly printed on the receipt. Whether something less than this "adequate" record will get by might be a matter of opinion or

judgment, but an audit is a bad time to find out if your methods are correct and in compliance with the code.

Calling square dances professionally is a business. We are calling professionally when we ask for and receive payment for our services. Whatever system we use to keep track of our income and expenses, make sure you keep the records in real time. Do not wait until the end of the year to try to reconstruct your income and expense picture. This is not a good idea. A good method is to use one of the readily available pieces of software to track your separate checking account that you will use in your business. Quicken Home or the mobile app QB Self Employed are good alternatives. There are others, like the mobile app 'Hurdlr'. You may also want to have a separate credit card available for use strictly with business related expenses.

You also want to keep track of all your business (calling) related expenses. You will use the same software. If you write checks to cover business expenses, do so out of the same checking account you use to deposit your business-related income. Avoid co-mingling calling income with your other income by using just one personal checking account.

Most software like Quicken allows you to compile a profit and loss statement for the year, summing up all your business-related income and expenses in one statement. You can use this statement to help you prepare your income tax reporting. You will need receipts to verify your expenses, properly dated and referencing the purpose and vendor.

Regarding expenses, callers have numerous types of expenses that require tracking. These include music, special clothing, office supplies including postage, office equipment, cell phone, software for tracking income and expenses, software for calling and choreography development, self-help aids, sound and audio equipment including a laptop or tablet computer used at dances, special luggage and storage materials for travel and storage of equipment; gas, fuel and automobile expenses, travel related expenses including motel/hotel and airline tickets, training seminars, training books and related documents, association dues, license fees, insurance, internet related expense, and professional services including voice training, accounting and tax preparation.

Depreciation expense is often referred to as a 'non-cash' expense, meaning depreciation can be used to lower our net profit without having to expend the cash, which results in lower taxes. Typically, large purchases of assets used in your calling business can be depreciated over time. In some instances, under existing tax code, these assets can be written off in one tax-reporting year. However, it may be in your best interest to depreciate them over time. Once again, a good tax consultant will give you that answer. Your other business-related expenses must be documented, and you need receipts and proofs of purchase to justify writing them off. Square dance clothing write-offs must be related to clothing specifically designed for square dancing and square dance calling. Clothes that are considered 'multi' or common use clothing are not deductible.

Be careful with cell phone write-offs. If you need a cell phone in your business, get a separate one for use only in the business. The IRS is currently cracking down on cell phone write-offs that include multiple phones that are used for both business and pleasure. You are better off having a dedicated phone for your calling business rather

than trying to justify which calls and charges are personal, and which are business related at the time of an audit.

Similarly, with your vehicle, keep records. Vehicle mileage and related auto expense write-offs represent one of your largest write-offs and must be documented. This includes depreciation write-offs for your business use vehicle. If you use your vehicle for both business and pleasure, these records are an absolute must. Keep a mileage log in your vehicle and document any mileage that is business related. Consider using one of the many mileage tracker cell phone apps, like MileIQ, that will somewhat automatically record all your vehicle mileage and provide you with periodic reports.

When you start your business, you have the option of taking standard mileage deduction or using detailed vehicle related expenses for the deduction. You should never claim both the standard mileage deduction and vehicle depreciation in the same year since the standard mileage deduction includes depreciation. This red flag could trigger an audit. If you choose to deduct actual vehicle expenses, then you can also deduct vehicle depreciation expense. If you choose to deduct vehicle expense using the standard mileage deduction, do not take a separate depreciation deduction. The detailed expenses must be documented in real time. Note that if you choose to claim detailed expenses, you cannot switch to standard mileage without filing a special form with the IRS. If you choose standard mileage deductions for your vehicle, you can later switch to actual detailed expenses without any issues.

Do you want to claim the home office expense? Usually based on the ratio the office space bears to the square footage of the home, this expense allows us to deduct that ratio of home related expenses as part of our business expenses. This includes a portion of the property taxes and depreciation, which can be relevant. Rules are strict. The office space must be solely used for the business, so a room that has any other normal usage in the household is not eligible. Also, when you sell your home, some of these home office related deductions (notably deprecation) must be ‘recovered’ which can complicate reporting the sale of the home later. Get some adequate tax advice from you tax professional regarding this deduction.

We Are Gig Contractors

Even if we only call for one club on a regular basis, we are not an employee for tax purposes. The only exception to this is that rare club that withholds from our pay, pays half of our social security tax, withholds our half and our Medicare tax, and issues you a W2 income and withholding summary statement at the end of each year. I have never seen this happen and cannot imagine it happening any time soon.

We are a self-employed independent contractor for tax purposes, even if we have a regular job where we receive a paycheck that includes withholdings. This means, we must file a Schedule C profit and loss statement with both state and federal governments each year along with our regular Federal 1040 and related state income tax forms if required. Overseas callers have similar tax reporting obligations in their respective countries.

Calling income must be reported. We only owe taxes on our net profit from calling. Our net profit is calculated on Schedule C. Uncle Sam also expects us to pay our social security and Medicare tax, which when paid by self-employed independent contractors is referred to as self-employment tax. The form Schedule C is a profit and loss statement

that allows us to deduct our business-related expenses from our income to calculate our net income. Self-employment taxes we owe are based on our net income.

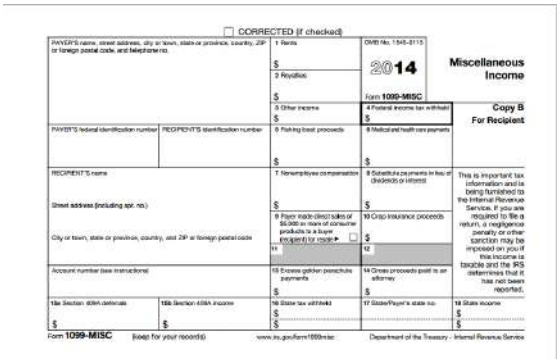
Our net income is added to any other taxable income reported and our tax is based on your total taxable income. If net income exceeds $400, the self-employment tax is calculated at approximately 15% of net income. Half of that tax is deducted from your total income to arrive at your adjusted gross income. This is an above-the-line (front page) deduction on form 1040. The total self-employment tax then adds directly to whatever tax is owed on your taxable income (page 2, form 1040.) All tax reporting software will do this calculation for us.

The self-employment tax often catches self-employed people by surprise. Owing these additional taxes may cause our situation to warrant paying quarterly taxes in accordance with our tax code. Our US tax code stipulates that taxes are due when money is earned. If we meet 90% or our tax obligation each quarter by submitting quarterly taxes when required, we comply with the code. If we fail to do so, penalties may be applied. So be aware of this situation and consult with your tax professional concerning any obligation you may have to pay quarterly taxes during the tax year.

REPORTING INCOME

It's just a hobby! Well, yes and no. There is no advantage at all in reporting calling income as 'hobby' income. For one thing, we cannot claim depreciation expense against hobby income. We have an advantage to report our business income and expenses on a Schedule C. However, if we do not show a profit in three out of the five most recent tax years, the IRS can challenge whether we are in the business to make a profit. They consider several different facts. If they determine we are not in business to make a profit, under the hobby rules the IRS may determine that we are not really a business, but rather we are engaged in a hobby. In this case, the IRS can convert our reporting from business income reporting to 'hobby' income reporting, reporting all our calling income directly on your form 1040 as 'Other Income' (line 22.) We then may have an opportunity to summarize our annual expenses and report them on Schedule A as miscellaneous hobby expenses related to hobby income. However, those expenses are subject to a 2% threshold (the expenses that total to 2% of your Adjusted Gross Income are not deductible) and our total expenses cannot exceed our total revenue from calling. Also, the miscellaneous expenses currently allowed on Schedule A may very likely be removed soon, meaning we will have no way to report our legitimate expenses and will pay taxes on all our gross calling income. We do not want the IRS to determine our business is a hobby. So, make some money!

FORM 1099, MISCELLANEOUS INCOME


CORRECTED (if checked)

PAYER'S name, street address, city or town, state or province, country, ZIP or foreign postal code, and telephone no.

1 Rents $

2 Royalties $

3 Other income $

4 Federal income tax withheld $

OMB No. 1545-0115

2014

Form 1099-MISC

Miscellaneous Income

Copy B For Recipient

PAYER'S federal identification number | RECIPIENT'S identification number

5 Fishing boat proceeds $

6 Medical and health care payments $

RECIPIENT'S name

Street address (including apt. no.)

City or town, state or province, country, and ZIP or foreign postal code

7 Nonemployee compensation $

8 Substitute payments in lieu of dividends or interest $

This is important tax information and is being furnished to the Internal Revenue Service. If you are required to file a return, a negligence penalty or other sanction may be imposed on you if this income is taxable and the IRS determines that it has not been reported.

9 Payer made direct sales of $5,000 or more of consumer products to a buyer (recipient) for resale ▶ ☐

10 Crop insurance proceeds $

11

12

Account number (see instructions)

15 Excess golden parachute payments $

14 Gross proceeds paid to an attorney $

15a Section 409A deferrals $

15b Section 409A income $

16 State tax withheld $

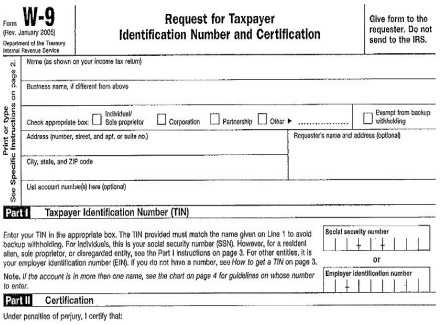
17 State/Payer's state no.

18 State income $

Form 1099-MISC (keep for your records) www.irs.gov/form1099misc Department of the Treasury - Internal Revenue Service

Any club, entity or person who pays us more than $600 in a tax year is required by US tax code to complete Form 1099Misc reporting the income, file it with the IRS, and send us a copy on or before January 31 following the tax year in which the income was earned. You need to comply with this requirement by giving your tax information to the party

responsible for filing the 1099Misc. This can be done informally, over the telephone, or email. However, I urge you to complete a form W9 (Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification) that contains the information the party needs and gives you a record of providing the party with the information. Simply download form W-9 from the IRS website, fill it out, make several copies including one digital PDF copy, and send it out as applicable.



Form **W-9** (Rev. January 2005) Department of the Treasury Internal Revenue Service

Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification

Give form to the requester. Do not send to the IRS.

Print or type See Specific Instructions on page 2.

Name (as shown on your income tax return)

Business name, if different from above

Check appropriate box: ☐ Individual/ Sole proprietor ☐ Corporation ☐ Partnership ☐ Other ▶ ..... ☐ Exempt from backup withholding

Address (number, street, and apt. or suite no.) | Requester's name and address (optional)

City, state, and ZIP code

List account number(s) here (optional)

Part I Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN)

Enter your TIN in the appropriate box. The TIN provided must match the name given on Line 1 to avoid backup withholding. For individuals, this is your social security number (SSN). However, for a resident alien, sole proprietor, or disregarded entity, see the Part I instructions on page 3. For other entities, it is your employer identification number (EIN). If you do not have a number, see *How to get a TIN* on page 3.

Social security number

or

Employer identification number

Note. *If the account is in more than one name, see the chart on page 4 for guidelines on whose number to enter.*

Part II Certification

Under penalties of perjury, I certify that:

I do this proactively, meaning if I am aware of a club, organization or person who is required to file a form 1099M for income they gave me, I will complete a W9 and put it in their hands usually by way of an email attachment, so I have a record of this transaction. This way, any entity or person who is required to file a form 1099Misc and fails to do so, will have difficulty in blaming me for not being willing to provide them the information. This has happened to me, so be the wiser for it.

SECTION 501(C)

Learn what you can about the tax-exempt IRS code Section 501(c). This code section covers tax-exempt organizations that are charitable or social. Older square dance clubs filed their corporate paperwork as 501(c)(3) organizations so they could procure a tax-exempt status with the IRS. What most clubs don't know is that the 501(c)(3) status is reserved for religious, educational, scientific and literary 'charitable' organizations and most square dance clubs are not charitable organizations as defined by the code. Club officers may not be aware that there are 28 subsections under Section 501(c) of the code. If you are advising a new club on how to file its corporate status, a better code subsection is 501(c)(7) which is tax exempt status for social and recreational clubs. The primary difference is in what your club can do in distributing club net assets in case of club dissolution. Competent advice from a tax professional is advised.

SALES/MARKETING

The caller is both the principal product and chief salesperson. Some of the selling activities are obvious - preparing advertising, negotiating dates and rates, promoting classes, etc. - but some are less obvious. The overall presentation of the caller includes many factors. One of these is appearance. Are the clothes clean and neat? Does the caller look professional? Is the language correct - not only avoiding offensive words but also using correct grammar? The off-stage interaction of the caller with the dancers in between tips and before the dance starts or at the after- party are important selling opportunities. In these situations, the other member of the sales staff, the caller's partner, is usually an important contributor to the success of the selling effort. As sales manager the caller will find it important to keep the morale high throughout the whole team. Any demonstration of square dancing to the non-dancing public is a marketing activity and both callers and dancers represent square dancing in such situations.

POSITIONING THE PRODUCT

Long ago, square dancing was a single product. In the modern square dance activity there are several different products available and callers must consider which parts of the market they will serve. In isolated areas with low population density there may not be much choice, but in metropolitan areas square dancing takes many forms. These range all the way from non-dancer parties to weekend festivals and include, club workshops, entry-level programs, open weekend dances, advanced programs (Plus, Advanced, etc.) square dance vacation weeks or weekends and square dance group travel. Each of these products places different requirements on the caller. Often the decision about which parts of the activity to work in is made without much thought of planning. A more effective approach may include assessment of the advantages and costs of each and then a conscious decision about what best fits the caller's interests, schedule, family commitments and talents. In these areas it is important that the whole sales force agree on what product is being promoted. This is another way of saying that caller and partner should both seek the same goals for the caller.

PRICING

Another obvious aspect of the marketing of a square dance caller is how to price the services. There are many options available and some principles from the general field of business may apply. Some callers charge a percentage of the total admissions with (or without) a minimum. Others feel that a firm fixed rate is the best way. Still another possibility is a share of the net after expenses. If the caller is running the program - renting the hall, providing the refreshments and pocketing the income there is still the question of what the admission charge should be. Many things must be included in the pricing calculation to reach a sound decision. Some of these are travel costs, equipment costs and depreciation, clothing costs, preparation time, training costs (caller schools and seminars), office supplies, etc.

MAINTENANCE

The maintenance department is another that has both an obvious and a less obvious application to the calling business. The obvious part has to do with maintaining the equipment, records, clothes and vehicle. These should be maintained in the best possible condition because failure, particularly of the equipment of the vehicle can prevent a dance from happening. Preventive maintenance is best of course and it is reasonable to expect callers to have spare needles with them and spare microphones, and perhaps even speakers, quickly available. The less obvious maintenance job is keeping the principle product (themselves) in good condition. The nature of the job is, for most callers, very fatiguing. They are likely to be tired and that can make driving dangerous. Fatigue may also make a person more susceptible to illness. Callers should acknowledge the possible effect of fatigue and take steps to stay as rested as possible. They might also give some attention to the fatigue state of the support staff. Caller's partners are often important contributors to the work of the business and they too should be well maintained.

MANAGEMENT

A business manager is responsible for advance planning. Deciding the future of the company - what products will be offered, what the company goals should be and how to keep the firm on the path toward these goals. The square dance caller faces all of these questions too. From time to time it is important to step back and look at where you, as a caller are headed. It is easy to "go

with the flow" taking whatever jobs are offered and charging as much as the traffic will bear. In the longer run a calling career will benefit from a plan that identifies what involvement - both what type of dates and how many - the caller wants in the future. Perhaps a change of tactics now will make that achievement more likely. The changes that might be made are investment in different equipment, a training program, accepting some lower paying jobs now because the potential for growth is better. These are management decisions.

Another area that could properly be considered management is concern for the future of the square dancing activity. Every caller has an obligation to leave square dancing at least as healthy as it was when the caller arrived on the scene. Sometimes that obligation requires that a date not be taken or that a promotional event be supported. These are things that may not promote the caller's individual interest but they are essential for the long term health of square dancing. Callers must always keep in mind that without a square dance activity both the applause and the profit (if any) will go away.

ETHICS

Ethics. A simple word that gets thrown around often, but what does it mean for you as a square dance caller and leader?

The definition of “ethics”, according to Merriam Webster’s dictionary:

eth·ic | \ ˈe-thik \

Definition of *ethic*

1 **ethics** *plural in form but singular or plural in construction* : the discipline dealing with what is good and bad and with moral duty and obligation

2 **a** : a set of moral principles : a theory or system of moral values
// the present-day materialistic *ethic*
// an old-fashioned work *ethic*
—often used in plural but singular or plural in construction
// an elaborate *ethics*
// Christian *ethics*

b **ethics** *plural in form but singular or plural in construction* : the principles of conduct governing an individual or a group
// professional *ethics*

For our purposes, the best description lies in the second section of the definition:

“the principles of conduct governing an individual or a group.”

When you make the decision to become a square dance caller, that decision puts you in a position of leadership in the square dance activity. Regardless of whether or not you choose to join an official caller organization, you are no longer just an individual, but part of a worldwide group. As a leader in the square dance community, you can (and will) be held to an unwritten standard of behavior by dancers, colleagues, club leaders, and others in the square dance community. That broad, unwritten, standard of behavior could be summarized in four words…..

Do the Right Thing!

While the simplicity of “do the right thing” could almost always be applied, many organizations, including CALLERLAB, have created a Code of Ethics for their members. The CALLERLAB Code of Ethics is a one-page document that very

clearly lays out a standard of behavior that should be accepted and applied by all square dance callers, regardless of their affiliation or membership in CALLERLAB.

You will find a copy of the CALLERLAB Code of Ethics document in the appendix of this syllabus, but here is a quick summary:

- A caller has an obligation to dancers. This includes leadership, instruction, dancer development, and satisfaction and enjoyment of the square dance activity.
- A caller has an obligation to club organizations. This includes club development, guidance, and mentoring.
- A caller has an obligation to the profession and activity as a whole. This includes respecting the dignity of other leaders in the activity, as well as maintaining their own personal reputation.
- A caller has an obligation to continue to work for their own professional growth.
- A caller has an obligation to all associations dealing with the square dance activity and to promote cooperation.
- A caller has an obligation to conduct themselves at dancers in a responsible manner. Arrive early, call using the advertised program, good taste used while on microphone, no use of alcohol or controlled substances.
- A caller has an obligation to honor a signed contract.
- A caller has an obligation to conduct their financial affairs within the square dance community in a responsible manner.
- A caller will only perform music that has been obtained in a manner that completely compensates the artist(s) and producer(s) responsible for its creation.

SUMMARY

The subject of ethics is often overlooked because it is not a flashy or entertaining topic. But the truth is, your reputation is the foundation of your calling career.

It is your responsibility to yourself, and act in a professional and ethical manner. It's easy….**Do the Right Thing!**



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