

This newsletter provides promotion and marketing ideas, shines a light on people in our dance community, provides history and general information about our much loved activity, and highlights provincial and national events. If you wish to contribute an article, or see an event, topic, person, or club featured, contact the editor.



“IT’S BEEN A SLICE!” - by Claudia Littlefair, Editor

This is my final issue of Alberta Chatter – I mean other than the next one, #2024-4, which is a collection of the marketing and promotion articles from the past 12 years of this newsletter. Read more about this 160-page issue in the article below.

Dave & I started dancing 30 years ago when we moved to Strathmore from Devon, Alberta. Little did we know then how square dancing would change our lives. In 2008 Dave started calling for our Strathmore club, and that same year I began learning to cue rounds.

The idea of writing a newsletter started when a friend gave me a stack of old American Square Dance magazines, chock full of information, ideas and history. It was an eye opener! Upon reading them I realized just how wonderful and widespread our activity is. And how full and interesting - not just locally, but on a national and international level, too. And because I was on our club's promotion committee of one, I was looking for some help and ideas. These magazines gave me a boatload of great information! Which eventually led to another thought . . . this stuff should be shared with others! And that's how 'Alberta Chatter' (formerly 'Convention Chatter') came to be.

Some of the articles in this issue are from past issues that are either personal favorites or worth reading again.

From 2016-23, Dee Jackins, a visually impaired dancer from Calgary contributed a regular column called "The Lighter Side of Darkness". You'll find Dee's personal story in this issue. Another regular contributor was dancer Kelly Thompson who was always happy to write up his thoughts for "Kelly's Korner". Read how square dancing literally changed his life.

Dancers James & Grace Chen are wonderful ambassadors for our activity. They are well known for taking pictures at all the dance events they attend. Then they upload them, send out group emails so people can have access to them and they post them on FaceBook, too. They also email dance posters and reminders out on a regular basis. All this is something they do without being asked. Read their story and how they found their way into our dance community.

At one time, I shared a little of our dance history in each issue from a book called "*As I See Saw It -Bob Osgood*". This issue contains one of the first excerpts. We can only wish our new dancer classes would fill up the way they did back then.

I've really enjoyed writing, researching and publishing the newsletter and to be honest, I think I've benefited the most. I've gained a deeper appreciation for our dance activity and community. I've met some wonderful leaders and dancers along the way and acquired some valuable marketing skills. But it's time to set my pen aside. Thank you, readers, for sending me your thoughts and comments. So glad most were positive. 😊

A COLLECTION OF MARKETING ARTICLES AND MORE!

- compiled by Claudia Littlefair, Editor, Issue #2024-4

If we're going to attract new dancers, we really need to 'up' our marketing game. The problem is that most of us do not have a marketing background and have little knowledge on how to "sell" our activity. This 160-page issue contains a wealth of information that will inspire, educate and assist you in your efforts. Just click on the link:

<https://strathmoresquaredance.com/newsletters-2019-1>. The issue is divided up into the following sections:

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A: MARKETING CAMPAIGNS & STRATEGIES: Suggestions and ideas for putting together a club marketing plan.

B: CLUB SUCCESS STORIES: Read how clubs' marketing campaigns worked for them. Lots of practical ideas and suggestions.

C: RESOURCES: These invaluable resources will help you produce current, eye-catching posters, brochures and other marketing material. Access a treasure-trove of material through CALLERLAB's Knowledgebase, CALLERLAB's Teaching Resource and the Canadian Society's Pinterest account.

D: MEDIA – SOCIAL (ONLINE): If your club is not online, it doesn't exist in today's marketing world. Find suggestions and help through these articles.

E: MEDIA – PRINT: These articles explain how to write effective news articles for print media (hard or online). There are also several examples of news articles that can be rewritten using your own club's information.

F: MEDIA – OTHER: These articles contain suggestions for radio or newspaper interviews, effective photography and effective use of signage.

G: DEMOS & EVENTS: Demonstrations are different than when we entertain (eg. at senior centres). These articles give valuable suggestions and ideas on how to give effective demonstrations.

H: WELCOMING NEW DANCERS: Making New Dancers feel welcome, whether it's a 'try-it' night or your first lesson night, is a key factor in whether they return or not. These articles give practical suggestions and ideas on how to create a welcoming environment.

I: KEEPING NEW DANCERS: Statistics show that 50% of new dancers will not return the following year, and another 50% will not return after the second year. Often the reasons are not within our control (eg. work, family, medical issues, relocation). But some dancers do not return for reasons within the club's control. These articles help explain the needs of New Dancers and give ideas and suggestions for retention.

J: PROGRAMS FOR NEW DANCERS:

- Recently, the Social Square Dance program (SSD) of 53 calls was introduced as an alternative to the Mainstream program of 68 calls.
- And most recently, Spring 2024, a proposal was made to CALLERLAB to reduce the existing Mainstream program to 50 calls, and put the remaining 18 Mainstream calls into the Plus program. This would make each program about the same size. See article "*Witnessing Generational Change*" in this issue for more information.
- Although most of the articles in this section pertain to the SSD program, the reasoning behind SSD **explains why and how a shorter program is of more benefit to New Dancers.**

You are welcome to use this marketing issue however you wish. Download it, print it, share it – do whatever will help you in your marketing efforts. Best of luck! Link: <https://strathmoresquaredance.com/newsletters-2019-1>



Alberta Square & Round Dance Federation

55th Annual Convention 2025

Lacombe, Alberta



Square Dancing, Choreographed Ballroom, Clogging



August 29 - September 1, 2025

Register online at:
www.communitydance.net

WITNESSING GENERATIONAL CHANGE (CALLERLAB 2024 - PROPOSAL)

Source: GCA Call Sheet Newsletter, Spring 2024, Editorial by Allan Hurst



Over the last few years, we've seen a generational change at CALLERLAB, resulting in an organization that's moving to become more flexible and agile, and a willingness to try some new things ("everything old is new again!") that will help make square dancing and square dance calling and teaching easier.

I feel that the SSD (Social Square Dancing) program was the result of the prior and incoming generations of CALLERLAB leadership working together to create an easier way to teach square dancing. For the first time, callers were handed not just a teach order, but a timed 12 week structured syllabus paired with teaching/check choreography.

In a related activity, the Choreographic Applications Committee (chaired by Dottie Welch and vice-chaired by Doren McBroom) realized that a new generation of incoming callers needed a more structured and accessible set of teaching resources.

The amazing result was <https://teaching.callerlab.org>, which provides the following information for every Basic, Mainstream, Plus, and A1 call:

- Definition
- Standard Applications
- Call Analysis
- Sample Modules
- Teaching Choreography and Tips
- Other Related Tips
- Extended Applications

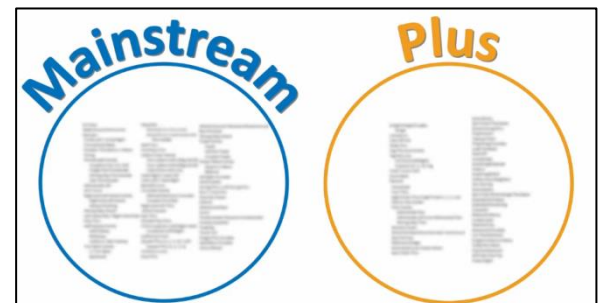
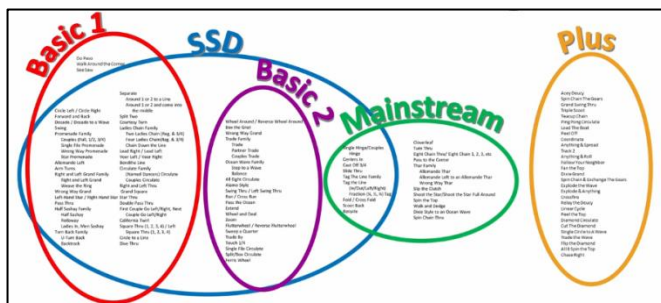
If only this had been available 25+ years ago, when I was learning to call! Even now, as a moderately experienced caller, I find new gems of knowledge to glean every time I access the site.

I'm already rewriting much of my own SSD teaching choreography that I created just a year ago, simply because the bounty of information available from the Teaching site is just that good. If you're a teaching caller who hasn't yet checked out the site, you're doing yourself and your dancers a disservice.

But this project is also a result or a reflection of the generational change taking place inside CALLERLAB. **We have a new generation of leadership which is computer- and technology-literate, and who understand the concepts and power of websites and social media.**

Another example of generational change: CALLERLAB Chair Ted Lizotte made a proposal that would have caused a huge commotion a decade ago, but which seemed to be quite well received this year.

In short, he proposed that Basic, Mainstream, and Plus—three levels with highly dissimilar counts of calls—be "normalized" into two sets of calls: Mainstream and Plus.



While details need to be worked out over the coming year and presented for discussion and voting at next year's CALLERLAB convention, Ted proposed that we combine Basic and Mainstream to form a new level called simply "Mainstream" (Jon Jones later suggested that the name "Social Square Dancing" be retained for this initial level), with about 50 calls. That would be similar to our current SSD program.

Everything else would move up into a new Plus program of...about 50 (maybe 60) calls, with a similar teaching guide and choreo examples to SSD.

The point of this? For a change, the answer isn't the same as the prior generation's cry of "Make it simpler for new dancers!". Instead, the answer is to make learning square dancing a more structured and consistent experience for dancers and callers.

That second part is not to be overlooked, because it contains a nugget that wasn't immediately apparent to me: Make it easier to train newer callers.

Specifically, make it easier for newer callers to teach classes using a set of structured guides similar to SSD's, which worked out better than most people seem to have expected.

There is, of course, another point to be taken into consideration. Generational knowledge of how to teach is being lost with every caller that passes away.

Restructuring the programs to simplify teaching will also allow us to record much of that generational knowledge in a set of structured documents that can be passed on to the next generation of callers.

Another benefit to consider: SSD was always intended as a destination level, with no "upgrade path." **By restructuring calls into two sets of highly documented lists with teaching guides, we now have a natural path for dancers to "move on up." And an easy way for callers to help get them there.**

There are still some details to work out. While I liked Jon Jones' comment that "SSD" should be retained as the name for the new entry level, that's something that will be worked out in committee and at Convention next year. Ditto discussing how many calls will be in the "new Plus."

Frankly, I'm kind of rarin' to go at the thought of a Plus teaching guide similar to the current SSD teaching guide. It would make my job (as a comparatively new club caller) far easier. And it would provide a standardized set of choreography that callers can use to measure their dancers' progress.

This has a profound potential to ease the job of training newer callers. After all, us old folks aren't going to be around forever. And this would be one heck of a legacy to pass on to the next generation. I'd like to think they'll be appreciative.

This article was reprinted courtesy of the GCA Call Sheet, technical journal for the Gay Callers Association. Information on the GCA can be found <https://www.gaycallers.org>

About the Author: *Allan Hurst serves on the CALLERLAB Marketing Committee. He has been calling since 1997, and currently calls SSD through Advanced for three clubs in Sacramento, California. He is the editor of the GCA Call Sheet, and leads the IAGSDC History Project.*

CHURCH BULLETIN BLOOPERS

- On a church bulletin during the minister's illness: GOD IS GOOD - Dr. Hargreaves is better.
- Don't let worry kill you off - let the church help.
- The 1997 Spring Council Retreat will be held May 10 and 11.
- The ladies of the church have cast off clothing of every kind. They can be seen in the church basement Saturday.
- A bean supper will be held on Tuesday evening in the church hall. Music will follow.
- At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be "What is hell?" Come early and listen to our choir practice.

(Issue 2019-7)

TIPS FOR BETTER DANCING

- Excerpt from Article by Ed Foote, Caller

The purpose of this article is to enhance your dancing pleasure. Dancers who follow these rules find they dance more, stand less, and in general have a more enjoyable dancing experience.

TAKE HANDS WITH THOSE STANDING BESIDE YOU

This should be done immediately after completing any figure, to enable you to see the formation you have (line, wave, etc.) when doing the next call.

1. **Hands should be joined within one-half second after the completion of any call.** Failure to join hands after a call will often result in sloppy lines or waves, which could cause the square to break down before or during the execution of the next call.
2. **Elbows must be bent when hands are joined.** If arms are outstretched when hands are touching, the set is much too large to operate smoothly.



HOW TO AVOID BREAKING DOWN



1. **Believe the caller.** Often dancers will stop cold if a caller tells them to do something and they do not understand why. Forget worrying about “why” and just do as the caller says. Refusing to execute a given command will cause the square to break down.
2. **If the caller gives a call you have never heard, do not give up and quit.** In the vast majority of cases the caller will tell you how to do the call after he has said the name, especially if it is not one of the Mainstream or Plus Program calls. Even if you have never heard a call, if it is not complicated, there is no reason for inability to do the call if the caller talks you thru it.
3. **If you want to help someone who is lost, use hand signals.** A very effective method is to point to the spot they should be occupying. If you talk, you could cause yourself and others in the square to miss hearing the caller give the next call.
4. **If you are positive you have done a call correctly, do not let someone who is unsure of the call make you change your position.** This will keep the square going.
5. **Experienced couples should be across from each other when squared up, never adjacent,** if a set consists of two experienced couples and two inexperienced couples. This will give each inexperienced dancer an experienced corner, and will provide each side of the square with experienced dancers when doing calls.
6. **Keep your head raised.** This lets you see what is going on. Many people dance looking down at the floor, and thus are out of touch with the set as a whole.
7. **Keep the set small.** Touching hands immediately after each call is one way to accomplish this. Large sets break down much more often than small ones.
8. **Always have your set lined up with the walls.** Often a set will become slightly offset from being lined up with the walls; now a Cast Off or other turning motion may cause some people to become disoriented. If the caller has the set Promenade and has the heads or sides Wheel Around, it is quite likely the set will not be lined up with the walls. **Solution:** Take it upon yourself to make slight adjustments on the next two or three calls to get the set aligned with the walls. One person can cause the whole set to adjust, so you be this person.



IF YOU BECOME COMPLETELY LOST

1. **Do not turn around.** This will make it difficult for someone behind you to help you recover. It is much easier to guide someone into place by guiding them from the back.

2. **Turn your head in all directions to see where you should go.** If someone says to turn around or you see that you should turn around, then do it. Otherwise, retain your facing direction and let someone guide you into place.
3. **Do not wander around.** Stay put until someone either guides you into place or directs you to go to a certain position. Do not be surprised to get this help – expect that you will get it and be ready to respond to it quickly.

IF YOUR SQUARE BREAKS DOWN, GET TO FACING LINES

Do this by: (1) Squaring your set (go home), and then
(2) Have the head couples slide to the right to form normal facing lines of four (each boy with a girl on his right).



Now watch the other squares. Often the caller will get the squares back to facing lines several times before finally getting to a Left Allemande; when he does get them to facing lines, your square can now pick up the next call and you are dancing again. You may not wind up with your original partner or corner, but you are dancing and that is the name of the game.

This will not work every time, as sometimes the caller does not bring people back to facing lines before a Left Allemande; but it works often enough to be worth doing. In fact, many callers will intentionally bring people back to facing lines in order to pick up those who have broken down early. If you do not accept this opportunity to resume dancing, you may have as long stand until the next Left Allemande.

HOW TO PASS PROPER SHOULDERS

Whenever you Pass Thru with someone, always pass *right* shoulders, *never* pass left shoulders.

HOW TO LEARN PROPERLY

1. **Try to understand the definition of the call rather than just memorizing a position.** If you understand the definition, you will be able to do the call from any position; but if you have only memorized one position, you will be lost if the call is used from any other position.
2. **Please be quiet while the caller is explaining something.** You may not need the help but others may.
3. **If a caller is walking the floor thru a call, do not get ahead of the caller's prompting even if you know what comes next.** This is inconsiderate of fellow dancers who need this help and could keep them from fully understanding the call, leading to a possible breakdown of the set later on.



TWO PRIMARY REASONS FOR SQUARES BREAKING DOWN

1. **Failure to take hands with adjacent dancers at the completion of every call to form lines or waves.**
2. **Failure to listen to or believe the caller.**

(Issue #2022-4)

A CALLER'S BRAIN AT WORK

"You Have Never Thought About This" -by Ed Foote

Editor's Note: This was recently re-published in a caller's newsletter from Australia "Behind The Mike" by caller Barry Wonson. In Barry's words, "This is a very cleverly written piece that boggles the mind!"

Q: What job requires more decisions to be made in a shorter period of time than any other job in the world?

A: Square Dance Caller.

When people first hear this, they think it is a joke. But then they realize it is not a joke - it is true. **A caller must make 8 to 10 decisions every 2 to 3 seconds. These include but are not limited to:**

- Knowing how long it will take the dancers to do a call, so as to know when to give the next call.
- Knowing what formation the named call will give.
- Knowing if this call will flow smoothly after the preceding call.

- Knowing what the next call should be from a variety of options.
- Knowing if that next call will flow smoothly from the preceding call.
- Deciding the correct timing for this particular call, based on whether the floor is weak, average, or strong.
- Knowing if the next call is "on the list" for the advertised program for the dance.
- Giving the calls on the beat with the music.
- Knowing who the partners and corners are in multiple squares.
- Knowing how to resolve to a Left Allemande and remembering which resolves have been used before so as to avoid repetition.
- Knowing where "Home" is if the caller wishes to use an "At Home" resolve.



Remember, all of the above is not happening two or three times a tip. This is all happening every 2 to 3 seconds in every tip. Having read the above, you are now trying to think of other jobs that require multiple decisions this fast. Let me help you. What about a fighter pilot in a dogfight with another plane? Yes, we concede that a large number of decisions are made here in a short period of time. But a dogfight is over fairly quickly. It may last a minute or two, but that's it. A caller is doing this rapid-fire thinking tip after tip for the entire dance. What about a surgeon in a complicated operation? The decisions are crucial, but they tend to be mapped out ahead of time, with a pause between each decision for implementation. In an emergency, there may be one minute of numerous decisions, but then there is a wait to see what happens.

I have presented this idea to many people, and so far no one has identified a job requiring the number of decisions a caller has to make in such a short period of time. If you can identify such a job, let me know. Note: I am not saying that square dance calling is the most important job in the world. On the contrary, I can name hundreds of jobs that are more important for the advancement of humanity than that of square dance calling. All I am discussing here is the number of decisions in a short space of time.

A final thought. A number of years ago a psychologist was treating a caller for mental stress and drug addiction (no, it wasn't me). He told the caller that the human brain is not designed to make the number of decisions in such a short period of time that a caller is required to make. Remember this the next time your caller misses the corner.



About the Author: *Ed Foote is considered by many to be one of the foremost authorities on the activity of Modern Western Style Square Dancing. He began his calling career in 1965 and calls all square dance programs thru Challenge. Ed has so many credits to his name in the Square Dance Community that a complete listing here would not be possible. He is seen by many as the "Callers Caller" and has been known to provide dancers with some of the most dynamic and entertaining choreography in the world. Ed is a full time International Caller who makes his home in the Pittsburgh area when he is not traveling.*

LIFE AS AN ALBERTAN

1. "Vacation" means going to Calgary for the weekend.
2. You measure distance in hours.
3. You often switch from "heat" to "A/C" in the same day.
4. You know several people who have hit deer with their vehicle more than one.
5. You use a down comforter in the summer.
6. Your grandparents drive at 100km/h through four meters snow during a blizzard without flinching.
7. You carry jumper cables in your car and your girlfriend knows how to use them.
8. You design your kids Halloween costume to fit over a snowsuit.
9. Driving is better in the winter because the potholes are filled.
10. You know both seasons: Winter and construction.
11. You are bundled up in three sweaters, a parka, ski pants, a toque, two pairs of mittens, boots past your knees in 3 feet of snow in a -35 (-80 with the wind chill) blizzard, your eyelashes are frozen together, your nose is running, you can't feel your toes, and you still stop at the gas station for a Slurpee on the way home.
12. You actually understand these jokes and will share them to all your friends from Alberta.

(Issue #2015-1)

WELCOME TO CALLER SCHOOL!**- by Caller Couple Gary & Eileen Smith, Whitecourt, AB**

It has taken a whole village of callers to teach some of us to call. We, the newer callers, are a work in progress. I am thankful to experienced callers such as Wayne Russell, Murray Few, Lorne Smith, Tony Oxendine, Jerry Jestin, Daryl Clendenin, Doug Davis, Bob Weller, Emil Paquette, Gary Winter, and Phil Hansen for freely sharing their knowledge. Whether in formal 'caller college' or more informal settings, each of these individuals has helped me to grow and develop as a caller.

Are we short of callers, or are we short of dancers? Sounds like a chicken and egg question. According to the statistics, there is a shortage of callers in ratio to dancers compared to historical measures. This, in turn, contributes to the shortage of dancers. It's obvious we do need one another.

For me, becoming a caller was initially to keep square dancing alive and well for own club in Whitecourt. As I began to learn more about calling, it became a passion and a hobby which has happily filled MANY hours of leisure time. Calling requires an investment of time spent practicing, preparing for a dance, and travelling; and money in the purchase of supplies and equipment. It is the passion and the pleasure shared with others which keep me going.

Why attend caller school? There are so many skills required to become a successful caller: the understanding of the moves, choreography, timing, how to use the equipment, computer software, the voice and delivery of the song or patter, how to teach, and even showmanship. The easiest way (if there is an easy way) is to learn from experienced callers.



The classes are great fun. We learn about systems of calling through memory, mental images, modules, and eventually sight calling. We learn about the number of beats required for each of the calls and how to teach each of the moves. Many calls can be issued from multiple positions. Smooth flow is something we all strive for.

Getting up in front of a live audience for the first time is quite a challenge. Things that can easily be seen from the dance floor by an experienced dancer are sometimes missed by new callers on stage. I received an explanation of this concept in one class: the microphone acts as a vacuum cleaner and sucks the thoughts from the brain. It seemed plausible to me at the time. Multiple classes or 'caller college' sessions have been required for me to have the light bulb of understanding eventually come on for different aspects of the craft. Having different instructors helped me to appreciate varied teaching methods.

Caller language discusses FASR – Formation (eg. waves, lines), Arrangement (eg. boy-boy, girl-girl), Sequence (in and out), and Relationship (eg. head boy with corner). We also learn a concept called symmetry – what is going on in the opposite side of the square is equivalent to the side you are focusing on. We learn to try catering to the needs of the dancers and attempt to make their evenings fun. We are taught how people prefer learning different ways, eg. verbal, written, doing, etc. And I have learned an alternative F-word when the dancers are in error – FREEZE!

It is truly quite amazing all the facets callers need to gain mastery of to become competent. We also learn to care for our voices. Programming a dance is an interesting topic – adjusting to the capabilities of an audience and ensuring success. We adjust the dance through the evening in terms of level of difficulty. We learned about quick 'get outs' or how to get your dancers back to their home position in very few moves. Caller ethics is an interesting topic – meeting our obligations to dancers and clubs is important. We must care for one another as family.

I would like to see future caller schools incorporate associated learning for club leaders. At CALLERLAB many of the sessions benefit club dancer leaders – topics such as building a club (recruiting), how to hold parties, welcoming new dancers, marketing, visitations, solving communication problems, etc. These topics, if presented to local club leaders, could be of significant help to build and strengthen dance clubs. Sessions could occur when the dancers weren't needed on the dance floor at caller school.

We need both callers and dancers. The better each is educated – the stronger our activity will become. We owe it to future generations to keep the activity strong. *Thanks for reading about Caller School. (I did graduate!)*

(Issue #2015-2)

DEMONSTRATING OUR DANCE

The following excerpts are from an article in the September 2014 issue of American Square Dance Magazine, called "CALLERLAB Viewpoints – Demonstrating our Dance". It was written by Mike Seastrom, Los Angeles, CA, who is an international caller and recording artist. Mike started dancing in 1960 and calling in 1963. He joined CALLERLAB in 1977 and over the years has served on various committees and in leadership roles, including Chairman of the Board. As a practicing dentist, calling is an avocation for Mike, and he says he is fortunate to have such a wonderful and understanding staff and family. His article gives some practical suggestions and ideas on how to make dance demos successful recruiting events.



Showing our dance to others is a great way to update our image, demonstrate the fun and team spirit of our unique dance form, and interest others in joining our recreation. **Yet to really be effective in using demonstrations as a means of bringing new dancers into our activity, it has to be done right and with a plan.**

How many times has your group been out to a mall, a fair, a chili cook off or some other event? You had a great time doing a demonstration, but only had limited success encouraging those in the crowd to join your next new dancer program or class. I've spoken with many club and association leaders over the last 25 years who have said they still do some demonstrations, but they hardly ever get new dancers to join their group. Many clubs have just stopped doing them altogether.

The following suggestions are my opinions only. They come from personal experience and by talking to those who consistently succeed in bringing new people into their new dancer programs by doing these demonstrations. I'm not talking about the times we entertain people with our dance in convalescent hospitals and the like. I'm talking about those events where others can see us and be excited enough to join.

- 1. MUSIC:** **Think about the age of the group you would like to target and have your caller program the demonstration to what would appeal to that age group.** You'll also need to consider that the age of the dancers in the demonstration can't be too far off the group you are targeting. If all your demo dancers are in their 70s and 80s and you are trying to appeal to people in their 40s and 50s, you won't be as successful, even if you use music that they like. Be realistic, but definitely consider the age and music preferences of those you want to attract.
- 2. DRESS:** If all your dancers come to the demonstration wearing their fancy square dance clothes, most of those watching will think you are all professional dancers and that they could never be as good as you are. They will also immediately think that it takes lots of time to be that good and will enjoy watching you, but will not participate when your caller asks all of you to go out and bring in volunteers to dance an easy number. **It is my opinion that most of your group should wear clothes that your target audience would have in their own closet at that moment.** It's much easier for your targeted group to imagine themselves dancing if they already own the type of clothes that your dancers have on. If a couple of your members absolutely have to wear their traditional clothes, then so be it; but I personally feel it can have a negative effect.
- 3. NON-PARTICIPATING PARTICIPANTS:** **I know this sounds a little shady, but having some of your group in "plain clothes" can really help the success of your demonstration.** Appoint several of your own people to dress in the same attire that your targeted observes would be wearing at the event. As they mingle on the outskirts of your demonstration, it makes it look like there are people watching already, so others will be more apt to stop too. It also is a great way to get your audience to join you when the caller stops and requests some of the audience to join. Your "non-participating participants" gladly volunteer to join in an easy dance. This helps provide some additional incentive for others to join. Believe me, it works. How far you go with this is up to you, but people are more likely to join your demonstration when they see others jump at the chance.

4. **NAMES, ADDRESSES, PHONE & EMAIL INFO:** Plan a way to have people sign up for some kind of a contest or raffle. Print tickets on your computer that has the information on your next class or new dancer event. Have the other part of the ticket be your copy asking for names, addresses, phone numbers and email addresses. This information gives you the ability to follow up by mail, phone, or email and contact these interested people with further information about the next opportunity to join you. This leads us to the next point.
5. **HOLD A RAFFLE OR PRIZE GIVE-AWAY:** Decide prior to your demonstration, what might appeal to your target audience. Some examples are free dance lessons, movie tickets, theater tickets, tickets to a sporting event, or a theme park. Use your imagination and the resources of those in your group. Don't miss out on this golden opportunity to provide an incentive to get personal information. Then be sure to follow up and personally contact those that have shown interest. These are important steps and are critical to your success. There may be some rules and regulations in your area dealing with prize giveaways, so check them out first.
6. **DANCING:** Be sure to have your caller keep the dancing easy and use movements that flow and look good. Your audience needs to picture themselves participating and if you're dancing figures like Relay the Deucey and Spin Chain the Gears, it can be a little intimidating to your observers and diminish the success of your demo. If you get too complicated, many will think it will be too hard for them to learn.
7. **SMILE AND HAVE FUN:** This point is pretty self-explanatory, but is often left out. Dancers should make eye contact with each other and with some of those in the crowd. Your success will go way up if you're having fun."

(Issue #2015-6)

THE LIGHTER SIDE OF DARKNESS - by Dee Jackins

Dee is an avid square and round dancer, and enjoys writing. She shares the lighter side of some of her experiences, challenges and near disasters as a sight impaired person.



Dancing has been a part of my life since Junior High. Born and raised in Radville, Saskatchewan, we took every opportunity to go dancing, whether it was a school dance, wedding or just a community affair. What better way to learn than a good old country dance?

When I moved to Calgary in 1961, one of the first things on my agenda was to find the dance halls. Does anyone remember Penley's, The Gardens, Isle Of Capri and even The Lone Pine? I married in 1965 and raised two children. Now I have three grandchildren and two great grandsons. My husband was not a dancer, but I convinced him to try and away we went.

We joined the Queens and Jacks in 1969 and danced with them for three years. We took in all the activities possible and collected badges for all the silly things that we could pull off. I'm still in contact with some of the friends we made and look forward to our visits whenever possible. As time went by we got busy in other activities including ballroom dance lessons and square dancing was put on the back burner.

My eye problems had already started and were getting more severe. Eyes are sympathetic - it started with iritis and graduated to retinitis, uveitis and optic neuritis along with glaucoma. My eyes were getting inflamed every year on a regular basis and when the optic nerve is inflamed it takes its toll. The sight in my left eye was gone by 1975 and four years later I had to quit working and quit driving (that was hard, my independence was gone). The doctor referred me to the University Hospital in San Francisco to be examined by eight specialists. The results were the same and nothing further could be done. I kept busy doing oil painting, volunteering at the Grandparent Program and of course social dancing whenever possible. By December of 1988 my sight had deteriorated to 20/400. I was heavily medicated with prednisone to try and save the little sight I had but now it was affecting the bone marrow. There was no choice but to taper off and pray, but it wasn't in God's plan. By the end of January, 1989 my vision was gone.

The next few years were years of adjustment in more ways than one. While coping with my blindness and trying to reorganize my life, my husband was diagnosed with cancer and after fighting this disease for ten months he succumbed in October of 1991. I continued volunteering at the Grandparent Program and played crib at the CNIB. I joined ASRAB (Alberta Sports and Recreation Association For The Blind). I was determined to get out and do things and that I did.

With this group we toured Southern Alberta and visited points of interest, lawn bowling, house boating in the Shuswap, para-sailing, horseback riding, white water rafting at Kicking Horse Pass (Actually I'm glad I couldn't see what was going on!)

One of the best highlights for me after going blind was in 1992, when my sisters and I took our Mother on her 80th birthday down to see her brother in Minnesota. We stopped at Eatons in Regina, Saskatchewan to buy a gift for her. The clerk told us that Red Skelton was just down this aisle. Well, he's my favorite comedian and away we went. When he spotted my cane, he grinned from ear to ear and pushed the power button on his scooter and headed straight for us. He stopped right in front of me and said, "I'm Red Skelton. I used to be the Vice President of the Braille Institute Of America. Do you have time for a joke?" With stogie in one hand he shook my hand with the other and commenced his joke. I managed to get an autograph on the back of my cheque. By this time a crowd of people had gathered and his agent was not very happy but everyone else was. He made my day.



Then one day while volunteering at the Grandparent Program a long-time friend, Marilyn Dawes was visiting. She mentioned she had gone back square dancing with the Swinging Singles and would I be interested in coming back. I couldn't believe my ears, can you square dance when you're blind? Sam Stead was the caller back then and after approaching him on this matter he had no problem with it. Thus I was looking forward to and could hardly wait for the fall to begin. That was in 1995 and I have never looked back. The members were accepting and helpful, it was time to dance again.

As the weeks went by, it was all coming back. I had to adjust for certain moves but I was visualizing this in my mind's eye. When Sam taught us the Weave, I knew skirt work was part of it so for now I would just keep my hands down so nobody would get hit. "WRONG!" As I was weaving I heard this "UMPH". My fears had been realized. I apologized profusely and laughter took over. I thought to myself that this had to be just an accident, so I continued to keep my hands down. "WRONG!" It happened again! "UMPH" --poor Charlie. That was it. From there on and to this day, that is why my hands are up on the weave. If everyone would just "touch" my hands as I go by, it makes it easier for everyone. I've learned to dance by definition, so whenever someone pulls, pushes or grabs me I lose concentration and will more than likely break down the square.

In the years following I attended most of the dances involving visiting clubs, beginner Jamboree's, CD Specials, Conventions and not to forget the Kirby Center in the summer time. It was good practice and dancing to other callers was a welcome challenge. It didn't take long before Round Dancing, Plus and Advance 1 and 2 came into the picture and I started venturing out to other cities and provinces to take in their special dances. Visiting a few states across the border allowed me to take in a lot of lessons during the day and dance to my heart's content in the evening. I have met the most wonderful people in this world of Square Dancing, friendships made and a lot of enjoyment over the years.

The question I asked so many years ago, "Can a blind person Square Dance?" Yes, most of the square dancers are understanding, helpful and forgiving. Forgiving? Yes, when I'm in a square there could be somebody checking, tripping, clipping from behind or hooking. H-m-m-m, just about sounds like a hockey game.

To sum it all up - "Faith, Optimism, Determination" and let's not forget Humor are the words of the day. "SEE" you across the square!

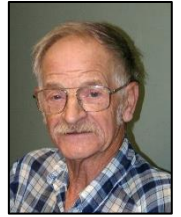
. . . MORE CHURCH BULLETIN BLOOPERS

- For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery down stairs.
- The eighth graders will be presenting Shakespeare's Hamlet in the church basement on Friday at 7 pm. The congregation is invited to attend the tragedy.
- The preacher will preach his farewell message, after which the choir will sing, "Break Forth With Joy".
- Thursday night: Potluck Supper - Prayer and medication will follow.
- Scouts are saving aluminum cans, bottles, and other items to be recycled. Proceeds will be used to cripple children.
- The outreach committee has enlisted 25 visitors to make calls on people who are not afflicted with any church.
- Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our church and community.

(Issue #2017-2)

KELLY'S KORNER - by Kelly Thompson

Kelly started square dancing in 2016 after being coerced by his sister. He admits that he would have never walked into the club on his own. He has since found a whole new way of looking at life, a community of new friends and personal confidence that didn't exist before.



Finding Hope In A Dance Hall

Hitting the Ground

I am not an avid bronco rider but have been knocked around to the point I never wanted to get back up. I spent the best part of twenty years as a dealership mechanic, went on to buy a small farm to run a few cows. Mixing with that, I spent 12 years driving a school bus and worked occasionally as a licensed school bus technician.

Through it all I tried twice to assemble a blended family and acquired two kids and have three of my own. We built our own house and shop on the farm and, with a lot of stress, I thought we were finally doing okay.

One winter's night an accident nearly took my two daughters. About three years later it all came apart when my wife stated she wanted a divorce. **I hit the dirt and hit it hard.**

Getting Up Again

Fast forward a few years. My sister invited me to a community dance. Three months later she sent me a message informing me that square dancing was starting up soon. At the time I was an 11 hour drive from home.

The next week I received the same message and was, again, still an 11 hour drive away. The third week I figured I should perhaps see what it was she was talking about. Maybe she needed a partner or something.

I have to admit that I would have never walked into a square dance club on my own. Not knowing anyone or what I was in for, I likely would have never become involved.

I have since found a whole new way of looking at life and a whack of new friends.

Square Dancing Is More Than A Dance

I have found square dancing to be so much more than simply dancing and almost not about dancing at all. I think any square dancer that has put in the effort would have to admit they got more out of it than they had put into it. What is even more profound is that if I can do it, anyone can!

I have gained personal confidence I didn't think existed to the point of being able to join into other groups without much anxiety. As one lady put it, "Square dancing is the world's best kept secret."

I have come to the conclusion that keeping one of the world's best activities a secret is bordering on being criminal.

One of the best aspects of square dancing is its safe, family-like atmosphere. Even before I could do much of the basics, the shared interest of the members was wearing down my resistance. Square dancing is hard work, a lot of walking in circles and not really going anywhere.

I never dreamt I would fall victim to the fun of square dancing or the expansion my life circle has taken.

In some ways I thought I was my best self, but square dancing has certainly made me better (although both of those points are subject to one's point of view).

I think those who have been bucked off the horses of life can testify: the one that drags you into a square dance club is putting the painful first stitch into a broken heart. The square dance family then puts in the rest.

The heart still hurts but it now is starting to work again. That is something I thought could never happen.

Can I get back onto the bronco we call life? Yes, I can. And even better, now it can also be said that I can dance.

(Issue #2014-1)

PHOTO AMBASSADORS

- by Grace & James Chen with help from daughter, Athena

About the Chens

James & Grace were born and raised in Taiwan, a scenic subtropical island (similar to the size of Vancouver Island) with a population of 23 million people. They met through an International Folk Dance Club in 1978, and married in 1982. They have two children, Athena and Stan, and two grandchildren, Damion and Nolan.

James obtained his electrical engineering degree from the Chung-Li University and was the principal engineer for a consulting company. Grace was most passionate about raising their children and fortunately she was able to stay home for several years before she started a career as a librarian in a public elementary school. Music and dance were always a great part of the lives of the Chen family members: going to operas/musicals, participating in choirs, and taking music and dance lessons are all activities that are near and dear to them.



Immigrating to Canada

The journey to their second homeland started in 1999 when James and Grace took the family for a vacation to western Canada. The trip was so wonderful that Athena affirmed her desire to attend university in Canada. Prompted by a sense of adventure and the passion to provide the best support/care for their children, James and Grace applied for immigrant status to Canada. The immigration approval process took two years, during which James led several projects domestic and abroad and had plenty of opportunity to practice his English. His company offered him early retirement just when the immigration was approved. Athena also got admitted to the University of Calgary around that time. Everything - the timing, the practice using English, and the retirement settlement - seemed to happen as if “God led the way for us to be here”.

Their Square Dance Story

The Chen family landed in Calgary in 2001, and James and Grace worked nights at a variety of jobs. **The first time Grace encountered square dancing was when a group of square dancers came to perform at Cochrane’s Bethany Care Centre where Grace worked in 2006.** Grace loved it! She knew that one day when their work schedules allowed it, and her English improved, they would join. In the meantime, she researched online to learn about square dancing.

In 2008, while both were working nights for the Calgary School Board as janitors, James and Grace decided to advance their new careers by challenging the *‘Fifth Class Engineer’s Certificate of Competency’* exam – passing this exam could lead to future promotions and day time employment. Studying a trade in English was hard - especially for Grace - so they joined a study group. They met every Saturday, and soon James was leading the group. **Their hard work paid off: eleven out of the 12 people in the study group passed the test! That kind of success rate was never heard of before or since.**

Finally, in 2009, James and Grace joined a Calgary Square Dance club. Five years later, they are Advanced-2 Square Dancers and Phase III+ Round Dancers. They are quick to tell you that their years of International Folk Dancing helped them to learn.

Photos, Photos and Photos . . .

Soon after joining, James and Grace snapped pictures and emailed them out to those people in the photos. The photos were well received and appreciated, so they kept taking more and more of them. It didn’t take long for their email list to grow, because they went to as many dances as possible. It gave James a chance, too, to continue using some of the skills he picked up when he was part of a photo club in Taiwan.

Today James and Grace are considered by many to be exceptional ambassadors for our great activity. They continue to willingly give up dance time in order to take photos - whether asked to or on their own initiative, and spend considerable time downloading and emailing out their results. They say that it gives them a chance to repay others the kindness and encouragement that was extended to them when they immigrated to Calgary.

(Issue #2017-9)

A GLIMPSE OF THE PAST

This column features excerpts from the book “As I See Saw It –Bob Osgood”, compiled and edited by Paul Moore, and reprinted by permission. Bob Osgood was a square dancer, caller, and publisher of the most widely read magazine on square dancing, Sets in Order, which changed its name to Square Dancing in 1969. He was the president of Sets In Order/American Square Dance Society which provided funding and leadership for many square dance projects. He established the Silver Spur award which was given to people who made outstanding contributions to the square dance activity and he founded the Caller’s Hall of Fame. He was a charismatic leader who attracted the finest in square dancing to his causes. It was largely because of his leadership that CALLERLAB and LEGACY were formed.

Look for this 600+ page book on Amazon.ca (cost \$26). Would make a great CHRISTMAS PRESENT!



Editor’s Note: Last issue we saw how Lloyd “Pappy” Shaw took it upon himself to train callers and was instrumental in establishing caller education. He started back in the 1930’s, suspended classes during WWII, and resumed in 1946. These caller classes led to the realization that classes for dancers were also needed. Up until that time, dances were “one night stand” type of dancing, with no time for learning styling and smooth dancing.

The First Square Dance Classes

A bell must have rung simultaneously in the minds of those callers who attended (Colorado Springs 1947 callers’ school). We all wanted to share with our dancers the experience we had in Colorado Springs. In the way we’d been operating over the years, we had developed little or no continuity. With brand new members entering our groups each time we met, there had been no opportunity to “fine tune” the dancers, making it necessary to start all over at the beginning each time. While it was obviously not practical to round up a group of individuals in our home areas and work with them as we had worked eight hours a day for six consecutive days in Colorado, **we could recruit a group of potential dancers, meet with them 2 or 3 hours once a week, and develop the whole class, without interruption, into a group that danced well together.** In this way they would be able to enjoy the same satisfying experience their callers had experienced.

In September, 1947, I tried an experiment of teaching a class, just to see if it would work. I selected a number of dancers from my Griffith Park group and invited them to try out a six week session in which we would learn timing and posture and grace. I charged \$5.00 per person for the entire set of six classes, payable in advance. The class was closed to new dancers after the first night so we did not have to reteach anything.

As I had learned from my experimental classes **six weeks was plenty of time to teach people to move automatically to the calls and in time to the music.** There was also time to work on styling and graceful dancing. I could also introduce some couple dances, such as the schottische and varsouviana. In these classes, we tried to do the things we had learned from Pappy, teaching people how to dance first.

Publicity for the first class consisted of an advertisement in the local little throw away papers here in Beverly Hills. The location for the class was the Beverly Hills High School gymnasium. The class was scheduled to begin at 7:00, so I planned to arrive at 6:00 to make sure the gymnasium was set up for dancing. Also, we used live music since there were few records available that were suitable for square dancing. As I recall I had a three-piece band for these classes. **I was amazed to see a line of people that went around the building and down the steps and the sidewalk to the street.** All of the people were dressed for square dancing: The ladies in brightly colored long dresses and the men in the typical blue jeans with the cuffs rolled up, checkered shirt, and cowboy boots. There were no shops to buy dance costumes in so the girls improvised or made their own costumes.



Dewey G. Mears Photograph Archive
Square Dancing in Austin, Texas 1948

The newspapers carried stories about it [square dancing], Hollywood was including it in the movies and classes were starting up all over our area. My alma mater, Beverly Hills High School, not wishing to be left out, added it to its adult education program and took me on as the caller/teacher.

Classes were a going thing all over Los Angeles area, and around the country, and the square dance activity was growing beyond our wildest imaginations.

The increase in the number of square dancers led to an increase of the number of callers in the area. Each caller wanted to teach his own class and thereby start a club. The number of clubs mushroomed and joined the associations which helped with the organizing of clubs and sponsored large festivals every month.

(Issue #2017-3)

SORE HANDS - Anonymous

*Reprinted with permission from Bill & Jean Wood, editors of "The Well Rounded Square",
Thompson-Shuswap & Okanagan Square & Round Dance News*

This is an open letter to all Square Dancers whether you are new this year or have been dancing for decades, you have all met me. I am SORE HANDS. **You can't see me, but you can affect how much I enjoy a dance.**

Do you squeeze the back of a hand with your thumb on a promenade or a circle left? **Do you grab** a thumb and twist on a swing through? **Do you smack hands** on a weave the ring or up to the middle and back?

If you do any of these things, please stop and think. Be aware of how strong your grip is or of how hard you hit someone else's hand. Square dancing is about touching hands and lives, not proving who is stronger. And yes, we understand that newer dancers are nervous and forget to let go or hold too hard, but a little self-awareness goes a long way.

Sore Hands can happen to anyone at any age and I could be anyone in your square. Next time you dance, please, stop and think and have a care how you come into contact with everyone. Gentle touch without grasp or grip is the way to go.

And please don't forget my cousin, Sore Shoulders, who can be hurt by a sharp tug on a hand or by not letting go soon enough in a right and left grand or swing through. Please dancers, dance through life with a gentle touch.

Thank you, SORE HANDS

(Issue #2023-1)

A New Song: THE ART OF THE SQUARE

- by Brent Daignault, Dancer, Calgary

We take to the floor, like brushes, our feet
Leave a trail of color, a Quarter to Sweep
We're painting a picture, with every step we take
In the art of the square, there's no time for cake

(Chorus) Dosado, allemande left, weave the ring
Separate, go around two and now swing
The art of the squares, it's a dance in four pairs
With brushstrokes and color, we sing

We flow and we glide, shadows form on the floor
Silhouettes of ourselves, Pass Thru much more
We're chasing the rhythm, with every step we take
In the art of the square, there's no time to fake



We spin and we twirl, music fills our hearts
Our bodies in sync, as the Ladies Chain starts
We're leaving our mark, with every step we take
In the art of the square, there's no time to shake

We dance through the night, until the morning light
Our spirits lift, as we Veer to the Right
We're blending the paint, with every step we take
In the art of the square, there's no time to ache

As we join hands, a Circle Left of friends
We know we'll be back, with many Extends
We're thanking each one, with every step we take
In the art of the square, there's no time to forsake

(Issue #2012-5)

WHAT ARE SQUARE DANCE PROGRAMS?

Sources - Excerpts from:

“Square Dance Programs - What’s the Difference” by Clark Baker, Belmont, MA, Western Square Dancing website and “Introduction to Challenge Square Dancing” by Lynette Bellini and Kathy Godfrey.

The Program Designers

CALLERLAB is the international association of square dance callers. They are active callers who work on committees and attend annual Conventions, to make square dancing a popular worldwide recreation. In addition to recruiting, promoting and maintaining the activity, they also maintain a suggested call list of dancing programs, from Mainstream through C-3A.

Current Dance Programs

★ Mainstream	★ A1 (Advanced 1)	★ C1 (Challenge 1)	★ C3A (non-CALLERLAB)
★ Plus	★ A2 (Advanced 2)	★ C2 (Challenge 2)	★ C4 (non-CALLERLAB)

Each dance program builds on the skills learned in the previous dance programs.

Levels vs. Dance Programs

At CALLERLAB, the levels are referred to as “dance programs”. The term “level” brings with it the idea that being a higher level dancer makes one somehow better, and that most should aspire to move up the levels. Despite at least 15 years of calling them dance programs, most people still call them levels.

The dance programs do not specify the degree of difficulty. There can be Hard Mainstream (eg. APD - All Position Dancing, DBD - Dance by Definition, or EA - Extended Applications), and Easy C4.

Mainstream Program

The Mainstream program has 68 calls. It provides a wide variety of calls, including most of the building block calls. Many of the Mainstream calls were, and still are, used in traditional square dancing, and have been around for more than 50 years.

Plus Program

Plus adds about 30 calls, most of which were created in the 1970’s. Some of these are large pattern calls like Relay The Deucey, Spin Chain And Exchange The Gears, and Load the Boat. Often the calls are taught and danced from one position only.

Advanced Program

In some areas, A1 is a separate program from A2 and in other areas the whole thing is simply called Advanced, and you have to learn the 60 or so calls on the list. Advanced introduces a few concepts (eg. As Couples, All 4 Couples, All 8) which can apply to many calls, and change how they are done. There are less singing calls at Advanced.

Challenge Program

Challenge dancing is square dancing taken to its puzzle-solving extreme. If you have a bent for algorithmic thinking and problem solving (logic, linguistics, mathematics, engineering, science, etc.) Challenge dancing is worth a look.

This program is the logical extension with more of everything. More concepts (about 100 by C4), more calls (about 1000 by C4), and the addition of “phantoms” (imaginary dancers with whom you Square Thru and Load The Boat and who are hard to see and little help in pulling you into position). There are few singing calls at Challenge.

WHAT IS ROUND DANCING?

*Source - Excerpts from: “Round Dance - Phase Rating System”
by Harold & Meredith Sears [www/rounddancing.net](http://www.rounddancing.net)*

Round Dancing is a form of social ballroom dancing in which the steps are choreographed precisely to the music, and those steps are announced by a “cuer”, as we dance. The rhythms are the familiar rhythms - waltz, two-step, foxtrot, cha-cha, rumba, jive and others.

The Program Designers

ROUNDALAB is the International Association of Round Dance Teachers, Inc. They have created the Phase Rating System of round dancing to provide a vehicle for rating the round dance figures according to degree of complexity. Each phase has a specific syllabus of basics - steps, movements, and actions.

Phase I

This is the beginner level, mainly seen in two-step and waltz. For instance, a simple forward or back step is considered Phase I, as is the side, close, rock and recover. Phase I also includes some simple figures of more than one step, such as the waltz box and the balance.

Phase II

Phase II is the easy level. It includes many figures that take a full measure of music or even more. Where the simple box was Phase I, the progressive box (two measures) and the left turning box (four measures) are Phase II. They are phase low because they have been around a long time, and dancers have been traditionally learning them first. So Phase II round dancing is sometimes "old" and not necessarily "easy".

Phase III

This is essentially a transition level, used to introduce additional rhythms beyond the two-step and waltz, and of course to introduce new steps and figures. At Phase III, you can begin to dance foxtrot, cha-cha, rumba, and most other rhythms as well.

Phase IV

Phase IV, the intermediate level, builds on the transition to the advanced level. New rhythms are introduced, such as samba and paso doble, another 20 or 30 figures (varies with each rhythm) are added to our growing repertoire, and the use of the entire body becomes more and more important. Many figures at this level simply cannot be performed without the use of stretch, sway, rotation, and rise and fall. So body mechanics becomes just as important as the steps in the overall flow of the dance.

Phase V

This takes us into the advanced level where we continue to add sophisticated steps, step combinations, and body movements. Some of these new figures are modifications or extensions of lower level figures. For instance, the waltz weave is a Phase IV figure; the natural weave is Phase V. The open natural turn in Phase IV; the running open natural is syncopated and Phase V.

Phase VI

This is the highest level within round dancing, and it is the level with the greatest breadth. There is no "end" to this level because new material is continually being written. This continued opportunity for growth is what draws us on and makes round dancing endlessly fascinating.

Phase VI figures are complex and sophisticated. For instance, the "fregolina" figure is seven measures and 28 steps long, and the "chasse cape" can run for eight measures and 36 steps (including some syncopation).

WHAT IS CLOGGING? - Source: Unknown

Clogging began in the Appalachian Mountains brought to America by Irish, Scottish, English and Dutch Germans who settled there in the mid 1700s. Native and African Americans, as well as today's Canadian step, tap and jazz dance have all influenced clogging.

The word "clog" means "time" in Gaelic. Clogging is danced keeping time to the downbeat. Many people think clogging is a dance performed in wooden shoes, which is not the case at all. Cloggers wear double taps on leather soled oxfords or running shoes. Tap shoes have a single tap attached to the toe and heel. Clogging taps have another piece riveted to that piece, and these "double taps" make more of a jingle sound.

Clogging differs from tap dancing in one basic way. In clogging, the heel keeps the downbeat. It also differs greatly from Irish Step dancing. In clogging, feet are placed side by side, and in Irish Step the feet are placed one in front of the other, toes turned out as in 5th position (ballet).

Clogging is one of the few dances considered a sport, forming teams and competing in area, state and national events.

WHAT IS CONTRA?

Source - Excerpts from: "Dancing Contra" by Don Ward, American Square Dance Magazine, August 1996.

Historically, Contra dances are older than squares. They come from the English Longways dances dating back to the 1600's and perhaps earlier. The term *contra* is derived from the word *contrary*. The dance formation consists of two contrary lines of dancers, literally and physically opposite (contrary) to each other.

The Contra dances of today are not relics of a bygone era. They are a delightful and uncomplicated form of dancing. For the most part, they use 12 to 15 common square dance movements. If one is looking for some challenge they need look no farther than today's Contra - a delightful social dance where you dance with not just eight people in a square but 15 to 20 people in a line referred to as a "set".

Contras are gaining popularity throughout the dance community because the dancer can dance in unison with the music, much like a round dance but using the square dance movements they are familiar with. My suggestion is, try 'em. You'll like 'em.

WHAT IS HEXAGON DANCING?

Source: Excerpts from Clark Baker's Abstract, Square Games, November 2002

Hexagon squares is a global twist on normal square dancing. Square dancing is usually danced by four couples who start each sequence in a square formation. Hexagon dancing uses six couples - 3 heads and 3 sides - who start each sequence in a perfect hexagon formation. In summary:

- All symmetric choreography works.
- Dance so that the timing is the same as in normal squares.
- When you work in the very center, under achieve (turn 2/3 the usual amount).
- The shape of your set will usually be either a "Y" or a Triangle.
- You can transition between "Y" and Triangle as needed.
- Each 4-dancer call will have you naturally end in a "Y" or Triangle.
- Go 4 hands on Right And Left Grand and Promenade the next dancer.
- Promenade to the nearest home position of your type.

Editor's Note: Clark Baker started dancing in 1974 at MIT's Tech Squares. In 1976, for his undergraduate thesis, Clark wrote a computer program to generate "smooth, flowing, danceable" Plus and Advanced material. He started calling in 1977, and in the mid-1980's he developed several programs to assist in writing choreography.

(Issue #2020-2) **GRANDPA LEARNS TO SQUARE DANCE (OR DOES HE?)**

- excerpt from American Squaredance, June 1990

My wife, Jackie, and my stepdaughter Phyllis, being experienced square dancers, and loving it, decided I should become a square dancer too. They wanted me to enjoy one of the better things of life. We used the democratic way to decide my future. We voted. I lost two to one. They knew a square dance caller who was starting a class for beginners, and believe me I was an absolute zero beginner. I warned them, if things didn't go well, my first lesson would be my last.

"You'll do just fine" Phyllis assured me. I was just as sure, I wouldn't do just fine. I had a negative attitude, and two left feet.



When the night of the first lesson arrived we drove to the hall, parked and went inside. Seated at a small table just inside the door was Bette, wife of Ron, the teacher and caller. She smiled and held out her hand. I shook it. That was my first mistake. I was supposed to put two dollars in it. So I did. I paid two dollars to go through all the torture I anticipated.

I looked around the hall. Young boys and girls outnumbered us oldsters two to one. I had joined the youth movement. I couldn't see any other grandpas. I panicked, but Jackie had a firm grip on my arm, and dragged me out on the floor, where we joined three other couples. Ron the caller looked down on us with pity, and began his lecture. Some of it was a foreign language. I understand some Spanish. It wasn't Spanish. After some instruction, something about doe-se-doe-ing, alamaning and promenading he started the music.

I became so confused and fouled up the square so bad, I committed the almost unpardonable sin of square dancing. I walked out of the square. I was going home. I could find easier ways to make a fool of myself than this. Some of the others talked me into staying. They said I was allowed to make mistakes. So I stayed and again joined the square.

After going through some strange maneuvers I found myself out of position, and without a partner. I looked around. A lady way over there was waving at me. I waved back, then I looked a little closer. She wasn't waving, she was beckoning. I hurried over and we began to promenade.

"Where is your home?" she asked. "In Layton," I answered. "No, I mean your home in the square." "Oh, I don't know. When the others get in place, we'll take what's left," I said. "Good thinking," she said. I beamed.

"Take a break," Ron finally announced. We all joined hands in a circle, bent down, then back up, and said "than...k yo...u. What for? I thought.

I needed a rest, so I started for a bench; one of the girls threw her arms around me and gave me a hug. Then two more hugged me right there before Jackie and everybody. I looked around to see if Jackie had observed this hugging. She was hugging all the men and boys. I hadn't seen this much hugging since the last funeral I went to. Did somebody die? Maybe the way I moved, they thought I was dead, but nobody was crying.

When Jackie got all her hugging done she walked up to me. "A fine spectacle you made of yourself, hugging all the men and boys," I said. "Oh, come on Lowell, everybody hugs at square dances. It's harmless," she said. "They do? Well then I'd like to square dance with Dolly Pardon," I said sarcastically. She hit me.

Ron is a good teacher, but I'm a poor learner. When he says doe-se-doe your partner I'm not through alamaning my corner. He told us not to spread our square out too much, to keep it smaller. I told him the reason ours was spread out, they were all hunting for me.

We are supposed to learn sixty-five basic movements to become a mainstream dancer. In five months the others have learned fifty. I think I have learned about fifteen.

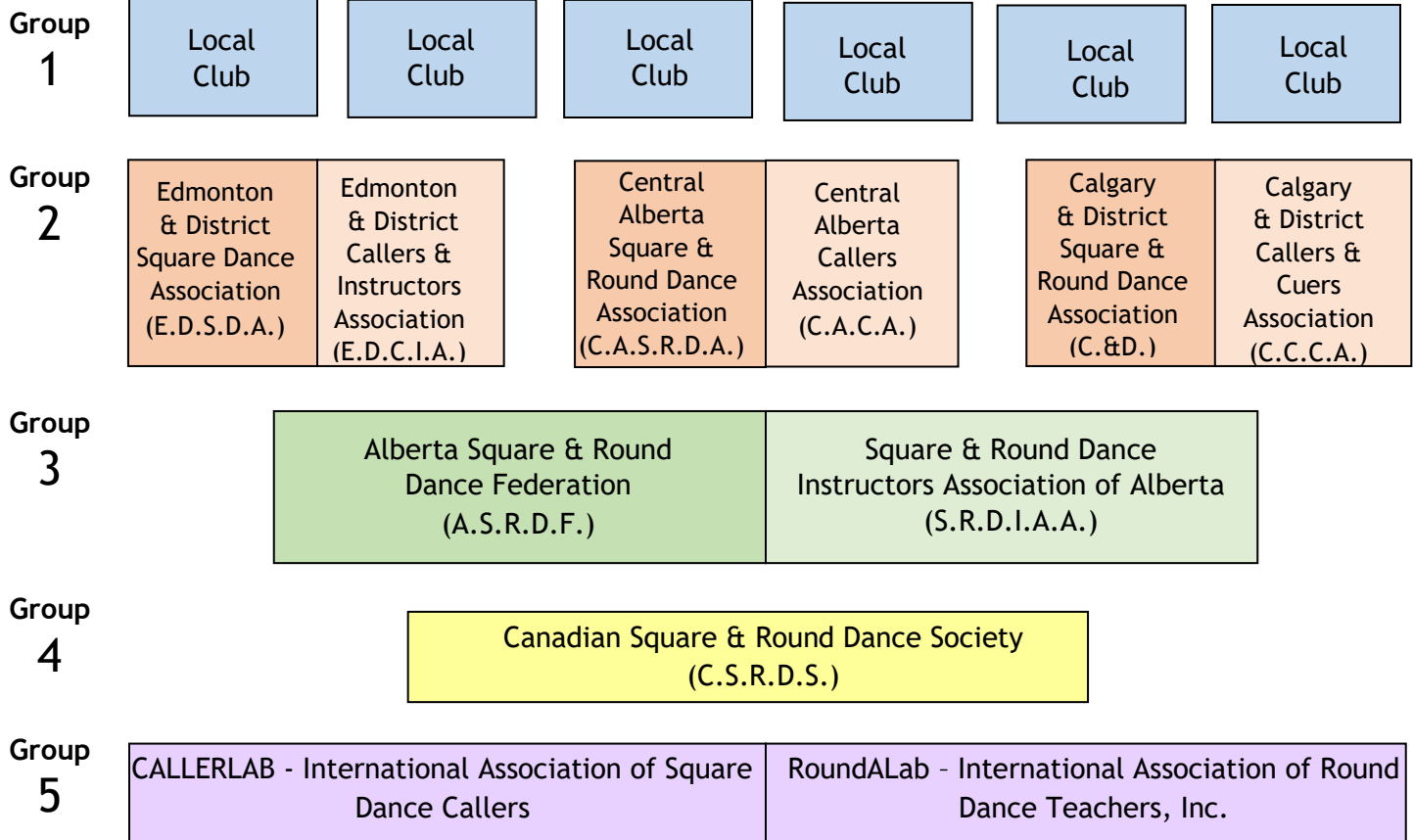
I am not a graceful dancer. When Ron calls a California Twirl mine is more like an elephant twirl. I do an ocean wave like we were in a hurricane. When he says stir the bucket I look for a spoon. Ron makes a mistake once in a while too. He says, "Now you should be back home with your partner". Well, I'm not back home and I'm not with my partner, so I'm one up on him there. The other dancers seem to like me though, as long as I'm not in their square.

Sometimes it seems everybody in the square is mixed up but me. I wish they would try to do better. I'll just have to be tolerant of them. At the end of the tip one of the girls will hug me and say, "You've done good". I love 'em. Bless their little lying lips. The others try to guide me. I end up facing wrong and someone turns me around. I find myself without a partner. She hunts till she finds me.

The messages have to go from the caller, through my ears to my brain, then to my feet and hands. With the others the messages don't go to their brain - they go directly to their hands and feet, so it's no wonder I can't keep up.

I'm still out there struggling, but do you know something? I'm having fun, and I love it. Thank...You!

(Issue #2016-4)

THE BIG PICTURE - WHERE DO YOU FIT IN? - by Claudia Littlefair, Editor

- 1. LOCAL GROUP:** The first group of our organization are the **Local Clubs**. They provide the members for ALL the other groups. All of the groups are comprised of volunteers, and all of the groups support and help the Local Clubs, either directly or indirectly.
- 2. ZONE GROUP:** Of the seven Zones that make up Alberta, three have active **Districts**: Edmonton & District, Central Alberta, and Calgary & District. Each district has a **Dance Association**, comprised of dancer representatives from Local Clubs, and a **Callers/Instructors Association**, comprised of local callers, cuers and instructors, and membership is voluntary.
- 3. PROVINCIAL GROUP:** The object of the **Alberta Square & Round Dance Federation** is to promote square and round dancing and the enjoyment thereof in Alberta. Members are dancer and caller/cuer representatives from each of the Zones. One of Federation's functions is to loan the seed money for the annual provincial conventions. The object of the **Square & Round Dance Instructors Association of Alberta** is to foster education for new and experienced instructors and provide a province wide forum. Membership is voluntary.
- 4. NATIONAL GROUP:** The **Canadian Square & Round Dance Society** is active in supporting and promoting our five dance forms - square, round, contra, clogging and line; assisting with national festivals; coordinating third party liability insurance; and providing a national voice. Members are representatives from the provincial Federations.
- 5. INTERNATIONAL GROUP:** **CALLERLAB** and **RoundALab** are international organizations that foster the art of square and round dancing by improving calling, cueing and teaching skills, and by promoting the dance activity. Membership is voluntary.