

DANCERgram

December 2020



THIS &
THAT

... for the latest news in the square and round dance community.

This publication is a sub-set of the *DANCERgram*, which provides Square and Round Dance news for the West Coast of Florida AND is the official Newsletter of the West Coast Square & Round Dancers Association (formerly the *West Coast Dancer*).

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West Coast Association President's Message:



These are trying times, and I know everyone is anxious to get back to dancing,

To my knowledge, we only have two clubs square dancing in the West Coast Association area at the current time, which are Temple Twirlers and Snells Bo's & Bell's in Dunedin. Temple Twirlers reduced their schedule to twice a month, and the Snells are dancing every week. They are following all the COVID guidelines, and so far, there have not been any problems.

The Palace Promenaders in Arcadia finally have a place for their square and round dances. The hall was sold earlier this year, but Mary Dow and Mary Claman were able to make arrangements with the new owners to use the hall one night a week. However, they had to change their dance night from Saturday to Friday. They will be starting with Rounds only, cued by Judy Barnhill. They will begin square dancing at a later date when it is deemed safe to do so.

Suncoast Squares in St. Petersburg have been trying different things to keep their members active and involved. They have a Zoom call every Tuesday night, which does not include dancing. They have themes for each of their meetings and dress appropriately for the theme, share news and talents, and they have even been doing hula-hoop dancing in an area park. We are saddened to hear that their caller, Mike Cox, and his wife, Mary, have retired and are moving to the Carolinas by the end of the month. The club had a farewell dance for them on Sunday, November 15th, with approximately 40 people in attendance.

We are pleased to know that we have several new callers moving into our area – Don Batcheldor from Massachusetts, Scotty Sharrer from Delray Beach, and Sheila Terhune from the Indianapolis area. There are more details on each of them further down in this issue of the *DANCERgram This & That*. As you prepare your schedules for next year, please include our year-round callers and cuers, and check out these new callers!

As you may know, Buttons & Bows of Lakeland is 68 years old. They are one of the oldest clubs in the state of Florida. They recently held their annual Fall meeting. Their main topic of discussion was whether to fold the club or stay open. The majority vote was to remain open for another year and see if they can rebuild their membership.

I hope each of our clubs is developing a plan to return to dancing so we can hit the ground running to bring start up again!

Penny Green
President

Florida Federation

Florida Federation President's Message

Well, here it is November, and as of this writing, two things are pretty clear. One, COVID-19 is still around, and two, Square Dancing, not so much. There is some dancing in the Northwest, mainly advanced. Some in the Southeast. None to my knowledge on the West Coast or Central. Here in the Northeast, we still have only one club dancing. None of our other clubs are dancing as they have no place to dance. The Moose Promenaders are dancing at one of our local Moose clubs. All the other Northeast clubs usually dance at either a school, church, or senior center, and one of these locations will allow any outside activities at their venues. It looks like it will be the first of the year before we get to dance at more clubs,

Please be advised that the Florida Federation or any Florida association will/would never request you to donate gift cards to any organization for any reason. A past board member of NEFSARDA received an email, and also a Caller received an email requesting some gift cards to donate to veterans at hospice and palliative care units. This is a scam!

After much thought and consideration, the Florida Federation, Florida Callers Association, and Florida Cuers Association have made the hard decision to cancel the

2021 Florida State Square and Round Dance Convention. These are unprecedented times with COVI-10. Some might say this was an unwise decision or the right decision. I'm sure none of us really know. We can only make what we feel is a safe decision. Richard and Carol Douget have agreed to be the 2022 convention chairman. Everything will remain the same except the date. Ribbons already purchased will be honored for 2022.

The Florida Federation of Square Dancers had to cancel our Working Weekend planned for the middle of May. At the time of this writing, we have picked a date to reschedule.

As most festivals have canceled, so has the NE Fall Festival planned for November. This decision was not made lightly. If you have already purchased your ribbons, you may:

- 1) Donate the purchase price of your ribbon to the NE Association
- 2) Keep your ribbon or entrance to the 2021 Fall Festival
- 3) Request a full refund

In order to receive a refund, you MUST send your ribbon with your name, address, and phone number to Joan Amarino, 6155 Suwannee Road, Jacksonville, FL 32217.

www.floridasquaredance.com, do you know what this website is all about? This is our official website for the Florida Federation of Square Dancers and has EVERYTHING (almost) regarding information for Florida square dancing. Please check us out.

We are continuing to look for a Webmaster to make sure the outstanding website Bruce Morgan has worked to design for the Florida Federation. Are you a computer geek? Do you enjoy working with the designing of websites or have the knowledge to upkeep our website? Bruce Morgan will be happy to work with the person who would be willing to take over the upkeep of our website. Please consider becoming the Florida Federation of Square Dancers Webmaster; email Bruce Morgan for more information or any questions you may have; brucemorgan@embarqmail.com. IF THIS IS SOMETHING, YOU THINK YOU WOULD LIKE TO DO BUT MAY NOT HAVE ALL THE KNOWLEDGE NEEDED. I am positive that Bruce will continue to work with you even after you take it over.

I would like to thank YOU, our Square and Round Dancers, for all the work and support you give to our activity. I look forward to seeing you at the 67th Florida State Square Dance Convention in 2022.

Linda Tester, President
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CALLERLAB Viewpoints

By Mike Seastrom

Let's restart with the Social Square Dance Curriculum

Members of CALLERLAB and the American Callers Association have struggled to find common ground on an easier to learn program for non-dancers to enter our activity for many years now.

The CALLERLAB Basic Program is remarkably close to the Sets In Order Basic 50 Program that we used in the early years of square dancing in the 50's and the early '60s. There was a big explosion starting in the early 1960s of calls written by callers and dancers, and chaos followed. CALLERLAB was formed in the early 1970s and tackled that chaos.

CALLERLAB organized and standardized our programs. Over the years, Mainstream and Plus have become the primary programs that new dancers must learn to join our activity instead of the Basic Program as it was for so many years.

In 1985, many in CALLERLAB recognized this problem, and a major motion was voted on to make an easier entry program for new dancers. The split on the vote was almost even, but the motion to use an easier program was defeated by only a few votes.

Many callers were disappointed, and some of our leaders left CALLERLAB and formed the American Callers Association. The program they developed has less calls, but it is a combination of Basic, Mainstream, and Plus calls, and many have strongly felt there are still too many calls for new dancers to learn before they can join our clubs.

The Pandemic of 2020 has had the most severe impact on our activity since World War II. Nothing since that time has just stopped everything in its tracks. Many have made "lemonade out of lemons" by continuing our dancing and social connections through the wonder of the internet, but more than half of our dancers, callers, and leaders have not had a dancing connection since March of 2020.

Returning to dancing, as we knew it, will take time and some serious adjustment. To bring us back together and to be able to have new dancers join us again, we need to come together with an easier entry program and allow dancers to stay in that program for as long as they chose to. We will still have more involved programs for those who want them. We just need to open our doors to new dancers more than once a year with less calls, all the fun, so many of us enjoy, and no pressure to keep learning more calls and programs.

This is the time we need to come together more than any time I can remember.

I sincerely respect every caller that has ever had the courage and motivation to call and teach new dancers over the years. Every one of those callers has brought so much joy and fun into the lives of those they have trained and called for.

Many of those callers have brought that joy and fun at their personal expense of family time, occupational involvement, and their own health. So many of our callers have passed on, retired, or just burnt out, that we need to teach the art and joy of calling to a whole new generation.

CALLERLAB has provided a curriculum and an amazing Square Dance Knowledgebase (<http://knowledge.callerlab.org>) for new caller education, and there are many callers all over the world actively mentoring new callers.

CALLERLAB is again providing positive leadership and guidance to preserve and build both square dancing and our calling ranks. The CALLERLAB Board of Governors now endorses the use of Social Square Dancing (formally called Sustainable Square Dancing) as a way of getting current dancers back on the floor, having fun, and enjoying the social connections that are so important in life.

Social Square Dancing is a simpler yet fast-paced approach for bringing new and existing dancers into our square dance community. It provides the prospect of having a well thought out plan in place for multiple starts in a year.

Originally put together by Jerry Story and the Social Square Dance Committee, this system has the capability to bring the fun of our dance to more people in a shorter period.

Information is abundant for callers to teach this system and a large base of choreography that can be used by new and experienced callers alike. This information can be found on the CALLERLAB Square Dance Knowledgebase listed above.

When there are multiple starts every year, any dancer that falls behind or has to take a break, due to the many diversions life can toss our way; it's very easy to join again and get back to friends, fun, and music.

My hope is that all square dance leadership can join for the good of the activity and move us forward. Let's work as a team to re-energize square dancing again as we emerge from this global crisis. This is such a great opportunity! I can't wait to dance, teach, and call again!

Reprint from *American Square Dance* – November 2020

On the Record SQUARES

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Music Review November 2020 by Buddy Weaver

ALTERNATING TIPS

Recently, an online meeting of local dance association leadership and prominent callers/teachers was held. This meeting produced many constructive thoughts on how square dancing will look when we are able to restart – post COVID-19 shutdown. There is tremendous support from both dancer leadership and callers for a destination program that would allow for non-dancers to become full club members in a much shorter period of time than it currently is. The most discussed “program” is SSD, Social Square Dancing.

Some folks have asked why SSD? After all, it is not a “recognized program” as legislated by CALLERLAB. Why not Mainstream? Why not Basics? This article offers facts for the purpose of answering those questions.

1. SSD compared to Mainstream. To form the basis of this comparison, I will resource from CALLERLAB, the institution that founded Mainstream and has, by committee, managed said program since its inception in 1976. *Mainstream has sixty-seven calls plus twenty-four subsets. An example of a call with a subset is Circulate that has five listed subsets of named dancers, couples, all eight, single file, split/box. Any veteran teacher will tell you this is not a single call to teach in one lesson; that is, easily six different calls as split and box do not mean the same thing. *Mainstream recommended teaching time is fifty-nine hours. With an average learning window of ninety-minutes, this requires forty weeks of consecutive teaching/learning. While this sounds simple, there is a problem that few are talking about – if the student misses one week, they are no longer in consecutive learning. In reality, when missed classes are taken into consideration, whether missed by the student or missed because the hall was closed, the learning window must expand beyond fifty-nine hours. To properly learn Mainstream in a relaxed setting, it would take one year. *By contrast, SSD has fifty calls in a recommended twelve-weeks. Use the above example of dancers who miss a lesson, thereby expanding the learning window; you would properly learn SSD in a relaxed setting within three months. Further-more, for the dancer who has missed, it is easier to catch up when the total number of calls is fifty versus sixty-seven plus twenty-four subsets.
2. SSD compared to Basics. Again, I will resource from CALLERLAB for this comparison.*Basics, comprised of A and B, recommends forty-four hours to

learn forty-eight calls plus twenty-one subsets (really sixty-nine calls). At ninety-minutes per class, this is thirty consecutive lessons.

*SSD is again shorter in-class time using fewer total calls. It also incorporates some of the more popular Mainstream calls that Basics does not. More than anything else, SSD is not part of the CALLERLAB escalating program series. Basics have since it's inception been a stepping stone to a higher program – Mainstream. In many parts of the world, Mainstream is only a stepping stone into Plus. Whether or not the programs were meant to be used in this way, the reality is, they are. SSD may be our chance to “reset” this reality. SSD is a club level. It doesn't replace Mainstream or Plus. It isn't a tool to get people in the door then extend classes to make them Mainstream or Plus.

In just the same way that Mainstream clubs offer Plus tips and Plus clubs offer A-1 tips, the SSD club can offer a Mainstream, or Plus tip. We can keep Mainstream and Plus dancers happy in a dance setting while growing your clubs at SSD.

If you haven't read my previous articles on SSD, please visit buddyweaver.com and click on the “articles.” Find me on Facebook on the following pages:

BuddyWeaver, Blue Star Square Dance Music, New Hi Hat Square Dance Music, and Rawhide Square dance music.

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All Things Considered

By Ed Foote

Things I am Thankful for in Square Dancing

1. Dancers who donate their time to serve as officers of clubs and state federations. This requires a lot of work with very little recognition. Square dancing would be down the drain without these volunteers.
2. Dancers who assist at Handicapable clubs. These people have a lot of love in their hearts. The same goes for those who call for these groups.
3. Callers donate their time to call without pay at National Conventions, state conventions, and charity events.
4. Callers in caller organizations who voluntarily give up a Saturday or Sunday every month to meet and improve their calling skills.
5. Dancers who help at Beginners Classes. Week after week, people volunteer so that clubs can be maintained with new blood.

6. Callers who teach beginners classes. Without them, our activity would die.
7. Dancers and callers in exhibition groups provide uplifting entertainment at the National Convention and state conventions. It takes a lot of time in rehearsal to prepare the routines, and we all get great enjoyment watching their performances.
8. Music producers, who have provided outstanding music over the years, and in the last decade have only broken even or lost money. Dancers are inspired by great music, and we sure get a lot of it.
9. Dancers who volunteer at local and state publications, thereby keeping everyone informed about what is going on in our activity.
10. The countless friends one makes while square dancing. Because of festivals and conventions, In addition to one or more home clubs, square dancers likely have more friends than anyone in any other activity.
11. The square dance activity itself. The combination of countless friends from all walks of life, opportunities to travel and dance in other states and countries, and beneficial exercise for both body and mind make square dancing one of the greatest activities in the world.

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For over a year and a half, we have pleaded for new subscribers, renewal subscribers, and advertisers. While a number of dancers/callers have responded, we do not have enough income to make the *Zip Coder* viable. Express Press has been subsidizing the *Zip Coder* for over a year to try to make it viable.

Therefore, it is with a heavy heart that we must say that the September 2020 issue was the final *Zip Coder* produced by DSL Promotions.

We have a few checks that we have received since the September issue. We will be returning them to the issuers soon. Anybody who feels they are due a refund, please let us know, and we will send you a check.

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CALLERLAB Viewpoints

By Lisa Seastrom

Virtual Acts of Kindness

Society's recognition of the value of kindness is growing. This is evident in a time of shutdowns and forced isolation by observing the increasing amount of humanitarian start-up organizations. Kind people from everywhere are using whatever they have available to them in order to help others. Perhaps this has always been the way, but due to the overwhelming exposure through television and social media, we are able to see the number of ever-growing examples. Kindness and the Internet could become a trend.

In these times of isolation and shutdowns, there's hardly a more important quality appearing in the human spirit than kindness.

Why is kindness so important? Has there ever been a time when we needed it more than right now?

Kindness is defined as the quality of being friendly, generous, and considerate. Affection, gentleness, warmth, concern, and care are words that are associated with kindness. It has been shown in studies that practicing kindness is beneficial to the health of the giver and the receiver. Thus, the expression, "It is better to give than to receive." We know one of the ways to practice kindness is noticing when people could use a helping hand.

Right now, we can certainly use more than a few random acts of kindness; we need a movement! The Internet and video conferencing platforms such as Zoom may be giving us that movement. With so many of us missing the activity we love so much, being kind means reaching out to participate in any type of social connection possible with those that share our love for dancing. It does seem strange after so many consecutive years of physically interacting with hundreds or maybe thousands of square dancers; it should all come to a stop. One of the kindest things we can do as members of this community is to reach out to someone.

The Internet is taking hold of our lives, but for many dancers, it's in a good way. After our Zoom virtual dances, I tend to reflect on the number of dancers participating that tell us how much they miss us as well as the activity. If we can stop someone from feeling so isolated, we are performing a virtual act of kindness. We encourage more callers and dance leaders to sponsor virtual square dance events. We believe it will have a great impact on keeping our activity alive in addition to making someone's day. And wouldn't it be great if we could bring non-dancers to our activity?

Our society cannot function without kindness. People helping people is imperative to helping us get through this pandemic and recessed economy;

kindness is key if we ever want to see our activity again in person. It is compassion that inspires us to connect with someone we have been missing. Why not develop a weekly or daily kindness goal? If you belong to a club, think about all the members you have not contacted in the last seven months. I'm proud to say I belong to a club whose leadership has decided to contact each of the club members to see how they are doing. Think of all the people that we could impact by just making it a goal to call one person a day. If they can be persuaded to join in on a Zoom session, all the better. Amelia Earhart said, "A single act of kindness throws out roots in all directions, and the roots spring up and make new trees." Wouldn't it be great to grow a whole dancing forest?

Another way we can practice kindness is by showing compassion for the causes in our community. With a coordinated effort, a club can create a fundraising activity that not only helps those in need but also lends exposure to our dance activity. Unfortunately, it will be a while until we can do most activities in person. That leaves again the Internet or phone contact; mailing/shipping can work too.

While we may be stuck at home, it's still possible to find outlets for kindness in the form of doing something nice for the environment. Besides recycling your bottles and cans, there is online bill paying and using energy-efficient lighting. The list goes on. The challenging and unprecedented times we are going through makes it all the more vital to focus on all the ways we can be in, and finally, the most important business is to be kind to yourself

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INSPIRATIONAL QUOTES

By Ed Foote

(From the collection of Ed Foote)

"Do not follow where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail" ...Muriel Strode

"A good character is the best tombstone. Those who loved you will remember. Carve your name on hearts, not on marble." ...author unknown

"Always do right. This will gratify some people and astonish the rest." ...Mark Twain

"Happiness is waiting what you already have." ...Ben Stein, political commentator

"Today, give a stranger one of your smiles. It might be the only sunshine they see all day." ...author unknown

"It never hurts to see the good in a person, because they often act better because of it." ...Nelson Mandela

"What do we live for, if not to make life less difficult for each other?" ...George Elliot

"The only people you ever want to get 'even' with are those who have helped you." ...John Honeyfeld

On The Record SQUARES

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STYLING PART I

Often we hear callers and dancers discussing the definition of a call. How a call is done; where the call may be executed from; what the square will look like at the end of the call. CALLERLAB, through decades of committee work, has done an incredible job of defining the calls we use and continues to refine those definitions.

How a call is done, while important, is only one component of dancing. It is the dancer's movement from one call to the next that is the fundamental of styling.

When dancers learn styling, they learn how to hold hands. For example, in a circle of dancers, it is man with his palms facing up toward the ceiling while lady with palms facing down toward the floor. Lady is resting her hand in the man's hand, and thumbs are in a neutral position, not squeezing or grabbing. Styling teaches us that when dancers grab hands, at the very least, there will be fellow dancers who cannot "shake loose" to do the next all, so the square breaks down; more severely, dancers get injured.

When dancers learn styling, they learn to keep their arms bent at the elbow as it keeps squares small while allowing the arms to act like shock absorbers when dancers transition from one call to the next. An elbow pointed down to the ground will avoid injuries like an accidental elbow to someone's face. Also, when the elbow is down, it prevents a dancer from torquing another dancers' shoulder.

When dancers learn these techniques, they create dance formations like lines, waves with ease. They move from formation to formation with confidence. When dancers learn styling AS THEY ARE LEARNING THE CALL, it is part of their definition. In this way, dancers see calls as more than a disconnected action; rather, they see the movement of the call and its connection to other calls.

When dancers learn styling, it is not by accident. It is taught by an experienced, master caller/teacher, or it is shown by a competent, graceful dancer. When styling is taught as part of learning a call, it is permanent. The new dancer will master the smoothness of the call, and when they move smoothly from one call to another, they will stay in square dancing because they know they are graceful – they are good dancers.

As we get closer to re-starting square dancing, now is the time to re-think how we teach square dancing. If you'd like to learn more about the topic, please write to me at buddy@buddyweaver.com.

If you haven't read my previous articles on SSD, please visit buddyweaver.com and click on the "articles." Find me on Facebook on the following pages: Buddy Weaver, Blue Star Square Dance Music, New Hi Hat Square Dance Music, and Rawhide Square Dance Music.

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All Things Considered

By Ed Foote

Re-connecting at Christmas

A year ago, I phoned a long-time square dancer who had been out of dancing for over 15 years. He was overjoyed to talk with someone from the past, and we had a wonderful time reminiscing about friends and experiences from long ago.

This got me to thinking that the Christmas season is a time of re-connecting with people, not just with family but with others who have been meaningful in our lives. Why not reach out this year to dancers and callers from the past for whom you have special memories?

Consider the dancers with whom you danced for many years but who had to drop out because of illness. They would love to get a phone call.

Likewise, callers who have retired often feel alone because no one calls. They would love to receive a phone call to discuss memories of past dances and festivals.

A Christmas card alone doesn't do it. These cards have become almost an obligation for many and thus often do not convey the feeling desired; a handwritten note is.

How about a goal of 5 phone calls? If everyone reading this would make five phone calls to former dancers and callers over the holiday season, think how much happiness would be created. Something to consider.

I would like to wish each of you a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, with the reminder that peace on earth is the result when we are willing to see things differently,

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The DANCERgram magazines presented on this website are written and published by a square and round dancer concerned about preserving our dance activity. The magazines include *Planner* (weekly), *This & That* (monthly), *Joys, Concerns, & Sympathies* (as needed), and *Directory* (as needed). All of the magazines are under the DANCERgram banner. In the event of new information between publication dates, notification is sent via the *Flash*.

The Editor reserves the right to edit, condense, or rewrite any submission to the DANCERgram magazines. Opinions expressed in any DANCERgram magazine or on this website are not necessarily that of the Editor or the West Coast Square and Round Dancers' Association. All new information (since the previous issue) in these magazines is highlighted in yellow.

Distribution of the DANCERgram magazines is encouraged via forwarding or hard copies. All of the Magazines, as well as additional content, can be found at www.dancergram.com.

If you would like to receive the DANCERgram Magazines via email or you would like to submit information to any of the magazines, please contact the Editor at sqdnfan@gmail.com or 863-224-3393.

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DANCERgram Magazines

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