

DANCERgram

April 2023



THIS &
THAT

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

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SQUARE DANCE CLOTHING RUMMAGE SALE

April 26, 2023

6:30 - 8:30 pm

Broderick Recreation Center

6101 66th Ave N., Pinellas Park, FL

The sale is the same night and location as the Student Graduation!

69th Florida State Square and Round Dance Convention

PLEASE NOTE: The location of the 69th Florida State Square and Dance Convention has been changed. It will still be in the same area but in Deltona. The new location is the Center At Deltona, 1640 Dr. Martin Luther King Boulevard, Deltona, FL 32725. The host hotel will remain the same as last year.

Stay tuned for more details!

DINNER AND A SHOW

**MORE INFORMATION
COMING SOON**

Friday, January 19, 2024, 4:15p-6:30p

**The Center At Deltona
1640 Dr. Martin Luther King Blvd.
Deltona, FL 32725**

**\$40 per person
(Not included in cost of convention ribbon)**

Deadline to purchase: Friday, January 5, 2024

Suncoast Callers and Cuers Association (SCCA) Announce 2023 – 2024 Officers

The Suncoast Callers and cuers held their monthly meeting on Saturday, April 1st. In addition to other business, they elected officers for 2023 – 2024. They are as follows:

President Keith Stevens
Vice President Ed and Bonnie Richey
Secretary Judy and Dwayne Barnhill
Treasurer Dave Muller and Susan Thompson-Muller

Spotlight Feature

Our own Judy Barnhill was the Spotlight Feature in the March 2023 American Square Dance! Below is the article.

In 2009, she went to a square dance class offered by the Volunteer Travelers in Knoxville, Tennessee with caller, Bill Fox. A little later, she and her husband Dwayne decided to also take round dance lessons with cuers, Bob and Bev Casteel.

Judy became interested in choreographing round dances when she retired from nursing in 2017, and moved to Port Charlotte/Punta Gorda in southwest Florida for the Winter months. Wanting a hobby that wouldn't have any stress, she asked Russ and Wilma Collier, who were their cuers in southwest Florida at that time to help choreograph a round dance. They agreed, but questioned why she didn't want to cue. The Colliers helped Judy and Dwayne choreograph a waltz to "Satan Can't Hold Me", a Jim Reeves song. But, in exchange, Russ wanted her to cue it for the dancers. Well, that was the start of another hobby! Russ & Wilma worked with her for another 6 months and then Wilma had a stroke and passed away. Russ then became sick shortly after that and also passed. Fortunately, Russ had introduced me to another cuer and her husband, Joanne & Ken Helton, who lived across the state in southeast Florida. The Heltons took Judy under their wings and helped her every week, and still do, via telephone with cueing, choreography, and dancing. Judy says,

“Any success that I’ve achieved is due largely to the Colliers’ & Heltons’ guidance and patience.”

She adds, “Have you ever thought of becoming a cuer? I thought cueing and teaching round dancing wouldn’t be that hard, right? Wrong! Little did I imagine not only did I need to know to tell a woman dancer where to put her feet and when, but I also had to learn the man’s part as well. Really, it was like learning to dance all over again. I’m still learning how to teach because each rhythm is different, and the steps are different. There’s always a challenge just around the corner. Cueing and teaching takes practice, lots of practice. For the first year or so of my new “hobby”, I worked tirelessly on my cueing & dancing. Not to mention the business aspect, learning about audio/video equipment, computer programs, teaching methods, and traveling. What happened to this stress free hobby???? Still, it’s worth it because I love the magic of dancing and I love people.”

Her advice to someone interested in becoming a round dance cuer? “Don’t enter into cueing with your eyes partially closed. You need a mentor to help guide you. A musical background is helpful but no required. You do need to realize that cueing is more than just a hobby, it’s a profession. There are certain standards of education and training that are needed so that you’ll have the knowledge and skills o provide the best experience to your dancers. Here’s also a code of conduct that ensures ethical and moral obligation. You need to like people, and learn how to work with callers, other cuers, and dancers in an art form of compromise. You need to encourage, compliment and uplift your dancers. Remember, dancing is for fun – mistakes & all. Many times you’ll need to go the extra mile and do it cheerfully. Take advantage of learning opportunities to further enhance your cueing and teaching. You need to become a member of a professional organization such as Roundalab or Callerlab. At each dance, you can make a difference if you go prepared and with the attitude of being a blessing to someone.”

You can find Judy Barnhill in American Square Dance publication each month and regularly cueing and teaching in Florida and Tennessee as well as state/national conventions throughout the south.

Reprint from American Square Dance – March 2023

Smooth Dancing

By Buddy Weaver

This month we look at how to smoothly dance **RECYCLE**. A call that has quite a few moving parts to it and can be very smooth, if learned (taught) correctly.

Let's start by stating the CALLERLAB definition: *from Ocean Waves only, Ends Cross Fold. Meanwhile each Center Folds behind the adjacent End and follow the End around, adjusting to finish side-by-side in Facing Couples.*

Now legs translate that into terms that are easily understood. First off, let's make certain the Ends are comfortable with the call CROSS FOLD. Not sure of how Cross Fold should be taught? STOP. Go back to June 2022 issue and look it up in the Smooth Dancing feature.

Since *almost everybody learns by rote*, we will have the Boys on the Ends of Ocean Waves doing Ends Cross Fold until comes easy (a couple of weeks) then introduce Recycle.

From your Ocean Wave, Ends Cross Fold – now look at where you've ended – this is where you will finish on the call Recycle, so boys Un-Cross Fold. This time, as the Boys are doing their Cross Fold, the Girls will Fold behind them and start to follow them, quickly giving them their “other hand” to finish as a couple facing a couple.

You will notice that everybody worked in sync; nobody pulled anyone nor did anyone grab a hand to yank anybody. At the risk of using negative reinforcement, this cannot go without saying because some dancers have learned this call as a “grab the hand and yank” execution. Grabbing and yanking are the antithesis of (the rest of the sentence is missing).

Smooth dancing is the foundation of sustainable square dancing. This feature is intended to put an end to rough dancing and is meant to be shared.

Here is an additional resource: CALLERLAB Teaching Resource
<https://teaching.callerlab.org/mainstream/recycle-definition/recycle-other/>

Reprint from *American Square Dance* – March 2023

Social Square Dance by Barry Johnson

Last month, we briefly mentioned the impacts that the SSD program can have on recruiting new dancers to class and the percentage of those dancers that graduate. This month let's look at the impact on retaining those newly graduated dancers.

An absolutely vital part of the program is for new dancers to be able to attend regularly scheduled dances and feel like the dance is for them. In some areas, new dancers are invited to club dances for a tip or few each night, but the majority of the dance is either an activity that they don't know how to do (like round dancing) or square dance level that they haven't learned. In those cases, the dancers can feel like they're being allowed to attend a dance that's really focused on someone else.

But if your regularly scheduled dance features the SSD program for at least half of the floor time, that perception can be reversed – the new dancers can feel at home, and that this is their dance that some other people might also be attending. This small change in perception makes a world of difference

If the new SSD dancers can succeed at your regular dance nights, then they will attend those dances over and over, and we've achieved the goal of absorbing them into the activity. Clubs have found that their retention rate for new graduates remaining active for the first year, and returning for a second year. Eventually those newer dancers may choose to learn more – but until then, they have a home with your club and feel like a full member of the group.

Improved recruitment, improved graduation rates, and improved new dancer retention rates (together with multiple lesson starts each year) can quickly add up to big increases in club membership. The combination of all these improvements is usually visible after the third round of SSD classes, and just gets better with each round of classes after that.

Link to CALLERLAB'S SSD web page

<https://callerlab.org/dance-programs/social-square-dancing>

Reprint from *American Square Dance* – March 2023

Mike Hogan on Marketing

Promoting Square Dancing

Last month I began covering the 4th P, promotion, and shared image research from Starworks about square dancing's image with non-dancers. While the research is old, chances are the image is about the same. Recently, I'm hearing younger individuals asking me what square dancing is. This tells me they don't have an image of square dancing, right or wrong. Before I jump into Awareness as promised, let's first discuss the topic of brand.

Image and Brand are Synonymous

Definition of Branding: The process involved in creating a unique name and image for a product in the consumers' mind, mainly through advertising campaigns with a consistent theme. Branding aims to establish a significant and differentiated presence in the market that attracts and retains loyal customers. Source: businessdictionary.com

Definition of Brand Image: The impressions in the consumers' mind of a brand's total personality (real and imaginary qualities and shortcomings). Brand image is developed every time through advertising campaigns with a consistent theme and is authenticated through the consumers' direct experience. Source: businessdictionary.com

Ask yourself: "What is the current brand image of square dancing?" What is the current brand image of your square dance club or organization?" If you could change it, what would you want the brand image of square dancing to be?

Our brand is what the public perceives square dancing to be, not what we believe it to be! Assuming you read last month's article, you likely agree with me that square dancing has evolved from what the focus group participants believed square dancing to be. We dance to multiple genres of music, the dress code has changed, we are not just country oriented, however we are patronized mostly by senior citizens. We need to re-brand, or reimage our products!

Re-Imaging

Re-imaging is establishing a new and different impression in the consumers' mind, changing the personality of our brand. How? Through advertising, campaigns with a consistent theme. The experience a new dancer has when purchasing our product must be consistent with the brand as we've described it, authenticating it through the consumers' direct experience.

Branding, especially re-branding takes time. It is accomplished by consistently delivering the correct message to the public. Non-dancers who have a negative perception about the activity have no desire to participate. We must change their desire to stay away from the activity to a desire to get involved.

If we are going to change the image of square dancing among non-dancers, while simultaneously creating it from scratch with individuals who have no concept of square dancing we need to increase the awareness of what dancing is in 2023. Since we've evolved, we also must change the messaging they receive about square dancing.

Next month, I'll cover the new square dance logo and slogan, give you my opinion on them, and explain why they needed to change.

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Ponderings by Tony Oxendine

Hello again faithful readers. If it's the end of the month (and it's February 28th here in Charlotte) then Buddy is on my case to get my monthly article submitted. One would think that I would learn my lesson....

I've been traveling quite a bit lately – spending more and more time in airports and airplanes. Oftentimes, especially in airports, I have time to do some serious pondering. Lately, I've been thinking a lot about this activity that all of us love so much – This square dance world of ours.

Our square dance population, for the past 40 years, has been steadily (and drastically) decreasing. At least that's true in the US. In other countries the decline has been as dramatic. We really can't say what the percentage of the

decline really amounts to because we have never really determined the exact number of square dancers that we have.

The only barometer that we have might be the US National Convention. According to the National Executive committee's (NEC) website, the largest national convention was in 1976 in Anaheim with an attendance of almost 40,000. The attendance hovered in the mid 20's (as in thousand) until another peak in 1983. The Louisville convention in 1983 had almost 31,000 dancers. Since that time, however, we have witnessed a steady decline in numbers. The 71st NSDC in Evansville had an attendance of 2,036. So from 1983 to 2022, we've lost approximately slightly over 90% of our dance population – if (and that's a big "if") we use the NSDC as our gauge.

The Covid pandemic dealt square dancing a major blow. For the first time in 68 years there was no National Square Dance Convention. Clubs all over the country are folding. More and more callers are hanging up the mic" and retiring.

Now... it sounds like I'm just another "naysayer" putting another nail into the square dance coffin. But...if you remember in an earlier article, I wrote ab out being a "glass half full kind of guy". I still am! I am actually optimistic ab out our square dance future. In my next couple of articles, I intend to go into more detail and describe just WHY I feel the way that I feel.

I leave you with this – Bob Dylan poignantly wrote that "The Time They Are A-Changin'", but Sam Cooke may have said it best when he sang "it's vbeen a lon time comin', but I know a change gon' come – Oh yes it will".

Until next month...

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CALLERLAB Viewpoints by Scot Byars

NOTE: Scot was a full-time caller who was involved in calling and teaching from 1970 until his passing in 2022. Her personally taught more than 3200 dancers, taught more than 50 callers, authored "Square Dance 101" CD teaching series for schools, was a featured caller at over 2500 dances, parties, and festivals through the U.S.A., was most recently a recording artist for Crown Records, and

was a member of the CALLERLAB Board of Governors from 2009-2012 and 2015-2016. He will be missed, but his wife, Erin, a wonderful cuer and dance leader, continues to carry on his legacy.

This is an article Scot wrote in 2008 when we were actively searching for easier dance programs to bring more dancers into our activity. Scot was a leader who helped steer us to our current SSD Program that is now successfully growing square dancing. Thanks Scot!

“We Are Not Common Folk”

“There have been great changes since 951, not all reassuring. The fantastic prestige of ‘name callers,’ a willingness to dance to calling that disregards the 8-cunt phrase, monotonous repetition of grill type figures; the vast size of the whole activity – these could be dangerous. Most alarming is the tendency to conformity. We have become as uniform as soup cans on a super-market shelf. Do not be disturbed. Last week we saw a “do-ci-do”! Contras are coming back. Every day another maverick sneaks out of the corral, sniffs the air, senses a good rain, and settles down to graze on the old pasture. The dance goes on, down the worn path taken by the first ancestor. We shall never lock it up in any man’s stable. It has wings, and it is ever so much bigger than we are.”

These words were penned in the 80’s by Dorothy Shaw, Wife, inspiration and the life dance partner of the late, great, Lloyd “Pappy” Shaw. “Pappy” was a pioneer in what he called “Cowboy Dances.” His love for the beginnings of what we call Modern Western Square Dancing (MWSD) took him and a group of energetic teenagers from Cheyenne Mountain High School to the far reaches of our country and abroad. His motivation was simply to share our tradition of American Western Folk Dancing with the world. He scoured the Country transcribing dance routines from Boston to San Francisco – in my mind a monumental feat.

My question is two-fold: Have we commercialized and massaged all the fun out of our activity? Or, have we simply created a brand-new activity that kind of

looks like what “Pappy” envisioned, but is, in most cases a whole different animal? Let me put it another way: By adding of new calls, standardizing and modifying definitions of calls, have we contributed to the decline of the activity? Or have we simply created a new product that has yet to reach its full potential?

Because I am a “The glass is half-full” kind of guy, I tend to believe the latter. A very well respected “name caller” made the comment recently that our activity is no longer a folk dance. Now I know that these kinds of statements make some people cringe, or at least get a little nervous. However, I whole-heartedly agree with him. Let me explain. For a dance to be “folk” it should fit certain criteria:

- It should be developed without a choreographer or teacher.
- It reflects the traditional life of the common people of a country or region.
- Steps and/or patterns are passed on from generation to generation with very little change.
- Costumes or a certain type of dress are generally associated with the dance.
- Routines are simple in nature such that the “common folk” can accomplish them with little instruction,

MWSD IS NOTHING BUT CHOREOGRAPHER DEPENDENT. Our dancers do not memorize a series of movements in a particular order – they require a caller to tell them what to do on the fly.

It is true that MWSD movements have some roots in the tradition of many different countries; however, most of our calls like ‘Pass to the Center” goes no further back in tradition than the 1950s and really have no regional associations at all.

Since MWSD is relatively new in its current incarnation, the most we can have dancing at one time is possibly four generations. And as far as change is concerned, we are constantly tweaking the definitions of our movements. Ah, yes, the dress code-we have one of those; no wait! We’re slowly eliminating that, aren’t we? Our dance is not simple; generally speaking, it takes on year of lessons and one year of dancing just to achieve a Mainstream level of competency. There is nothing simple about that.

I am not saying that not being a folk dance is bad in any way. I just believe that we should call a spade, a spade and a heart, a heart. Trying to convince people that Square Dancing is a folk dance, and that anyone can do it, is false advertising and in my mind – just plain wrong. Oh, we can create a subset of the activity and teach the masses, but that won't get everyone into the mainstream of our dance. Promoting traditional movements is admirable, but teaching traditional movements at a party dance and passing it off as MWSD will not increase our population of modern square dancers.

What we need to do is support and market as many different programs as is humanly possible. We all need to promote programs such as ABC and Community Dance. We all need to support accelerated learning programs like blast and 12-12-12-Week. We must change our approach to marketing to target specific groups in our area and stop generalizing our advertising. And we must start creating professional, appealing advertising campaigns and stop putting out mimeographed, handwritten flyers.'

Einstein wrote; "We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them. If we can change the way we approach the training and marketing of our activity we can change the results. One caller, or on dancer can make a difference.

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Inspirational Quotes from Ed Foote

"One of the most valuable things we can do to heal one another is to listen to each other's stories." ...Rebecca Falls

"Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console. To be understood as to understand" ...St. Francis of Assisi

"One's life has value so long as one attributes value to the life of others, by means of love, friendship, and compassion." ...Simone de Beauvoir, French philosopher

"A dead batter can't jump a dead battery. Get away from people who can't change your spirit when you need a jump!" ...author unknown

"The person who sends out positive thoughts activates the world around them positively, and draws back to them positive results." ...Norman Vincent Peale, minister & author

The DANCERgram magazines 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. 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 sqdncfan@gmail.com or 863-224-3393.

DANCERgram Magazines

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This and That (monthly) • Reprint of articles • New Articles

DANCERgram Staff

Editor: Penny T. Green Webmaster: Cliff Reiss