

A Christmas Tribute to Local Club Callers

By

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Earlier American Callers' Association's Viewpoint argued that the problem of the cumbersome dance program confusions caused dancer losses with all groups of potential dancers in every age basis demographic category including Seniors, Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y groups.

The American Callers' Association in its attempt to be of service to all callers, dancers, and associations provided current, timely, and effective information on new dancer recruitment, winning ways to retain club dancers, and pitfalls to drive square dancers away for most from 2000 to 2008. The American Callers' Association appreciates the positive comments, encouragement to continue, and contributions from callers and dancers all over the country and from abroad to continue these initiatives. The American Callers' Association will continue to provide information that will help the square dance community recruit, retain and retrieve square dancers as well as encourage the dancers and dancer organizations to speak out on the cumbersome and confusing dance programs

This month's Viewpoint is dedicated to CLUB CALLERS everywhere who contribute so much to square dancing and receive very little recognition.

The American Callers' Association continues to recognize that many of today's dancers in the Seniors Generation, Baby Boomer Generation, Generation X, Generation Y and Generation Z (E) demand instant gratification for their time and money spent. The playing field has changed but square dancing with its sacred cows (programs/levels) has not. All groups of new dancers want a simple way to start having fun. They state by their absence that they do not want long-term sets of instructional programs. This apparent contradiction between the needs and wants of potential square dancers and the square dance product compounds the problem for club caller survival.

How do we define the role of a club caller? The answer is very simple to describe and very hard to live. A club caller is more than being a part time employee. Some people may see the caller on the stage calling to his/her club and comment to the caller that it would be nice "to have your job. They come once or twice a week to stand up on the stage calling, teaching, and having a great time." Many callers might shake their heads at this type of a statement and wonder how many people have similar impressions of the job of a "club caller". Perhaps, they do know that the job of club caller is its own special category long on duties, responsibilities, and time unknown by many people.

It is true that many people see the caller during his or her, two to three hour performance at a club dances. In reality, the club caller is very generous with his/her time behind the scenes supporting his/her club with great affection. When not up on the stage, many club callers are working full time jobs, raising a family, mowing the yard, helping in the house, and raising a family.

In addition to this, the club caller, must prepare for each dance with a dance program, practice calling techniques, maintain and repair square dancing equipment, read/study square dance literature, assist in the preparation of class recruitment, visit the ill and shut-in dancers, attend funerals of deceased square dance friends, attend callers and square association meetings, participate in fund raiser activities, schedule and attend square dance presentations for rest home patients, AND A WHOLE HOST OF OTHER DUTIES. Very often free times including weekends are preempted for various square dancing related activities.

The American Callers' Association argues that the CLUB CALLER is quite often the strength of the club and local square dancing. The caller teaches the classes, serves as a gentle advisor, confidant, diplomat, comforter the conflicted, and visits to the sick in hospitals. At the same time, the caller continues to call the dances and teach the students week after week, month after month, year after year.

In many ways, the caller becomes the charismatic leader of the club and puts out the fires of conflict. People come to the caller for information and direction. The caller may be described as the eyes and ears of the club and local square dancing. Club callers understand and practice altruism, favoring fun, friendship and service over monetary rewards. Callers training for club calling and teaching often extend over several years.

In their professional lives, local club callers are military members, bankers, sales executives, public servants, teachers, university professors, business executives, plumbers, electricians, and computer experts.

One fact is certain, no matter the background the caller is a considerate and concerned servant to the square dancers dedicated to the health of square dancing, his/her club, and square dancers. TO SERVE AS A CLUB CALLER IS A PRICELESS HONOR AND AN EXTRAORDINARY AVOCATION. It includes so many obligations taken for granted. Remember the local club callers are the spirit and backbone of square dancing. Just support them. They offer so much to the square dancing activity.

The American Callers' Association is honored to present this tribute and extend the blessings of this joyful season to the local club callers and wish them a very Merry Christmas and Happy and Healthy New Year.

Any individual, club, caller, or association who wishes to communicate his/her opinions on this subject is encouraged to contact the American Callers' Association at Loulet@aol.com or Dr. Patrick Demerath at pdemerath@uwa.edu.

Until next time, Happy Dancing.