



American Callers Association

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Newsletter

THIS IS WHAT THE FOURTH OF JULY IS ABOUT

As I came out of the supermarket that sunny day, pushing my cart of groceries towards my car, I saw an old man with the hood of his car up and a lady sitting inside the car, with the door open. The old man was looking at the engine. I put my groceries away in my car and continued to watch the old gentleman from about 25 feet away. I saw a young man in his early twenties with a grocery bag in his arm, walking towards the old man. The old gentleman saw him coming too, and took a few steps towards him. I saw the old gentleman point to his open hood and say something.

The young man put his grocery bag into what looked like a brand new Cadillac Escalade and then turned back to the old man and I heard him yell at the old gentleman saying, "You shouldn't even be allowed to drive a car at your age." And then with a wave of his hand, he got in his car and peeled rubber out of the parking lot.

I saw the old gentleman pull out his handkerchief and mop his brow as he went back to his car and again looked at the engine. He then went to his wife and spoke with her and appeared to tell her it would be okay. I had seen enough and I approached the old man. He saw me coming and stood straight and as I got near him I said, "Looks like you're having a problem."

He smiled sheepishly and quietly nodded his head. I looked under the hood myself and knew that whatever the problem was, it was beyond me. Looking around I saw a gas station up the road and told the old man that I would be right back. I drove to the station and went inside and saw three attendants working on cars. I approached one of them and related the problem the old man had with his car and offered to pay them if they could follow me back down and help him.

The old man had pushed the heavy car under the shade of a tree and appeared to be comforting his wife. When he saw us, he straightened up and thanked me for my help. As the mechanics diagnosed the problem (overheated engine), I spoke with the old gentleman.

When I shook hands with him earlier, he had noticed my Marine Corps ring and had commented about it, telling me that he had been a Marine too. I nodded and asked the usual question, 'What outfit did you serve with?'

He had mentioned that he served with the first Marine Division at Tarawa, Saipan, Iwo Jima, and Guadalcanal. He had hit all the big ones and retired from the Corps after the war was over. As we talked we heard the car engine come on and saw the mechanics lower the hood. They came over to us as the old man reached for his wallet, but was stopped by me and I told him I would just put the bill on my AAA card.

He still reached for the wallet and handed me a card that I assumed had his name and address on it and I stuck it in my pocket. We all shook hands all around again and I said my goodbyes to his wife. I then told the two mechanics that I would follow them back up to the station. Once at the station I told them that they had interrupted their own jobs to come along with me and help the old man. I said I wanted to pay for the help, but they refused to charge me.

One of them pulled out a card from his pocket looking exactly like the card the old man had given to me. Both of the men told me then, that they were Marine Corps Reserves. Once again we shook hands all around and as I was leaving, one of them told me I should look at the card the old man had given to me. I said I would and drove off.

For some reason I had gone about two blocks when I pulled over and took the card out of my pocket and looked at it for a long, long time. The name of the old gentleman was on the card in golden leaf and under his name "Congressional Medal of Honor Society." I sat there motionless looking at the card and reading it over and over. I looked up from the card and smiled to no one but myself and marveled that on this day, four Marines had all come together, because one of us needed help. He was an old man all right, but it felt good to have stood next to greatness and courage and an honor to have been in his presence. Remember, OLD men like him gave you FREEDOM for America. Thanks to those who served....& those who supported them. If you don't stand behind our troops, PLEASE feel free to stand in front of them! Remember, Freedom isn't "Free" -- thousands have paid the price so you can enjoy what you have today!

LET'S DO THIS -- JUST 39 WORDS

**OUR FATHER,
WALK THROUGH MY HOUSE
AND TAKE AWAY ALL MY WORRIES AND ILLNESSES;
AND PLEASE WATCH OVER AND HEAL MY FAMILY AND OUR FRIENDS AND THE MEN AND WOMEN
WHO HAVE FOUGHT AND ARE FIGHTING FOR OUR FREEDOM.
IN JESUS ' NAME. AMEN**

This prayer is so powerful. Hope you all had a great Fourth of July.

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Ray Brigrance has been president of American Callers for a full term and now is serving an extra year because we had no one agree to run for board member. So if you would like to run for board member, please let the office know. We can have the names of the candidates in the next newsletter and have the voting done by January 2010. Then the board can elect a president for a two-year term. **We need help with things to put in the newsletter. If you have anything that you feel would help or just want get your voice heard. This is your chance. Thanks-- Mac**

SAD NEWS

We have lost so many callers since the last newsletter. We will list the ones we know about that have passed away:

Steve Jacques Maryland—**Hal Dodson** of North Carolina—**Harold Thomas** of South Carolina
Robert Funderburke of Florida—**John Steckman** of Pennsylvania—**John Sybalsky** of California
Curtis Byars of Texas. To the families of these fine men, we extend our heart-felt sympathy.

Statement from the Past:

By Eddie Powell

Local Councils and Federations-Many are losing members faster than they are gaining members, thus creating shaky operations that are typically under funded and overly political.. Aren't we all standing on a slippery slope?? Yet, we continue to badger each other on the professionalism of callers, the dynamics of each particular square dance movement, and some really great new choreography that "I" dreamed up... All the while the rug is being pulled out from under us...slowly, quietly, and without a voice. **Question: Are we going to develop a plan and really change anything or shall we just sit here griping and grumbling until it really is all gone, then just pack our own tent and go quietly away. Will the last one out of square dancing please turn out the lights??**

Gary Shoemake:

As I travel across the country I see more and more ACA badges and our members have every reason to be proud of ACA because they have made this association an organization to be proud off. **We have stuck with our agenda to have one-floor below advance and challenge and now more and more callers and dancers see that we were right. The board of ACA is very proud of our members, because they know that you must stand for something or you will fall for anything.** I will say again what I said in the last newsletter -we must downsize our list until it will fit the lifestyle of those interested. Marketing will not change anything in square dancing, people will. If we all stick to our guns it will change. Thanks--Gary

By John Saunders

How can we get the dancers more motivated to help find new class members. I know you'll hear the same old excuses of we have asked all of our friends and we don't know anyone else to ask. Remind them that every time they get the car serviced or buy groceries or get a hair cut they come in contact with someone. This one on one contact worked in the past and will work now.

However, as callers and leaders we cannot depend on the dancers alone to do this recruiting. We as callers must be there to do our part to help. Look back on the times when your recruiting program was most successful and remember what you did. Try to repeat some of those positive things and you may find that they still work. You may not get the big crowds that you used to get, but if you can increase your numbers by a couple of squares each class you can be successful. If you have a club membership of 40 dancers and each dancer actually puts the class flyer in the hands of just 10 people, then along with what you can give out and any demos you can do, I would bet that you can see results. We used to encourage dancers to bring new dancers to the first night or two of classes. We should still be doing this. Another thing I've noticed in our area is the increased number of demos we are asked to do at this time of year. These demos would be more useful if they were done closer to the start of a new class, so ask the sponsoring group if they maybe could change them and tell the reason why. Don't sell any idea short. Any promotional idea is worth looking at and you never know what will work at a given time in a given area. The dancing part of our activity has not changed. The dancers like to dance and the callers like to call. The way we perceive our activity has changed and I don't think all the perceptions are good. Try to remember what got you into the activity and kept you in the activity. Remember what you liked about square dancing and promote the heck out of those things. The things you don't like, make sure they are not brought up to new dancers. Sometimes you have to back up to go forward. Maybe it's time for us to look back and then be able to look forward. Remember the old hoe-down record "Back Up and Push." Thanks, John.

Contra Page: Year 5, 20 issues. Here are thoughts, ideas, questions, raised along the way.

2004: OCT. The name of the dance is NEAT & EASY.....The ... move is "couples weave".

2005: JANUARY. One of the aims of Western Contra (is) to serve as a place where the lost elements of square dancing (can) find a home - and be worked with - until such time as square dancing might find itself, once again, in need of them. **APRIL.** The culprit is "phrase awareness". It is not the same thing as "dancing to the beat." **JULY.** When the music starts playing you have four different ways to position yourself (occupy a portion of the floor) vis-a-vis the other dancers before any dancing even starts. **OCT.** "What's Your Phrase Level, Pilgrim?"

2006: JANUARY. A good figure calls the dancer's attention to the music and says, "we belong together". **APRIL.** Square dancing is a uniquely American invention. **JULY.** "Chasing the phrase" grew out of my intention to counteract the image that some contra dancers and leaders were selling about the musical superiority of contra dancing over square dancing. **OCT.** I have no objection to the way "grand square" is done on the square dance floor.. ...What I object to is the name. Calling it "grand square" is unfair.. .. The original is defined differently and deserves some respect. As for the upscale version, give it a name of its own. Call it "Grand Zip". . . .

2007: JANUARY. The time is the summer of 1949, the place, Jones Beach State Park on the South Shore of Long Island, 30 miles East of New York City...The band is the Top Hands. Behind the mike is ... Ed Durlacher! For Diane and I, young teenagers, this is our square dance club. This is all there is, this is all we know, and this is all that we need. **APRIL.** In the beginning, music comes first... **JULY.** A square dance caller... ..might present dancers with a whole contra evening rather than with just one or two contras. **OCT.** Where square dancing reaches for its complexity by adding figures and exploring the relationship between them, contra complexity comes' from doing a small number of figures in different formats.....The same figures, done as single, double, triple progression, or facing couples... with proper and improper variations can yield a whole collection of unique dance arrangements.

2008: JANUARY. I believe that. ..crossover timing in squares - today's squares - encourages good dancing. Call it "phrase shifting". Phrase shifting introduces a variety in timing along with a variety in figures, something that dancers enjoy and respond to. **APRIL.** Five contras done Orange County way: to Scottish music. **JULY.** "Trouble" has roots in the difference between "fun" and "dance"... Too much "fun" by some, takes away from the fun that others come to the dance for. **OCT.** Each time I pick up the mike I do so with a great sense of wonder.

2009: JANUARY. Traditionalists are set in a mold determined by the eight count full circle. Western contra, getting around only 3/4 of the way in 8 counts, reaches its next whole number, 16 counts, at 1 & 1/2 turns. These new numbers open up a whole new range of choreographic possibilities. **APRIL.** Here are 6 contras with unusual choreo and with solid music matches. Spread over a couple of decades, they represent the unique world that Western Contra lives in. **JULY.** Many thanks to ACA and very special thanks to Mac Letson. I am Hal Rice, 1919 W. Coronet, #227, Anaheim, CA 92801. (714-778-0848) See you in October.

To ACA Members:

How many of you would attend if American Callers were to have a meeting in Nashville or Oklahoma City in mid-September? Please let the home office know by mail or email if you could attend. This is just in the talking stage for now. What has been suggested is to start Sunday night, all day Monday, and be out by noon Tuesday.

ACA will start as a part of the Viewpoint article in American Square Dance magazine a New Dancers Corner. We will ask all new dancers to contact dancers that started class with them, but did not complete the class, and we will contact the drop outs to find what caused them to not stay in square dancing. Maybe we can find why it is so hard to get new people into square dancing. Please read the ACA viewpoint by Dr. Pat Demerath on our web page or in the American Square Dance magazine every month. If we are to attract new people to our activity, we must find out what we can do to make the activity available and reachable for everyone interested in a timeframe that will fit their lifestyle.

SOME VERY DIFFERENT SINGING CALL FIGURES THAT WILL REQUIRE A LITTLE WORK.**# 1.**

HEAD LADIES CHAIN 3/4 ROUND, SIDE MAN TURN THE GIRL AND ROLL-AWAY, TAKE BOTH GIRLS UP TO THE MIDDLE AND BACK, SIX STEP TO A WAVE AND SWING THRU, SIDE BOY RUN AROUND YOUR GIRL, LINES OF THREE BEND THE LINE, THREE BY THREE, CENTER GIRL TURN BACK, SWING THE CORNER AND PROMENADE

#2

HEADS TOUCH A 1/4 , GIRLS PASS THRU, CENTER FOUR GO RIGHT & LEFT THRU, WHILE THE OTHERS TRADE AND ROLL, CENTERS STAR THRU, LINES UP TO THE MIDDLE AND BACK , PASS THRU WHEEL & DEAL, THE CENTERS PASS THRU, TOUCH A 1/4 , SCOOT BACK, SWING CORNER AND PROMENADE.

#3

HEADS SQUARE THRU, SWING THRU, GIRLS CIRCULATE AND BOYS TRADE, BOYS RUN, BEND THE LINE, FOUR BOYS EXTEND TO A WAVE, SWING THRU, CENTER BOYS TRADE, CENTER BOYS RUN, NEW CENTER BOYS HINGE, SWING THE CORNER AND PROMENADE.

#4

By Evan Pauley

HEADS TOUCH A QUARTER, GIRLS PASS THRU, CENTERS RIGHT & LEFT THRU, THE OTHERS TRADE & ROLL, CENTERS SLIDE THRU, ALL PASS THRU, TAG THE LINE, LEADERS TRADE, SWING THRU, GIRLS TURN AROUND, PROMENADE.

#5

By Dave Cox

HEADS SQUARE THRU, TOUCH 1/4, CENTERS TRADE, CENTERS RUN, FERRIS WHEEL, ZOOM, DO A DOUBLE PASS THRU, LADIES U-TURN BACK, STAR THRU, LADIES TRADE, PARTNER TRADE, PROMENADE.

#6

FUN FIGURE. GOOD CLASS DRILL ON STARS.

HEADS STAR LEFT TILL YOU FIND YOUR CORNER, MAKE A RIGHT HAND STAR AND TURN IT, HEADS STAR LEFT IN THE MIDDLE TILL YOU FIND YOUR CORNER, MAKE A RIGHT HAND STAR AND TURN IT FULL AROUND, GIRLS TURN -BACK, SWING AND PROMENADE.

REMEMBER SQUARE DANCING SHOULD BE FUN FOR EVERYONE. ALWAYS USE GOOD JUDGMENT.

