

What Can We Do To Help Each Other?

By

Charlie Holly and Mike Matsko

The AMERICAN CALLERS' ASSOCIATION in its attempt to be of service to all callers, dancers, and associations has provided current, timely, and effective information on new dancer recruitment, winning ways to retain club dancers, and pitfalls that drive square dancers away for the past ten years. ACA really appreciates the positive comments, encouragement to continue, and the contributions from callers and dancers all over North America and abroad to continue these initiatives. ACA will continue to provide information that will help the square dance community recruit, retain and retrieve square dancers as well as encourage the dancers to speak out on the cumbersome and segregationist dance programs.

This month's ACA Viewpoint was communicated from two outstanding square dance leaders, Mr. Charlie Holley from Montgomery, Alabama and Mr. Mike Matsko, Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania They looked at some of the issues that have plagued square dancing as a human organization for over forty years such as the problems of leadership, fewer volunteers, low retention rates, dress codes and "aging images." On the surface it looked like many of these issues cannot be rectified. Charlie Holley and Mike Matsko beg to differ with this train of thought and offer DANCE LEADERS VIEWS on how to HELP Dancing by reconnecting the dancers back to the national and local callers, round dance teachers, contra teaches and line dance instructors. Charlie and Mike purport that if all square dance enthusiasts would follow these logical ideas that

the communications would improve and decreasing numbers of square dancers could reverse itself naturally.

Callers, Cuers, Contra Prompters and Line Dance teachers, what can we as dancers do to help you have better dances? Their answer is that dancers can help plan, promote, and greet the dancers and guests. What are we looking for? The answer is that we desperately need a more connected and cooperative **working together relationships** that will better the dancing activity and atmosphere. Dance enthusiasts know that dancing has physical and mental benefits and offers a social connection with many new friends.

While visiting several areas of the United States, Charlie and Mike observed the lack of supportive leadership from the Callers, Cuers, Contra Prompters and Line Dance teachers. They argue that this lack of support has hampered the efforts of dancers and dance leaders in their attempts to conduct promotional and recruiting activities. With a lack of good leadership, apathy, denial, confusion, and a sense of hopelessness sets in very quickly. Charlie and Mike further maintain that club leaders lose the enthusiasm and interest to continue to lead without the necessary support of Callers, Cuers, and instructors. The end results is that there is very little effort and enthusiasm placed on promotional and recruiting activities. What promotion is done generates little positive results or is ineffective and reinforces the negative frustrations and negative feelings of the dancers. Perhaps, Callers/Cuers/Instructors are not showing real concern about the current declining trend of the number of dancers or the hazy future of Square, Round, Contra, and Line Dancing. This lack of “connection” is not being discussed and elevated among dancers and leaders within their state and regional groups.

Charlie and Mike advocate that organizations like the American Callers' Association, Callerlab, Roundalab, Contralab and the National Teachers' Association etc. need to aggressively encourage their members to become more proactive and offer strong leadership and active support to their state, regional and club leaders. This includes but is not limited to emphasizing the need to hold periodic meetings to address ways to support the clubs leaders become active contributors to state and regional groups by selecting a caller and cuer delegate to attend all meetings.

There is a composite noun called "Synergy". Synergy proves the traditional saying that $1 + 1 = 7$. The translation of this short equation is the two people working together for the good of all far exceed the results of seven people working for their own benefits. Both Charlie and Mike have observed that when everyone is working together, very positive results are achieved. Their voices cry out **LET'S DO THIS!**

The American Callers' Association is indebted to Charlie Holley and Mike Matsko for composing and organizing their well-presented thoughts and feelings on ways to improve dancing. Along with Charlie Holley and Mike Matsco, the American Callers' Association is dedicated to publicize, promote and preserve square dancing and continuously invests all its assets, time and funds to communicate with callers, dancers, and associations to bring the dance enthusiasts back together to unite as one group with a common goal.

The American Callers' Association will work with dance organizations to reverse recessionary growth and energize and recover square dancing to prosperity. The Board of Directors of the American Callers' Association invites each of you to visit our website

and newsletters at americancallers.com/news and communicate with us. **“Give us your ideas. We Will Listen”**.

Any individual, club, caller, or association who wishes to communicate his/her opinions on this subject is encouraged to contact the American Callers' Association

mac@americancallers.com or Dr. Patrick Demerath at pdemerath@uwa.edu. Please

visit our website and newsletters [@American Callers.com/news](http://AmericanCallers.com/news).

“Until next time, Happy Dancing!” - Patrick Demerath