

“Ten Smart Steps for Square Dancing”

By

Patrick Demerath

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. ACA really appreciates the positive comments, encouragement to continue, and 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 clarifies offers ten Smart Steps that ACA received from Caller Mr. John Gibson, of Atlanta, Georgia .John sent a very refreshing letter to the American Callers' Association. In a very practical and palatable message, John makes “**Ten Sensus Communum**” suggestions that could have long-term positive benefits for square dancers and clubs and callers.

Here they are:

1. You can't teach a person to dance in 20 weeks but you can expose them to square dancing. It works if the new dancer graduates and can visit other clubs and dance with pleasure.
2. Often clubs have a myriad of duties for the dancers converting what was FUN into what is WORK not PLEASURE. John believes that this is the main reason we lose graduated new dancers.
3. You can teach new dancers some plus with the basics. Just do not tell the new dancers.
4. Each night it is fun for the dancers to have a publicized “challenge” series of calls predicated in FUN for the dancers.
5. There does not seem to be a relationship between the fun and participation level of a club with formal or informal square dancing dress codes.
6. There are too many SPECIAL DANCES WITH OUT OF TOWN CALLERS. John suggests a limit of 4 Special Dances per year in each area.

7. Take the WORK out of square dancing and make it PLEASURABLE again by stopping a tip and WALKING the dancers through the difficult maneuvers.
8. Eliminate full meal and theme dances with table set up and take down assignments.
9. Dancers should have no responsibility except to SHOW UP and DANCE and have FUN..
10. Look at the dancing choreography from the 50's and 60's and learn the incredible variety using the 60 plus maneuvers.

In summary John parallels David Ramsey in his common sense Financial Peace University by stating if you can't pay for it, you do not need it and do not buy it. The status symbol in square dancing is not a few dancers struggling to get through high level maneuvers. The real status symbol is a hall full of people having fun.

In the same letter, John talks about callers and clubs and changes in society. John offers eleven suggestions on how to enhance square dancing's aligning itself to the changes in society. They are excellent ideas and are more than worthy of a second ACA Viewpoints next month.

As the American Callers' Association continuously invests all its assets, time and funds to communicate with callers, dancers, and associations to bring the dancers back together to dance on a one floor united program and at the same time the American Callers' Association stays tuned into the desires and needs of the dancers. John does the same thing in a different venue.

.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".

The American Callers' Association is committed to unifying the dancers and to preserve square dancing; ACA recognizes that the **Square Dancing Renaissance** can begin by unifying the dancers into a one floor program and seeks to work with caller organizations, square dance organizations and others to reverse the growth and energize square dancing. John's ten suggestions fit hand in glove with ACA's commitment and desires.

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](https://www.americancallers.com/news).

Until next time, happy dancing.