

*News, Notes 'n Nonsense :*  
*A Magazine for Callers & Cuers*

# OCTEMBER 2017

(combined October & November  
Magazines)

***DATES to REMEMBER for 2018***

20-21 January 2018	SARDANSW Callers Education Weekend at Corrimal RSL Club
20-23 April 2018	59 <sup>th</sup> Annual Australian national Square Dance Convention – Perth, Western Australia ( <a href="http://www.perth2018.org.au/">http://www.perth2018.org.au/</a> )
27-29 July 2018	NSW State Square Dance Convention – Great Lakes College, the orthern Parkway Tuncurry NSW ( <a href="http://taws.info/taws/39th-nsw-ssdc-reg-form.pdf">http://taws.info/taws/39th-nsw-ssdc-reg-form.pdf</a> )

# WHAT'S INSIDE THIS MONTH

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## ***ON THE INSIDE TRACK***

Hi everyone.

Well, at long last I have been able to get this issue ready to send out. As most are aware following a weekend Anniversary Special for Essendon Square Dance Club in Melbourne in October, I had a stroke. It must have happened during the night after the Sunday dinner. I woke many times during the night with a pounding headache and a really "off feeling". I flew home on Monday, and after a harrowing experience getting back Sydney, I was still unaware of what happened and I just put everything down being overtired. Sue wanted to call an ambulance, but the typical "macho male" (me), talked her in to leaving it until Tuesday to see how I felt. On Tuesday morning nothing changed, and Sue called the ambulance. My slurred speech should have been an indicator, but I just shrugged it off.

I had a stroke that caused damage at the base of my brain (which puts to rest the notion that I did not have one) stem. While there was no paralysis, my balance is affected, as is control of my right hand. My speech has improved however; there is still a long way to go. I am still able to call, however the inflection in my voice has changed. I can do some singing calls, although my singing ability (not that I had much to start with) is definitely impaired. I know where the notes are; but I just can not get my voice to go there. I can get away with it but to me it sounds as though I am tone deaf. I am seeing a speech therapist and I hope that improvement can be made.

It takes me a lot longer to type at the moment as my right hand just does not want to go to the correct keys. What was 20 minutes, now takes me 2 hours! Most frustrating!

The support I have received from everyone during this very trying time has been fantastic and I thank all of you who sent letters of encouragement, advice and supporting comments. It will obviously be a long recovery process; however I am pretty stubborn, so I will not let it get me down. Sue, as usual, has been wonderful and has taken time off to look after me. The stroke was bad enough, but the addition of diabetes has compounded the problem. Nevertheless, Sue has been training me to eat correctly, preparing the medication for me each day and making sure I check the sugar levels. She tells me when I have done too much and makes sure that I rest. I always get the last word though. It is always "Yes Dear". At least I can drive again....was not allowed to drive for 4 weeks after the stroke...very frustrating as we bought a new car!!! Finally got to drive it last week!

As noted in the September issue of BTM, I had planned a special "Supplement" with material aimed predominantly at new callers to be sent out late September.

Due to various commitments, this was delayed and a combined September October Supplement for New callers was issued in October. These supplements for Newer Callers will continue to be released periodically although not necessarily on a monthly basis. It all depends on how busy we get!!!!

The BTM website is still in its early stages. There have been a few problems with the organization of the Sound Archives to be available, but everything is moving forward. We hope to have this ready late next month (fingers crossed).

We at Behind the Mike thank you for your patience and support and hope you forgive the little delays in release. As always your comments, critiques and submissions to any articles are welcome and we will do our best to get to them all. We may not publish all of the letters but they do get read and we do try to get back to everyone that has questions for us.

## ***QUESTIONS FROM OUR READERS:***

**From Bruce Barton;**

Hi Barry. I was interested in following through on Shaun Werkels article in the last edition September BTM. There is a lot of good content about using Modules. The idea of using TAG THE LINE following WALK AND DODGE has merit to providing an alternative to PARTNER TRADE. The example of a module using Partner Lines as the start and finish of the module using the above combination was a good approach except for one thing. The one thing of vital importance that has been emphasized repeatedly in previous BTMs is that the choreography has to be correct. (Mel's Note: This refers to the first module routine of the article)

Response:

**Hi Bruce.**

You are absolutely correct. We missed that in the choreographic review. Good Catch. Please see the correction as follows.

Correction to September 2017 Edition of Behind the Mike: In the article Creating Interesting Square Dance Choreography by Shaun Werkele,

The first sequence was:

- (Partner Lines): PASS THE OCEAN, RECYCLE, VEER LEFT, COUPLES CIRCULATE, 1/2 TAG (THE LINE), WALK & DODGE, TAG THE LINE – FACE IN, PASS THRU, U-TURN BACK (Partner Lines):

As noted by Bruce Burton, the end position is incorrect. This module ends in partner lines out of sequence.

It should read:

- (Partner Lines): PASS THE OCEAN, RECYCLE, VEER LEFT, COUPLES CIRCULATE, 1/2 TAG (THE LINE), WALK & DODGE, TAG THE LINE – FACE IN, BOX THE GNAT, RIGHT AND LEFT THRU.  
(Partner Lines):

Alternatively, Bruce offered an alternative routine which flows equally well and highlights the point of breaking from the norm of partner trade after the walk and dodge. I like your sequence suggestion as well;

- (PL) PASS THE OCEAN, RECYCLE, VEER LEFT, ½ TAG, WALK AND DODGE, TAG THE LINE, ENDS U-TURN BACK, STAR THRU (PL)

## ***2018 Australian National Convention - Update***

Next year's National Convention in Perth is getting closer. To callers planning on attending, do not forget that the cut-off date for Caller Registrations is November 30th. The Convention committee has advised that they are looking forward to a truly great weekend.

I have to say that I always enjoy the National Convention. It is really the only chance that we callers have of spending time together. This social time is invaluable for all callers. Networking, trading ideas or just being able to talk to each other face to face over a cup of coffee (or sometimes something stronger) is a great way to relax and enjoy what life has to offer. We are determined (as we are every year that we will again like every year we will again have the chance to fix every problem in the square dance world at the same time!

## ***Australian Caller Federation (ACF) Update***

The ACF Board has been discussing ways to better streamline the current Eligibility system for callers applying to call at National Conventions. As with all things in life, evolutionary processes occur that make some of our previous ideas outdated.

Our aim is to keep up with the changes within the framework established and has a system that reflects current trends, and is fair to all callers, while still

achieving the goal of giving the dancers attending these functions the best experience possible.

Of course, all changes do take time to make certain that what we have is the most workable system within these parameters. It is hoped that we should have this completed within the next few weeks. Will keep everyone informed

## ***Red Barons Triple Celebration Weekend***

(October 2017)

Well, the weekend that Sue and I had been looking forward to for so long is now but a memory for us. Red Barons Square Dance Club celebrated 43 years of dancing, I celebrated my 50<sup>th</sup> year of calling and I also got to celebrate my 70th birthday.

Kevin Kelly from Western Australia A did an outstanding job in entertaining the troops. In his typical style, he had them rolling in the aisles. It was a sight to behold when he arrived for the Saturday night dance dressed as a Monk (Bald head and all). There were lots of dancers in attendance (about 140) and also many visiting callers including Peter Humphries (Vic), Howard Cockburn (Vic), Jaden Frigo (Vic), Janet Cook (Vic), Brian Hotchkies (NSW), David Todd (NSW), Jan Johnson (NSW), Allen Kerr (ACT), Alannah Smith (ACT), Gary Petersen (Qld), Jeff Van Sambecck (WA) and many others. For Rounds we had Ed Coleman, Helen Hodalj, Janet Cook & Jaden Frigo.

It was really great to see everyone having a great time. Kevin did quite a few duets with many of the visiting callers. Kevin also presented two caller seminars on music and entertainment, which were both well received by all.

I did call a patter call at the start of the Saturday night dance; but as I was just recovering from the stroke, I was not ready to attempt a singing call as my singing ability was still not up to scratch. The only real downer for me was that at around 5am on Sunday morning, Sue had to call an ambulance to take me to hospital. I was suffering from severe abdominal pains which turned out to be diverticulitis. This resulted in a few more days in hospital. Bummer again; but at least it was nothing too very serious.

Many thanks go out to Kevin and all the visiting callers for creating such a wonderful dance atmosphere for everyone.

## ***SARDANSW Caller Training Weekend Update***

Over the weekend of January 20-21 2018, SARDANSW will be running our 3rd Annual Caller Education Weekend. This will again be held at Corrimal RSL Club here on the sunny south coast, and will also again feature Mel Wilkerson as our Caller Coach. There is a flyer and further information at the end of this issue. Both the 2016 and 2017 weekends were super successful, so come along and join us for this great experience. The weekend is planned to build on the previous training sessions with the focus on preparation, performance and delivery.

### **2018 SARDANSW CALLER WEEKEND**

**Caller Sessions** will be as follows:

SATURDAY MORNING	10:00am - 12:30pm
SATURDAY LUNCH	12.30pm - 1.30pm
SATURDAY AFTERNOON	1.30pm - 4.30pm
SATURDAY EVENING DANCE	7.30pm - 10.30pm

SUNDAY MORNING	10.00am - 12.30pm
SUNDAY LUNCH	12.30pm - 1.30pm
SUNDAY AFTERNOON	1.30pm - 4.30pm

This weekend is open to all callers and interested dancers. Mel Wilkerson will be our Caller Coach. As with the 2017 weekend, the presentations will be interesting, informative and entertaining. This is one weekend not to miss. There will be a dance on Saturday Evening, with Mel and a few special guests.

## ***2020 National Convention & ACF Caller Conference Update***

As most are aware, the Australian National Convention in 2020 will be held in New South Wales in the magnificent Blue Mountains at Wentworth Falls. Wentworth Falls is located just a few minutes from scenic Katoomba and all the local attractions.

The Convention will be held over the Easter Weekend (starting Good Friday and going thru to Tuesday). Prior to the Convention the ACF will be organizing a Caller Conference. This will begin the preceding Monday thru Wednesday. We will have a special Callerlab accredited Caller Coach as well as a professional Voice coach. There will also be other presenters over the 3 days. This should be an outstanding Conference, so mark it in your calendars.

Best wishes  
Barry

## ***COURTESY TURNS*** By John Goodwin (from New England Dancer Magazine - 1990's)

- TURN thyself, from the Devil's Brew, for verily there is no call for "Stagger Thru"
- TURN up thy hearing aid, and let thy caller/cuers words pass thru.
- TURN thyself many times in thy tub or shower, lest ye offend during the Star Thru.
- TURN thy mouth upward, that a smile is truly, the Dixie Style.
- TURN thyself in haste to the call "square 'em up" lest ye find the boat already loaded.
- TURN NOT to a Dive Thru, when the call was circle halfway.
- TURN NOT into a traffic cop, lest ye become an outcast.
- TURN thy partner with gentleness, lest ye get pushed under during the next ocean wave.
- TURN NOT from a beginner's square, lest they close the friendship door and Lock It.
- TURN thyself away from horseplay, lest ye cause thy neighbour to explode the square.
- TURN NOT an accusing finger, lest ye receive a Curli Cross to the chin.
- TURN thyself in rhythm lest ye shall surely indeed be doing the limp step.
- TURN away from coveting thy neighbour's style, lest ye lose thine own star variations.
- TURN often toward your partner and give him / her a big scrunch (Yellow Rock).



# ***SOUND ARCHIVE***

## ***EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS***

- 2015 SARDANSW Training Day at Blaxland (quality varies)
- 2016 SARDANSW Weekend at Corrimal RSL Club
- 2016 SARDANSW Weekend at Port Macquarie
- 2016 SARDANSW State Convention Caller Sessions (Jaden Frigo & Gary Petersen)
- CALLERLAB 1982 : Voice Session (2) with vocal coach Arden Hopkin
- CALLERLAB 1982 : Keeping Mainstream Fun
- CALLERLAB 1983 : Advanced Interest Session
- CALLERLAB 1983 : Challenge Interest Session
- CALLERLAB 1985 : Mainstream Choreography Session
- CALLERLAB 1985: Voice Interest Session
- CALLERLAB 1985: Programming Thru Music
- CALLERLAB 1985: Duties of MC / Showmanship
- CALLERLAB 1985: Techniques In The Use Of Music
- CALLERLAB 1985: Techniques For Self Improvement
- CALLERLAB 1985 : Plus Choreography Session
- CALLERLAB 1988 : After-Party Fun
- CALLERLAB 1988 : One Night Stands
- CALLERLAB 1985: Teaching By Definition Part 2
- CALLERLAB 1983: Contra Session
- CALLERLAB 1983: DBD Session
- CALLERLAB 1983: One Night stands
- CALLERLAB 1983: Music
- CALLERLAB 1983: New & Innovative
- CALLERLAB 1983: Programming Session
- CALLERLAB 1983: Mainstream Session
- CALLERLAB 1983: Advanced Session
- CALLERLAB 1983: Challenge Session
- CALLERLAB 1980: Creative Choreography MAINSTREAM
- CALLERLAB 1980: Creative Choreography PLUS
- CALLERLAB 1983: Traditional Dance & Music Session

## ***DANCE RECORDINGS***

- SPECIAL DANCE with Bronc Wise & Jet Roberts
- 1977 NSW Square Dance Society Cabaret with BARRY WONSON (scary voice back then)
- 1980 Willoughby 1989 Weekend with KEN BOWER (plus Barry Wonson, Peter Humphries & David Smythe)
- 1988 Weekend with WADE DRIVER (plus Barry Wonson, Peter Humphries & Brian Hotchkies)
- 2014 RED BARONS Weekend with KEVIN KELLY & BARRY WONSON
- Wade Driver Weekend Part 2

I hope to transcribe our recent Weekend with Kevin Kelly shortly. Hopefully, it and many others will also be available shortly.

# THE WORKSHOP

## *Belligerent but Beautiful Basic*

By Mel Wilkerson

There has been a lot of commentary regarding the use of basic dancing as a level, (even club 50 as a level by itself). Much of the commentary is negative saying basic dancing is boring and not a challenge – not even fun. By contrast, the callers that use the programs well (even club 50) get phenomenal positive feedback. Some even call basic in challenge and advance halls to give the dancers a good challenge and they often do not even realize it.

I have thought about this for quite a while now. I try to consider myself a fairly good caller, but I am one of those dinosaurs that continues to believe that we have an excellent basic and an equally excellent mainstream program. I am quite vocal about using the programs to the fullest and callers working and developing choreography for the levels they call.

I am a very anti – RUSH TO PLUS (that is only an expression) meaning that I believe that callers and dancers push or pull new dancers way too fast to get the next level without really learning the level they are dancing. This is partly dancers wanting to pull the dancers up to dance at the higher levels where it is (and I hate this reasoning) **more challenging and more fun** – not boring and you have to think a little about what you are doing. My personal opinion on this is generally “It is mainly, callers not doing their work and taking the easy road out.” Dancers are there to be entertained through the performance, the show, the social aspect of the activity and **YES – With the Choreography**. This doesn't mean it is so far out in left field it is un-danceable with fractionalized sub fractions of partial definitions from abstract locations. It does mean however, using the programs from multiple set ups, calling smooth danceable material that has variety and intrigue but most of all is entertaining and provokes a bit of thought that dancers can have fun successfully (the key is dancers succeed).

For those of you that know me, you know that I have been calling for just over 35 years. I only call to A1 level because I choose to. I chose to start calling Advanced for purely business reasons – I wasn't getting hired for big dances with limited number of callers because the levels were Mainstream Plus and Advanced. Besides, I am still having fun.

I would like to think that any caller that calls mainstream can call a full basic program to its fullest potential. I would likewise think that any caller that can

call plus, can call a full basic and mainstream program that is challenging, interesting and a lot of fun for the dancers.

Amongst callers there is a lot of put your money where your mouth is. Thanks Barry Wonson, Allen Kerr, Jerry Story, Don Beck and Tony Oxendine and Ken Ritucci amongst many over the years that have encouraged me at various times over the years to use the programs wisely and fully with the goal focused on dancer entertainment, excitement, challenge, fun, and success.

Well here is the money where the mouth is moment. Challenge and fun at basic - the hardest level to call, and the foundation for good dancing at every level. Basic is where the most challenge is for dancers and callers alike if done properly.

**My challenge in this article is 30 movements or less.**

1. Allemande left
2. Right and Left Grand
3. Box the gnat
4. Pass thru
5. Swing
6. Promenade
7. ½ sashay
8. U-turn back
9. Right and left thru
10. Pass thru
11. Square thru
12. Star thru
13. Pass to the centre
14. Veer left/right
15. Pass the ocean
16. Swing thru
17. Run
18. Trade
19. Bend the line
20. Lead right
21. Circle to a line
22. Flutterwheel
23. Sweep 1/4
24. Separate
25. Circulate
26. Wheel and deal
27. Ferris wheel
28. Double pass thru
29. Zoom
30. Chain down the line

## SOME PATTERN:

- HEADS LEFT TOUCH 1/4, JUST THE BOYS PASS THRU, CENTRES LEFT SQUARE THRU 3, OUTSIDE BOYS RUN (LEFT), ALL LEFT TOUCH 1/4, CENTRES TRADE, BOYS RUN, PASS THRU, WHEEL and DEAL, PASS THRU TWICE, RIGHT AND LEFT GRAND
- HEADS PASS THE OCEAN, SWING THRU, GIRL ONLY U-TURN BACK, CENTRES ONLY VEER LEFT, EVERYBODY ONLY VEER LEFT, CHAIN DOWN THE LINE, TOUCH 1/4, CIRCULATE, BOYS RUN, PASS TO THE CENTRE, PASS THRU, SQUARE THRU 3, ALLEMANDE LEFT
- HEADS RIGHT AND LEFT THRU, SIDES ½ SASHAY, HEADS STAR THRU, PASS THRU, PASS TO THE CENTRE, PASS THRU, CIRCLE TO A LINE, BOYS PASS THRU, BOYS RUN, GIRLS SQUARE THRU, BOYS FACE, SWING YOUR CORNER, ALL PROMENADE
- HEADS PROMENADE 1/2 WAY, SQUARE THRU 2, TOUCH 1/4, CENTRES TRADE, SWING THRU, CENTRES RUN, BEND THE LINE, REVERSE FLUTTERWHEEL (PICK UP SAME SEX), HALF SASHAY 1-1/2, CENTRES PASS THRU, HOME – BOW TO CORNER, (**NOTE**, this can end with a swing and promenade for a singing call)

## SOME RESOLUTION MODULES

- **(PL)** - PASS THRU, GIRLS RUN, CENTRES TRADE, LEFT SWING THRU, SPLIT CIRCULATE, SPLIT CIRCULATE AGAIN, BOYS RUN, PASS THE OCEAN, RIGHT AND LEFT GRAND
- **(PL)** PASS THRU, BEND THE LINE, COUPLES ON THE LEFT ONLY - REVERSE WHEEL AROUND, BOYS TAKE HANDS AND TRADE, COUPLES CIRCULATE, BEND THE LINE -- **AND** -- EVERYBODY WHEEL AROUND (**facing out**), JUST THE GIRLS TRADE, EVERYBODY - RIGHT HAND TRADE, FACE THAT PERSON, RIGHT AND LEFT GRAND
- **(PL)** PASS THRU, GIRLS RUN, CENTRES TRADE, LEFT SWING THRU, SPLIT CIRCULATE, SPLIT CIRCULATE AGAIN, BOYS RUN, PASS THE OCEAN, RIGHT AND LEFT GRAND,
- **(CB)** LEFT TOUCH ¼, CENTRES TRADE, SPLIT CIRCULATE, GIRLS RUN, FERRIS WHEEL, PASS THRU, ALLEMANDE LEFT **(CB)** (**NOTE**: ensure you have a left hand free coming into the corner box)

## SOME BASIC SINGING CALLS

- HEADS FLUTTER WHEEL, SWEEP 1/4, PASS THRU, SWING THRU, GIRLS CIRCULATE, BOYS TRADE, BOYS RUN, BEND THE LINE, RIGHT and LEFT THRU, (**careful here**) PUT THE LADIES IN THE LEAD - DOUBLE PASS THRU, GIRLS GO LEFT, BOYS GO RIGHT, SWING CORNER, PROMENADE HOME (**Note – timing delivery is critical**)
- HEADS PASS THRU, SEPARATE AROUND 1 TO A LINE, LEFT TOUCH 1/4, CENTRE FOUR ONLY ZOOM (boy go back and girl move up), ALL 8 CIRCULATE, EVERYBODY ZOOM (*girls go back and boys move up*), BOYS RUN LEFT, PASS THRU, TRADE BY, BOX THE GNAT, PASS THRU, SWING and PROMENADE
- HEADS PROMENADE 1/2, SIDES BOX THE GNAT, (S) PASS THE OCEAN, STEP THRU, **AND** CIRCLE 4 TO A LINE (*boys in the middle*), PASS THRU, WHEEL AND DEAL, ZOOM, CENTRES TOUCH ¼, BOYS RUN, SWING THE OUTSIDES AND PROMENADE (**NOTE:** this works very well for some sinning calls but not so well for others due to the nuance of choreography lyrics – delivery and timing is important)
- HEADS PROMENADE 1/2, LEAD RIGHT, SQUARE THRU 3, TRADE BY, SWING THRU, BOYS RUN, BEND THE LINE, LEFT TOUCH 1/4, ALL 8 CIRCULATE, GIRLS RUN, SWING AND PROMENADE
- HEADS RIGHT AND LEFT THRU, SIDES ½ SASHAY, HEADS STAR THRU, PASS THRU, PASS TO THE CENTRE, PASS THRU, CIRCLE 4 TO A LINE, BOYS PASS THRU, BOYS RUN, GIRLS SQUARE THRU, BOYS FACE, SWING YOUR CORNER AND PROMENADE
- HEADS RIGHT and LEFT THRU, FLUTTERWHEEL (Back away), SIDE LEAD RIGHT, TOUCH 1/4, GIRLS RUN, REVERSE FLUTTERWHEEL (girls in), SWEEP 1/4, HALF SASHAY (boy in front), SWING, PROMENADE
- HEADS PROMENADE 1/2, SAME 4 -LEFT SQUARE THRU 4, LEFT SWING THRU, GIRLS RUN, FERRIS WHEEL, CENTRES WHEEL AROUND, SWING and PROMENADE
- HEADS PASS THE OCEAN, SWING THRU, SIDES SEPARATE – **AND** -- HOOK ON THE ENDS OF THE WAVE, **EVERYBODY-** RIGHT AND LEFT THRU, PASS THRU, WHEEL and DEAL, ZOOM, ZOOM (again) – “BUT WHEN YOU MEET” - SWING AND PROMENADE HOME

□



## *Mel's Meanderings*

### *Preparing and Practicing the Premiere Patter*

**Delivering that First Patter Hoedown - getting behind the Mike.** I receive a lot of comments and queries from new and newer callers that are just starting out and are being encouraged to call patter. This is great. Many of the same callers tell me that they are told to “just sight call”- and move the dancers around to the music and do not worry about who is where. – My opinion, this is not great.

There are many books, texts, modules, organizational workshops, caller schools and other resources available to all callers at any level. Nevertheless, when virtually, (yes there are a few exceptions) all callers start, they begin to practice their first patters by using the known. This usually takes two forms

1. Just calling random movements to feel the rhythm of patter and working the music. (just saying the words to the music- the choreography is irrelevant)
  - One benefit of this is you learn to adapt phrasing and flow of word annunciation with the music.
  - One big drawback is that you are not actually using the music timing of movements and body flow to incorporate into your patter.
2. The second and more common thing that happens is that most new callers know about 1-5 singing calls and draw on that memory of the figures to adapt their patter routines into flowing and successful flow
  - One benefit of this is that the timing is known usually for the movements and the body flow is accurate usually to a resolution. It is comfortable and easy. It is also a good way to adapt patter phrasing and flow with the music.
  - One drawback is that your patter may become redundant and you tend to rely on the same flow figures over and over again.

**HOWEVER:** while the first method may help you call phrases and movements

rather than “sing” the calls, the second method does the same but is also a very valuable tool. The choreography works and you get a “feel for its use”

I have been asked by so many new callers. “How do you Sight-Call and still remember so many zeroes and combinations and modules. **Part of the secret is to accept that PURE SIGHT CALLING IS A MYTH – IT DOESN’T EXIST.**

However remember these words, **PREPARATION** and **PRACTICE**. Sight calling and sight resolution is only the application of memorized techniques rather than memorizing or reading all your choreography. However, like all techniques, it is important to start this the basics. And the next basic is for the new caller, getting ready to call your first patter or hoedown.

For a new caller, patter is probably one of the most daunting things in front of you, especially when “sight calling”. Unfortunately “sight resolution” is too often pushed as the immediate target goal for most callers. Quite frankly, from a dancer’s perspective, I would rather have someone who has practice and prepared, and occasionally glances at a cue cards or computer screen but calls a good dance, than have someone who is forcing his/her way through stress and torment by trying to sight resolve because they were told that is all they needed.

I have not met a good caller mentor or coach yet that tells new callers you must sight call from day one. Many will ensure callers understand the mechanics of each movement, and will have them analyze calls to see what each call does, and what can be called from the end points of each movement. That is not sight calling – that is learning the basics.

With regard to calling patter, especially the first time, the emphasis should be on:

1. Always put the dancers first. Let them dance.
2. **PREPARATION and PRACTICE**
3. Smooth and flowing sequences that do what you want them to
4. **PREPARATION and PRACTICE**
5. Comfortable routines that you know work
6. **PREPARATION and PRACTICE**
7. Knowing your routines so that you can watch the dancers and follow timing and flow.
8. **PREPARATION and PRACTICE**
9. **PREPARATION and PRACTICE**
10. **PREPARATION and PRACTICE**

Many experienced mentors and coaches tell their newer callers to pick one or two singing calls, write out the figures, and memorize them. Then just work on using the singing call figures as your patter.

From there the progression is the introduction of a few zero modules to add a little variety. **P.S.** - It is perfectly OK to have a cue card with your zero module(s) in big letters so you can refresh at a glance set down off to the side somewhere. You can mix them in and use them where appropriate because you have your singing call figures memorized. You have identified the boxes and lines where you can use your zeroes. And importantly you have gone back and done steps 2, 4,6,8,9 and 10 as outlined above.

Good caller mentors and coaches will tell you that you can break down most singing calls into “patter modules” for use and to build up your Calling Toolkit. But they will also tell you that; *“Doing this is not all there is to calling patter. It is only one small tool in the basic starter kit moving dancers around the floor”*.

In this article we will look at the next stage of calling - Getting up and doing that first daunting “patter call” or hoedown. What will be highlighted in this article is the use of singing call figures in patter. **Important:** Many singing call figures do not easily breakdown in to bits and pieces to give you module zeros. (In other words, you may not get a corner box or partner line anywhere in the singing call figure. **THIS DOES NOT MEAN YOU CANNOT USE IT. IT JUST MEANS YOU HAVE A LITTLE MORE PREPARATION AND PRACTICE THAT YOU WILL HAVE TO DO WITH THAT FIGURE.**

This is true of many (probably nearly ½) of all singing calls when you start getting into more complex choreography. The SECRET to using those figures is “Do not even try to break down these more complex ones into anything beyond the basics formations and relationships”. **If you do, you will only frustrate yourself trying to think of 1p2c lines or 1c-3p OS box and all sorts of crap that you really do not need to frustrate yourself with .....the simple rule is KEEP IT SIMPLE**

**Do you need to know what a FASR/FAROO CW/CCW 1-3 OS position by number and letter designation means? – NO.** It is nice to know and eventually you may learn all that stuff, but in reality, at this point you don’t need it and frankly, you do not want it. All you will really need to start is an understanding of what is a box what is a line, what is a boy and what is a girl. Again **KEEP IT SIMPLE.**

At this point you should already know what corner boxes (CB) or partner lines (PL) are. If not, simply put they are (Formation) boxes or lines where the couples (Relationship) are standard boy on the left and girl on the right and from which you can call an allemande left. The best examples are a Heads Square Thru 4 box (Corner Box) or a heads Lead Right and Circle to a Line (Partner Line).

Let’s set a common scenario for new callers. You have been asked to prepare a

tip to call at the next club dance.

To illustrate the use of singing calls as a patter, let's look at a specific singing call figure. The singing call you chose, or were provided, has the following lyrics in the figure:

Why 1 & 3 (2 & 4) you square thru & you count 4 hands you know  
When you see the corner girl, do a little dosado  
Swing thru and now boys run to the right  
Tag the line and when you're there, let's cloverleaf tonight  
Oh girls square thru, go 3 hands around  
Swing that corner lady, promenade her down....singing....

**Step one:** take out all the filler and fluff and just look at the movements.

(H) SQUARE THRU 4 , DO-SA-DO, SWING THRU, BOYS RUN, TAG THE LINE, CLOVERLEAF, GIRLS SQUARE THRU 3, CORNER

**Step 2:** Break it down into recognizable formations. (remember to **KEEP IT SIMPLE**.)

- Heads square thru puts it into a box position (two boxes and in this case a corner box or an allemande left box)
- Do-sa-do does nothing to either the formation or arrangement – still a corner box.
- Swing thru – boys run (this makes a two face line with your original sides facing out and the heads not paired facing in and out of sequence. – in other words a two face line where you can call a wheel and deal and be at an allemande left) – this is not my corner box or partner line so I ignore it at this point. (Remember to **KEEP IT SIMPLE**)
- Tag the line – this puts you in a completed double pass thru position with the girls in the lead – (for new callers this is a difficult formation to pick and flow from so again - we will ignore it for now. (Remember to **KEEP IT SIMPLE**)
- Cloverleaf – puts the girls in the middle of a double pass thru position – again this is a more difficult formation to recognise for new callers at a glance so we leave it alone. (Remember to **KEEP IT SIMPLE**)
- Girls square thru 3 – corner swing. – **Note:** this corner swing formation is not good for an allemande left because two of the couples have to do full turns to sort out and normalise the square.

Repeat this process for two or three singing call figures that you have memorized.

BREAK IT DOWN AND ADD IN YOUR ZERO POINTS (for now just stick with Corner Box (CB) and Partner Line (PL). Many of you know many more formations and arrangements but remember this is your first performance patter so let's keep it simple.

After the initial square thru you are in a corner box (allemande left box). You can add in any true 'geographic (footprint) module for a box, or any singing call figure remnant that takes you from a corner box to a corner box.

- In our first choice for a singing call figure you have:

(H) SQUARE THRU 4 , (CB) DO-SA-DO, SWING THRU, BOYS RUN, TAG THE LINE, CLOVERLEAF, GIRLS SQUARE THRU 3, CORNER

- In our second choice for a singing call figure you have:

(H) PROMENADE  $\frac{1}{2}$  , SIDES RIGHT AND LEFT THRU, SQUARE THRU FOUR (CB), RIGHT AND LEFT THRU, VEER LEFT, FERRIS WHEEL, PASS THRU (CB), SWING CORNER

- In our third choice for a singing call figure you have:

HEADS SQUARE THRU 4, (CB) SWING THRU, GIRLS CIRCULATE BOYS TRADE, BOYS RUN, BEND THE LINE, (PL) TOUCH  $\frac{1}{4}$  ALL 8 CIRCULATE, BOYS RUN, (CB) SWING CORNER.

From here you have enough material to call an entire patter with variety and flexibility. You have not even looked at the dancers yet. Actually you probably haven't even left the kitchen table yet. What you have done however is look at just calling a patter tip. We can now prepare.

**Step 3:** In step 3 you need to look at our singing call figures and see what you have.

1. You have three complete modules that take the dancers from a static square to a corner. (the three singing call figures)
2. You have several sequences that take the dancers from a corner box to a corner (each singing call figure starting from the CB point to the corner)

3. You have two sequences that take the dancers from a corner box to a corner box (from singing call sequences 2 and 3)
  - **(CB), RIGHT AND LEFT THRU, VEER LEFT, FERRIS WHEEL, PASS THRU (CB)**
  - **(CB) SWING THRU, GIRLS CIRCULATE BOYS TRADE, BOYS RUN, BEND THE LINE, (PL) TOUCH ¼ ALL 8 CIRCULATE, BOYS RUN, (CB)**
4. You have one sequence that takes the dancers from a corner box to a partner line (from singing call sequence three)
  - **(CB) SWING THRU, GIRLS CIRCULATE BOYS TRADE, BOYS RUN, BEND THE LINE, (PL)**
5. You have one sequence that takes the dancers from a partner line to a corner box (from singing call sequence 3)
  - **(PL) TOUCH ¼ ALL 8 CIRCULATE, BOYS RUN, (CB)**
6. You have one sequence that takes the dancers from a partner line to a corner. (from singing call sequence 3)
  - **(PL) TOUCH ¼ ALL 8 CIRCULATE, BOYS RUN, (CB) CORNER**

**Step 4:** Get ONE LINE ZERO AND ONE BOX ZERO that use a movement that is in your singing call figures. That will be the theme movement for your patter.

For the purpose of this article I chose the movement CLOVERLEAF as my focus or theme move. For the corner box (CB) and partner line (PL) module, I want to ensure there is good flow, but they are simple and easy to remember. If they are similar in nature and complimentary that is even better. The modules I chose are:

- **(CB-CB) Module:** PASS THRU, ENDS CLOVERLEAF, CENTRES TOUCH 1/4, BOYS RUN
- **(PL-PL) Module:** SQUARE THRU 4, OUTSIDES CLOVERLEAF, CENTRES TOUCH ¼, BOYS RUN, SLIDE THRU.

Memories your modules. Then more **PREPARATION AND PRACTICE.**

**Step 5:** Write your sequences down on cue cards.

It is always controversial when I say this, but every caller does it at one point or another, and even more so as you get to higher levels. It may be on a screen or in a book or on a cue card, but every caller I know has them. Your writing has to be big enough to see from a distance. (Hint: stand up, take two steps away from the table and glance at a cue card. It has to be big enough to read (refresh at a glance) from there. **For me, I use 16-24 point font Arial bold type.**

**Step 6:** Sir Mix and Match a Lot.

This is the point where things start to get real. Now you are ready to start preparing out patter for our first tip, or our guest tip. Caller experience levels may vary, and the knowledge base increases with experience, however; the process is pretty much the same. Remember those two words again. **PREPARATION AND PRACTICE.** This is the point where you put it all together.

You have three singing call figures, two zeroes and a focus movement. You are ready to prepare a full tip with a patter and a singing call.

### **Singing calls:**

- (H) SQUARE THRU 4 , **(CB)** DO-SA-DO, SWING THRU, BOYS RUN, TAG THE LINE, CLOVERLEAF, GIRLS SQUARE THRU 3, **\*\*CORNER** (\*\*Not a good allemande left)
- (H) PROMENADE ½ , SIDES RIGHT AND LEFT THRU, SQUARE THRU FOUR **(CB)**, RIGHT AND LEFT THRU, VEER LEFT, FERRIS WHEEL, PASS THRU **(CB)**, SWING CORNER
- (H) SQUARE THRU 4, **(CB)** SWING THRU, GIRLS CIRCULATE, BOYS TRADE, BOYS RUN, BEND THE LINE, **(PL)** TOUCH ¼, ALL 8 CIRCULATE, BOYS RUN, **(CB)** SWING CORNER

### **Zeroes:**

- (CB-CB): PASS THRU, ENDS CLOVERLEAF, CENTRES TOUCH 1/4, BOYS RUN
- (PL-PL): SQUARE THRU 4, OUTSIDES CLOVERLEAF, CENTRES TOUCH ¼, BOYS RUN, SLIDE THRU.

From here do not write any long sequences out. Use only the cue cards, with sequences no longer than that written above. (see sample cue card below)

<p><b>(H) SQUARE THRU 4, (CB)</b>  <b>SWING THRU,</b>  <b>GIRLS CIRCULATE,</b>  <b>BOYS TRADE,</b>  <b>BOYS RUN,</b>  <b>BEND THE LINE, (PL)</b>  <b>TOUCH 1/4,</b>  <b>ALL 8 CIRCULATE,</b>  <b>BOYS RUN, (CB) CNR</b></p>	<p><b>(CB): PASS THRU,</b>  <b>ENDS CLOVERLEAF,</b>  <b>CENTRES TOUCH 1/4,</b>  <b>BOYS RUN (CB)</b></p> <p><b>(PL): SQUARE THRU 4,</b>  <b>OUTSIDES CLOVERLEAF,</b>  <b>CENTRES TOUCH 1/4,</b>  <b>BOYS RUN,</b>  <b>SLIDE THRU (PL).</b></p>
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### REMEMBER – KEEP IT SIMPLE.

**An opener:** You have decided that the singing call figure that will be used in the actual singing call is the first one. You also know that the corner swing in that singing call, is not good for an allemande left. **BUT** you want to ensure the dancers know it and succeed with it. In order to use this figure, you have to make sure that everyone has their original partner as their corner at the start of the figure. This can be done, and hide the figure as an opening sequence as follows.

- Heads right and left thru, head ladies chain, sides right and left thru, side ladies chain, all 4 ladies chain  $\frac{3}{4}$  (everyone has corner as their partner in a static square) Call the figure and end with a swing your partner...
  - (H) SQUARE THRU, DO-SA-DO, SWING THRU, BOYS RUN, TAG THE LINE, CLOVERLEAF, GIRLS SQUARE THRU 3, **Swing her, allemande left and a right and left grand.**

**Step 7:** Calling the singing call with the modules at the zero points

Now you are going to start calling patter sequences. You use your three known singing call figures but insert corner box modules or partner line modules where you can; once or maybe twice maximum in the sequence. You want your sequences to be short – this is more for your comfort levels than that of the dancers. (It will be better for them to though)

- **Sequence 1:** (H) PROMENADE  $\frac{1}{2}$  , SIDES RIGHT AND LEFT THRU, SQUARE THRU FOUR, **(CB) - (CB-CB): PASS THRU, ENDS CLOVERLEAF, CENTRES TOUCH 1/4, BOYS RUN),** RIGHT AND LEFT THRU, VEER LEFT, FERRIS WHEEL, PASS THRU **(CB), ALLEMANDE LEFT.....**

- **Sequence 2:** (H) SQUARE THRU 4, (CB) SWING THRU, GIRLS CIRCULATE, BOYS TRADE, BOYS RUN, BEND THE LINE, (PL - (PL-PL): SQUARE THRU 4, OUTSIDES CLOVERLEAF, CENTRES TOUCH  $\frac{1}{4}$ , BOYS RUN, SLIDE THRU.) TOUCH  $\frac{1}{4}$ , ALL 8 CIRCULATE, BOYS RUN, (CB) ALLEMANDE LEFT
- **Sequence 3:** (H) PROMENADE  $\frac{1}{2}$ , (S)RIGHT AND LEFT THRU, (H) SQUARE THRU,(CB) - (CB-PL) SWING THRU, GIRLS CIRCULATE, BOYS TRADE, BOYS RUN, BEND THE LINE, (PL) - (PL - (PL-PL): SQUARE THRU 4, OUTSIDES CLOVERLEAF, CENTRES TOUCH  $\frac{1}{4}$ , BOYS RUN, SLIDE THRU.) (PL)-(PL-CB) TOUCH  $\frac{1}{4}$ , ALL 8 CIRCULATE, BOYS RUN (CB), RIGHT AND LEFT THRU, VEER LEFT, FERRIS WHEEL, PASS THRU (CB), ALLEMANDE LEFT
- **Sequence 4,5,6,7 etc:** Mix and match a lot.

All of the above sequences are samples of mixing and matching using only choreography (except the 4 ladies chain and ladies chain  $\frac{3}{4}$  in the opening sequence) that is from those three already known singing calls and two known zero modules.

### MY PREPARATION NOW.

- I have no long sequences written down - I already know the sequences from the singing calls.
- I have practiced my singing calls figures and know where the zero points are.
- I have identified a number of corner box modules and a partner line module that I can insert at any appropriate zero point.
- I have a number of cue cards written down (or screen shots) (or whatever you use)) that have my figure with the zero points and cards with the zeroes I will insert. They are big enough to refresh at a glance.

### Step 8: PRACTICE PRACTICE AND MORE PRACTICE

From here, you will practice your calling. Put on the music, and if you can record yourself.

- **Practice** calling your singing call (SC) sequences as patter.
- **Practice** calling your SC sequences and inserting a zero module
- **Practice** calling your SC sequences and inserting two zero modules

- **Practice** calling your SC sequences and insert another SC part of a sequence to finish it – only at the Appropriate Zero Points.
- **Practice** mixing and matching.

Then listen to yourself and try and dance to what you called.

Then do it all again, and again and again.

When you think you are ready – Practice some more. Get used to glancing at your cards, not reading them. You will read a lot at the start but the more you practice the easier it gets. Remember, you already know all these sequences as singing calls. All you are doing is remembering more than one at a time.

### **Step 9: - PRACTICE SOME MORE.**

**IMPORTANT.** Do not try to get hundreds of modules and sequences and zeros together. You only need a couple for each tip. You have a theme movement and keep focused on it. Mix and match what you know and **KEEP IT SIMPLE.**

The truth is, patter calling is much much more than just moving dancers around the floor successfully. I have yet to meet a caller that does not have memory modules and tools in the toolbox to draw from. Sight calling is little more than knowing your basic tools (one of which has been given here) and expanding the toolbox beyond one or two known formations comfortably. As you grow and practice, so too does the tool box and so too does your ability to call, to sight call, and seemingly move dancers without memorized sequences and the ability to resolve from anywhere. Most of it is written down on cards kept in their heads.

As callers get better and more practiced, their ability to randomize the flow and move the dancers comfortably around the floor in a seemingly random flow increases. They learn choreographic dancer management techniques like CRAMs or Mental Imaging which makes them even more fluid and successful at their craft. The reason for this is that they have learned to use the tools like this one effectively, **and** have learned to build bigger and better things with the tools and resources available. Nevertheless, all of them started with the basic tools and every single one of them at one point felt the same thing you do when they called their first patter.

If you keep looking at what you know, you will find out that you know a lot more than you think. With these three singing calls two easy zero modules, you can now create over 20 different independent patter routines by only changing adding one box or line module – this increases exponentially if you add more than one box and one line in the same figure.

Finally, each of these routines may or may not use a cloverleaf but each time you introduce a “focus movement module zero”, you know a cloverleaf will be used. You also know that a full cloverleaf can be used in the prepared opener, and time can be filled in with breaks like circle left, men make a right hand star, allemande left, right and left grand when you need to take a break and gather your wits. Practice and prepare your breathing and your breaks as well usually every two or three sequences.

I can pretty much guarantee that if you do this to prepare your tip, and practice, you will run out of music well before you run out of material to call. You will have prepared and practiced enough so that when you are calling, your focus is on the dancers; and believe me, they will feel it and love you for it. Your biggest worry at this point will be that you did so well; they will want you to come and call a dance or hire you for an event. If that is the worst that can happen well then life is pretty good.

What is crucial to remember is that, this is your first patter tip or maybe even a second or third guest tip. You have still not done any “sight calling” or needed a sight resolution technique because at this point, it is all been using three singing call figures and two zero modules.

**THE STRESS FACTOR.** What if you get lost or lose your place?

If you do ever get lost, and do not know where the dancers are, pair up a key couple and get them to the outside of a box and call allemande left...you will have a 50% chance of being right. Give a couple of seconds for the square to regroup and start over. The dancers will not mind. In fact they will appreciate it more than you standing there and struggling to make it work in stop and go fashion.

Good luck and hope this is useful to some new callers. Please remember that this is one opinion only. Do not just listen to just one opinion when learning to call. Listen to all the experienced callers out there. Ask them questions and find out how they do things. Determine for yourself what is right and comfortable for you and make it yours. You only get better through practice and more practice.

### **The Aspirational Goal:**

**- DO NOT PRACTICE UNTIL YOU GET IT RIGHT –**

**PRACTICE UNTIL YOU NO LONGER GET IT WRONG.**

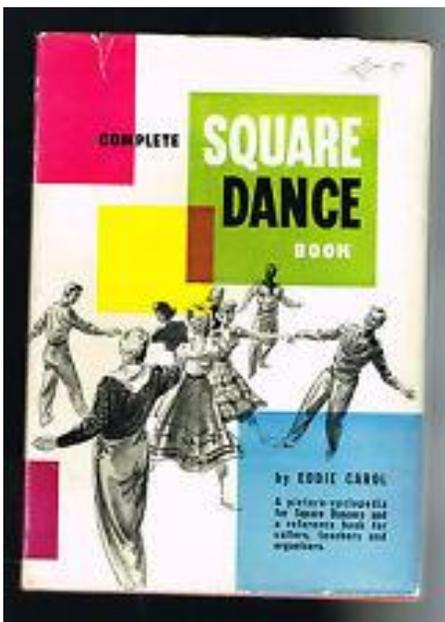
## **A BIT OF HISTORY** by Merv Sharpe

*(For many callers here in Australia, our early square dance history is often only known by just a few names such as Joe Lewis, Jim Vickers-Willi (Photo) s, Garry Cohen, or Smiling Billy Blinkhorn. While these callers were extremely influential in the development of our great activity 'down under', they are not the whole story.*



*Nowadays we have lost a large number of callers and dancers who were involved in the early days of Square Dancing in Australia. One of our leaders in New South Wales was Merv Sharpe (now passed on the the big hall in the sky) who had a great knowledge of those earlier times.*

*The notes below are taken from recorded conversations with Merv when I was doing some research about a possible book on the early history here in NSW. (Barry Wonson)*



The Carrol family lived in Toronto, a suburb of the city of Newcastle, about 80 miles north of Sydney. The Carrols were involved in the music industry as they had a small country band that toured around local towns. Their teenage son, Eddie, travelled to the USA to visit their American friend Larry Dale, who was a fiddler and a Square Dance Caller in the New England area. Eddie liked what he heard and saw with this new form of folk dancing. Larry Dale saw a great potential in Eddie Carrol and started to teach him the art of calling. On returning back home to Newcastle, Eddie brought this new form of dancing along with the family band. They attempted a number of times to introduce this new dance form in their local area, but had very little success.

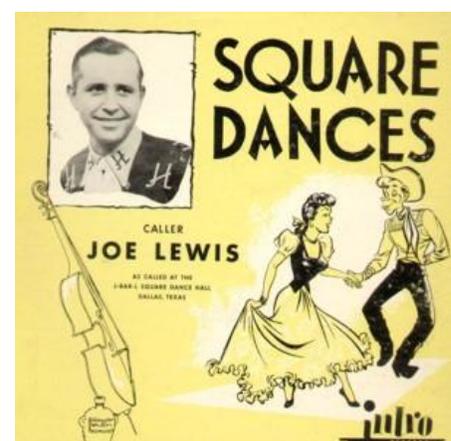
In 1948, Bill McGrath, a Physical Education teacher from the Victorian Department of Education, heard about this new activity "Square Dancing" from a couple of ladies he met during a summer camp at a Teachers College in Victoria. They had just returned to Australia after a period spent in Japan, where they were involved in the teaching of the children of servicemen. During their time in Japan they had learned Square Dancing from the American service personnel stationed there.

They advised Bill McGrath on all they had learned while in Japan about this new activity. Bill collected every bit of information he could find in regard to Square Dancing. This included sheet music and books, and he studied it thoroughly, and then used it thoroughly with his students in Physical Education. He became an expert on chant pater calling, and had great success in running Square Dance Clubs around Melbourne as well as in schools. He taught his style of calling to many young men and women from his clubs around Melbourne. Some of these new callers trained by Bill went north to Queensland. All had some success in starting clubs and teaching square dancing. With basically no form of National advertising, that is where square dancing in Australia stayed; as a purely local activity.

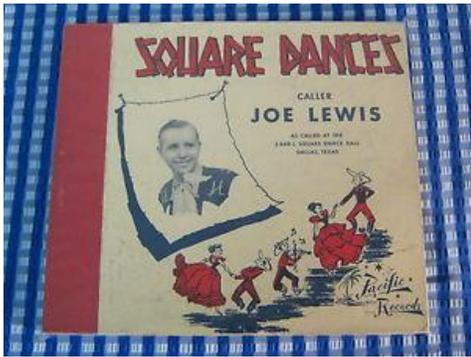
In New South Wales at this time, Ballroom Dancing teachers were becoming interested in this new form of folk dancing as well. This interest was created by ballroom teachers and dancers who had come across this new dance form while visiting the USA. Many returned with books and music on Square Dancing. Initially Ballroom Dance teachers began teaching Square Dancing in their studios, but had very little success as no-one knew enough about the calling side or the movements to go very far. Square Dancing here remained strictly a Ballroom province.

In the latter part of 1949, a major retail chain, David Jones, sent their buyers to America looking for the latest fashions to bring to Australia. These buyers discovered this new activity while in USA. As David Jones chain of stores was seen as a leader in supplying fashionable clothes, an opportunity was seen in the style of clothes worn with this activity. . Prior to investing in this idea, executives from the chain made enquiries about getting a caller and band to come out to Australia to visit their stores in Sydney and do a Square Dance promotion. It is interesting to note that there was really very little altruism involved here, but seen just as a way of selling clothes.

The chose a caller from Texas, Joe Lewis. He had personality, good looks, style and a fine voice. He also had a set of Beginners Records in a large folder, with all instructions on learning to square dance, all ready for sale. Once the buyers returned from the USA and discussed with the company, arrangements were made and promotion began soon after, all in order to be ready for Joe Lewis' arrival in March 1950. The copies that were brought over of Joe Lewis' set of 5 records, folder and instructions, sold out within a matter of hours. The Ballroom Dancer teacher organizations were prepared for the large influx of



enquiries that was expected. They met with Joe personally and started to learn how to call and teach Square Dancing.



When Joe Lewis arrived promptly with his band and a specially trained set of dancers, the excitement was truly amazing for all involved. Joe entertained the packed-out theatre with everything that anyone could want to know about Square Dancing. There was even a fashion show of what to wear. You could not move for Ballroom dancers and their teachers. Joe was a great entertainer as well as a great caller. He had charisma in spades.

Prior to his return to the USA, Joe had meetings with the Ballroom Dancing Associations, and organizations; taught teachers the fundamentals of how to call and teach, as well as how to promote for new dancers. Eddie Carrol was there, and he changed his calling style to the Joe Lewis's style. Eddie remained as a support teacher and caller after Joe left for America. Eddie stayed in Sydney to follow up all Joe had created and further promote the activity.

Square Dancing boomed. Clubs were in every hall and garage, Joe Lewis' records were heard in just about every street, and there were budding callers on every street corner. A regular magazine was published for square dancers.

In 1951, a major women's magazine "The Australian Women's Weekly" along with Coca-Cola, decided to promote a Square Dance Competition using Joe Lewis style of square dancing. Prize money was \$12,000, and it would be conducted in every state. A first, second and third for each state would be awarded, with the first from each state to enter the Grand Finals to be held in Sydney on 11th August, 1951. Joe Lewis would be brought back out to judge the finals.

Joe and his wife arrived in time to visit all States in the competition to make sure that all entrants were doing the right style and movements for judging. By the time the competition finished there were over 100,000 people Square Dancing every night of the week in Sydney and Melbourne. Square Dancing also saw the same type of boom in the other State Capitals as well as most country towns (here in Wollongong dances were on every night of the week...most in large halls that were filled to capacity with sometimes in excess of 250 dancers).

Before leaving Sydney, Joe promised to come back and visit all the Ballroom Dancing clubs and call for them. He kept his word and was welcomed back in December 1953. Square Dancing boomed for the next couple of years here in Australia. The ABC Radio Network broadcast a half hour of Square Dancing

nationally across the entire network of stations. The caller for this broadcast each time was another American named Leonard Hurst. When his contract ended, he ran clubs in Melbourne, Victoria and in Adelaide, South Australia.

As with all new ideas that become a 'craze', Square Dancing slowly began to fade. The larger companies would no longer promote it; radio advertising and promotion ceased. The large Ballroom Organizations ceased to run clubs, so individual callers started their own Square Dance Clubs by hiring local halls and doing their own promotions.

One of the major ballroom teachers who had taken up the Joe Lewis style of calling, Ron Jones, gave his ballroom studio to other teachers and concentrated on running his own clubs. He called 6 nights a week and taught new callers on Sundays, all while still holding down a full time job. Other ballroom teachers-turned-callers ran their own clubs one or two times a week.

**DAVID BURKE answers a question—**  
**Square Dancing Boom Bigger, Better and Boomier**

**SIXTY thousand** carefree Victorians will have "climbed the golden stairs" before this week ends. Callers have sung themselves hoarse — it's a seven nights out of seven job — and each will have made, maybe, \$100 for their trouble.

Hardly a suburban ball does not echo nightly to the chirp of a 45-45-45.

and sales of records and apparel soar.

Can square dancing keep up this dizzy tempo? Ten months ago the fad of a few, today square dancing is more than a \$1,000,000 industry in Victoria.

The fantastic success story of how it has set husbands and wives, grandmas and grandpas, sons and nieces, boys and grandsons, has been written already. But can square dancing last?

**THIS IS** the \$4-dollar question of the moment. This is the question people are asking, and answering, in hall and throng.

Whatever the pessimists say (non-dancers, of course), the fact is — square dancing is bigger, better, boomier, than ever. It is —

- Drawing 30,000 competitors to the Sun beach alone.
- Packing 2000 nightly into just one ballroom, with queues 200 yards long.
- Calling attendances at movies and "old style" dances, and building big radio sessions and boomie-bop parties.
- Tying up, practically every hall in city and suburbs, (how square dancing is to be performed to allow the present square dancing boom).
- Attracting hundreds

patients are square dancing — on doctors' orders.

Can it . . . ?

Whom should we ask to answer this pose? Not Jim Vickers-Willis, Sun journalist turned caller, who rides the crest of the square dance wave with a phenomenal success story all his own.

Jim has made as much as \$100 for one night's calling.

He has trained callers free, runs a booking bureau for them — free

help out at local kindergarten charity socials — but back from another whirlwind promotional trip to Adelaide (4000 the average nightly attendance), Jim says —

"I am convinced that square dancing is fast becoming a most attractive feature of our national life.

"Square dancing had everything that Australians have been waiting to fill the post-war vacuum of an all-time low in social entertainment.

It has been specially tailored to suit Australian likes and dislikes — there is very little of the hill-billy left.

"We have changed the old remonstrate calls for a rhythmic, dancing variety. We have put form into the dancing, and particularly for youth, we have made it, competitive and exciting.

"**T**HOSE who pool-pool the future of the square dance forget that it has

square dancing may lapse in some centres which draw a scattered patronage, or have unqualified callers," Jim says finally.

"But local clubs are thriving more and more, and square dancing is re-

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**THE SUN**  
**Wed., July 1, 1953**



**Proof is provided by this happy picture of caller Jim Vickers-Willis's wife, Beth.**

**SUN SQUARE DANCE CUP HEAT TONIGHT —AT— EARL'S COURT**

**Proof also comes from Jim Vickers-Willis**

ers. One, Joe a housewife, moved to Ad the new de "I don't

Stores have done a huge trade in clothing and accessories. For men, sports slacks and shirts, golf shoes and socks. For women, cotton frocks, gay skirts, fancy petticoats, off the shoulder blouses, and strapless waists.

In the Vickers-Willis nation, the 20000 attention, who come weekly

During the heyday of Square Dancing in Australia, we saw many callers rise to great heights, and then just fade away after a few short years. We also saw a number of national Record companies release Square Dance records. These old 78's are still around today. Dozens of callers rose to national fame (at least for a while) via these recordings.

Joe Lewis' influence and leadership has left a strong bond with his callers and remains so to this very day. In 1984 Joe came back to Australia for the Silver Jubilee National Square Dance Convention in Canberra. His style, his attitude, his friendliness, his showmanship, his personality were the same as in his initial visits in the 50's. We were all there to greet him once again -- somewhat older, but all still with the same enthusiasm.

*(Barry - I had the great fortune to spend some time with Joe at a couple of CALLERLAB Conventions and can heartily agree with all Merv's comments. He was a true gentleman. )*

# ***SINGING CALLS*** By Paul Adams

## **How I Pick, Prepare & Present a Singing Call** aka

### **Why I do not care for Singing Calls**

1. Most importantly is the fact that I feel I do not sing well and therefore must settle for singing the best I can.
2. With **Hoedown or Patter Music** I am free to create choreography as it comes to mind. **With a Singing Call** I am boxed in to sixty-four beat phrases, repeated seven times, where in four of the sixty-four beat phrases I must create a little dance, and in each little dance I must finish having the Men Dancers at Home with either your Corner or their Right Hand Lady as your Partner, in the other three Sixty-four beat phrases I must finish with the Men at home with their current Partner.
3. **With a Singing Call** I must remember the **Choreography** as well as the **Lyrics** to the song. Then present it, like I own and totally believe every word in the song. Knowing in my mind all the while I'm performing it, that I have seven chances to mess the thing up.
4. **With a Singing Call** at anything above Basics, I must be capable of calling at least one or possibly two figures, using only the Calls which these Dancers know. At Plus and above I must use at least two figures or a different figure for every sixty-four beat phrase. Meaning in one evening with seven tips I will use seven Singing Calls and have to know 28 x 64 beat Figures and 21 x 64 beat Breaks, for a total of 49 chances in which, I could have a train-wreck.
5. **With a Singing Call** I must insure that the phrasing or spacing between my calls are correct and that the Dancers are just finishing one call when you give the next call, just like in a hoedown, except in a singer they must have time to complete all the calls and arrive at home within a couple of beats of the required sixty-four.
6. Most Dancers expected Callers to perform Singing Calls as the "**Icing, On The Cake**" following a good patter Call workout; A2 & Challenge Dancers enjoy the occasional singing Call.
7. Then to top it all off I buy the Singer, I spend time learning it, honing it, making it as perfect as I can, memorizing it, the use it a dozen or so times then but it way for a year or so.

## **Here are some ways which I use, to develop my Singing Calls.**

1. I start by listening to the music that is available from our suppliers, and if when I find one piece of music I think I might like, I order it, pay for it, download it, and now it is mine.
2. I listen to the entire instrumental piece of music. I do not listen to the vocal side. I listen for a change in the Key Signature. I listen to what the Instruments are playing / saying. I listen to which Instrument has the lead, and in which phrases does it repeat. I listen to the introduction or lead in to the start. Try to figure out which genera it fit into, Caribbean, Country, Rock & Roll, Bluegrass, Jazz, etc.
3. Is it straight forward 64 beats with only instrumental lead changes, or is it a Chorus / Verse / Verse Chorus type format, or is there a Bridge in the music making it a Chorus / Verse / Verse/ Bridge / Verse / Verse/ Chorus, progression. Now I try to think of how I can make this singer sound like I own it, I feel it and I believe it.
4. When will I use this Singer once I have spent the time and effort to learn it, is it a Christmas Song, or other Holiday Song, Rainy Day Song, Sunny Day Song, Love Song, etc.
5. Now I listen to the Called Side and dance it, by myself to the Caller who recorded the record. I try to determine if the figure he/she uses works and does it work well with the music. Maybe I have to push my Dolls through it to be sure.

Now I can set up my all my equipment and pick up the Mic. and give it a whirl. I visualizing I'm Calling to a large floor full of dancers and they are just flying. And I ask myself these questions.

1. Am I in Key or Flat or Sharp, can I adjust the Pitch?
2. How is the speed, can I adjust the speed?
3. How long is the Intro, am I on time with it?
4. What is the Tag like, and can I make that work for me?
5. Did I make the Middle Break or Closer, on time?
6. What can I do to make this song my own?

So after I have gone over this song many, many times, and it sounds right, it's now time to take it to my Club and lay it on the Dancers.

1. How did I do?

2. How did the Dancers respond to it and did some sing along with me?
3. Did I make the individual dancer feel I was singing just to them?
4. Did anyone say, Wow! That was a Great Singer?
5. If it was the last singer of the night did anyone hum or sing the Tag when they were leaving?

**If I can answer Yes, to these Questions then it may be a keeper, and after I have used it at least four times and the dancers still enjoy it, then I would say it is a keeper. So now I can put it away for a few months or years, until I decide to use it again.**

Here are some examples of what I do to make these songs my songs.

1. Take The Ribbon From Your Hair. *Note the Middle Break and Closer call opposite to the Lead Melody Line.*
2. Two Timin' Blues, *Swing type music or Texas swing.*
3. I'm Just the Way I've Always Been. *The lead melody line is absent.*
4. Darlin' *watch the middle break & closer melody line, modulates up.*
5. Why don't You Spend The Night. *Key change in closer is a great driver.*
6. It's Now or Never. *chorus/verse/verse/verse/verse/verse/chorus.*
7. Two of my favourite Patter records are Singing Call Records, which I bought to use as Patter because I like the instrumentation.

When I add up the cost of the music, the time I've spent trying to get it to where it sounds like something I think my dancers will enjoy for four minutes, memorize the lyrics and some Choreography that will work, and use it a few (a dozen) times. Then put it on the back burner for a few months or years.

### **This is: Why I do not care for Singing Calls.**

If you can click play, or throw a new record on the turn table and stand out there and "Call it like you own it". **Then, Man! You've Got Talent.**



*Paul and Judy Adams live in the Ottawa area of Ontario Canada. Paul has been calling since 1975 and calls regularly for the Village Squares Basic Mainstream Club, PJ's Plus Club, Adams Aces A1-A2 Club, as well as for Open Club Festivals, Jamborees, & Conventions. Paul was of great help to me early in my calling career in the 1980s and I am happy and proud to have borrowed, begged and stolen so much information and material from him over the many years. He is a true gentleman in the calling profession. - Mel*

## ***THE RIGHT LADY*** by Steve Turner

*This article is a condensed version of the seminar presented by Steve at the 2016 ACF Conference at Mooloolabah.*

Forgetting the corner station occasionally allows you to start recognising other stations. Being able to engineer other stations with a few memorised get outs thrown in will enhance the feeling of being in control of your choreography.

The idea is when you're "across the street" with the Right Hand Lady (Heads Square Thru 2) and then Slide Thru, you don't have to worry about sequence.

- **If the ends are facing partner it takes a Square Thru 4, Trade By to resolve to an Allemande left.**
- **If the centres are facing partner then it is a Square Thru 2 Trade By to resolve to an Allemande Left.**

So you don't have to worry about "are they in or out of sequence" from these "primary RHL lines" and by callers learning to LOOK for matchings, you are taking the first steps in having control of your choreography.

Have your dancers go directly to a Right Hand Lady Line using the Chicken Plucker routine, (Heads Square Thru 2 then Slide Thru).

Now we can use the rubber band method of sight calling. Take a snap shot of the #1 man with his Right Hand Lady (or a snap shot of any 2 dancers). Now keeping the rubber band around these two dancers, let's move these dancers all over the floor using a "theme" in 2 or 3 quadrants.

It is essential NOT to call anything that moves ONLY 2 dancers across the centre of the set (Column Circ. or Spin Chain Thru, etc.) because this changes the F.A.S.R. You will see how easily it is to move the dancers, present the theme, take the RHL and move to another quadrant and do the same thing, then look to see whether it is a square thru "2 or a 4".

Again, this is basically the rubber band method. Now when you have visited 2 or 3 quadrants and presented your theme, you get back in a line with the RHL. If the #1 Man still has his RHL then everyone still has RHL. There is no need to check for sequence per say.

The idea is to leave the matching couple there and finish the Chicken Plucker. "Is it a Square thru 4 or 2, Trade By, LA".

## **RECOGNISING A RIGHT HAND LADY STATION ON THE FLY**

To start training your mind, let's assume you have chosen Number 1 couple as your primary couple and the secondary couple is the number 4.

Also make a note of your RIGHT HAND LADY for a moment and now concentrate on your Primary and Secondary couples and play with these and resolve the square a few times.

Now I need you to focus on resolving the square by recognising the Right Hand Lady station and having that lady as your temporary partner.

To do this, whenever you have a group of 4, normal arrangement, see if your number one man is all alone in that group of four.

**In other words, no partner or Secondary couple in that group of four. When this happens then you are in a Right Hand Lady station.**

1. The next step is to pair yourself with the right hand lady in facing lines
2. The next step is for you, as number 1 man, is he in sequence or not.

## **GET OUTS**

### **From lines of four in sequence**

- SQUARE THRU 4, TRADE BY, ALLEMEANDE LEFT
- PASS THE OCEAN, SWING THRU TWICE, SPIN CHAIN THRU, RIGHT AND LEFT GRAND
- PASS THRU, ½ TAG, CENTRES TRADE, GIRLS TRADE, SQUARE THRU 3, ALLEMANDE LEFT

### **From lines of four out of sequence**

- SQUARE THRU 2, TRADE BY, ALLEMANDE LEFT
- PASS THE OCEAN, SPIN CHAIN THRU, RIGHT AND LEFT GRAND
- R&L THRU, PASS THRU, TAG THE LINE, LEADS U TURN BACK, LA, RIGHT AND LEFT GRAND BUT ON THE 3<sup>RD</sup> HAND PROMENADE

# *The Square Dance Emperor's New Clothes*

by Ken Ritucci



A burning issue that does not appear to be going away is that of the argument regarding should dancers wear “proper square dance attire” or not. Then again, what is considered nowadays as “proper?”

On the bottom of the registration form for the National Convention (US 2015) it clearly states that “Square Dance Attire” is required after 6 PM.” This is a ruling by the NEC (National Executive Committee) and has been in place for some time.

But with all of the issues we are facing in our beloved activity, i.e., recruitment, maintaining existing dancers plus much more, I see that the dress codes (or not) are becoming more and more of an issue. Where will it all lead? I have no idea. But, if we continue to act as the emperor did in the Hans Christian Anderson fable about the clothes, then we are only fooling ourselves.

Just look at society as it exists today. Ever see anyone dressed up in church these days? What about the work place? Personally I have gone on job interviews recently with a suit and tie and have been interviewed by executives of the company in sport shirts and jeans. “Dress down Friday” at offices is now becoming “dress down every day.” Many receptionists wear jeans when they greet you. No, this isn’t happening everywhere, but it is becoming more and more prevalent.

In so many ways, our society has become lax. Standards are being lowered in almost every phase of society. Whether it is the dumbing down of test scores so “we leave no child behind etc.” to dress code and behaviour. It is hard to fight the masses. Eventually, the masses do win.

In our activity, dancers vote by their feet. They choose to be at a dance or festival to dance to particular callers or cuers. Regarding the dress code for the National Conventions, do not be fooled by what you see in print, there seems to be a rising against being told what a dancer should and should not wear. As someone once told me, what are the people there for? To dance, or to stand around in pretty outfits.

To be fair, outfits and costumes are a traditional part of any activity. I enjoy looking at beautiful and colourful square dance outfits, especially if the partner is wearing a matching outfit. Visually, it looks nice. Call me old fashion. But the term “partner” has taken on a new meaning as well.

Unlike the little boy in Anderson's fable, many of us are turning a blind eye to the dress code issue because it is a confrontation many do not want to face. But, it is the elephant in the room and cannot be avoided any more. I believe we need to face reality, our activity needs dancers, and creating another obstacle for either someone to join or for someone to leave square dancing isn't going to help. (and yes, square dance clothing is viewed as an obstacle by many) I have never seen anyone chastised for wearing a square dance outfit to a dance. But I have seen people spoken to, sometimes in harsh tones, about NOT wearing a square dance outfit.

Now, I will be the first to admit that some dancers have made really terrible choices when it comes to some outfits, but they are few and far between. I have seen some callers on stage calling in shorts and tank tops. I don't like that, the caller/cuer should be a professional on stage and shorts at a convention has no place. But, hey, that's my opinion, like it or not.

We live in a world where we have choices. Everything we do is by choice. Dancers who want to dress up should be allowed to do so, the attire is wonderful to look at and part of our heritage. But for those who choose not to dress up should be allowed to make their decisions based on their beliefs as well. We are fortunate we live in a country where freedom of expression is conceived at times to be a good thing.

However, at times it can go overboard. I say let a person's conscious come into play. If someone is dumb enough to really go overboard on appearance at a function, then they will have to live with themselves.

Life is too short, and square dance life is even shorter. We have bigger issues to tackle; dress code should be the least of our worries. 2015 will mark my 40th year as a caller and dancer. I have seen many changes in the activity. I believe everyone's heart is in the right place. Let's not try to put a damper on someone's spirit.

At the end of the dance, what will you remember more? That you had a fantastic time dancing and socializing, or that someone didn't wear a square dance outfit?

Let's not try to be like the emperor, who was trying to pretend he could see the new clothes when in reality he had nothing on. We are ALL wearing clothes; some choose to wear something different than others. I can live with that!

See you in a square....with clothes on.

## **QUOTABLE QUOTES** (well, sort of)

*More words of wisdom that have been attributed to some of our well-known Australian and overseas callers (these all come from extremely reliable sources whose honesty and integrity is above reproach).*

- " It is well known that the older generation don't give much thought to waking up early, a new survey shows that the newer generation don't think much about waking up early either." - **Jeffrey Garbutt**
- " The most expensive component always breaks first " - **Greg Fawell**
- " Computers can never replace human stupidity" - **Jim Buckingham**
- " Work is for those who have nothing better to do " - **Mike Davey**
- " Everything changes except change " - **Howard Cockburn**
- " A diplomat thinks twice before saying nothing " - **David Cox**
- " I'd kill for a Nobel peace prize! " - **Kevin Kelly**
- " I'm dangerous when I know what I'm doing " - **Jaden Frigo**
- " I intend to live forever - so far so good" - **Alan Evans**
- " He who laughs last thinks slowest " - **Glenn Wilson**
- " Nothing is fool-proof to a talented fool "- **Steve Turner**
- " Life not only begins at forty - it begins to show "- **Gary Carpenter**
- " The only thing shorter than a weekend is a vacation "- **Matthew Mills**
- " Plan to be spontaneous - tomorrow "- **Allen Kerr**
- " Ever stopped to think, and forgot to start again?" **Ed Foote**
- " Politics: Poli (many) - tics (blood sucking parasites)"- **Jeff Seidel**

## *Movin' Down To Mainstream* With Barry Wonson

The use of some 'asymmetrical' routines within a patter call during a night's dancing presents a neat variation that always gives the dancers a nice boost. Used sparingly this type of routine has a neat 'wow' factor for the dancers. Try some of these:



King Barry and his Callers of teh Asymmetrical table.

- COUPLE #1 LEAD RIGHT AND CIRCLE TO A LINE, FORWARD AND BACK, BEND THE LINE, SLIDE THRU, TOUCH 1/4, SCOOTBACK, MEN RUN, STAR THRU...COUPLE #3 LEAD RIGHT AND CIRCLE TO A LINE, ENDS FOLD, TURN THRU, OTHERS PASS THRU, ALLEMANDE LEFT.
  
- COUPLES 2 AND 3 RIGHT AND LEFT THRU, HEADS LEAD RIGHT, STEP TO A WAVE, CENTRES TRADE, COUPLES 2 AND 3 BOX CIRCULATE THEN TRADE, COUPLES 1 AND 4 TRADE THEN BOX CIRCULATE, ALL SINGLE HINGE, SPLIT CIRCULATE, CENTRES TRADE, SCOOTBACK, SWING, PROMENADE.

*A bit of Plus here-*

- COUPLES 1 AND 4 RIGHT AND LEFT THRU, HEADS LEAD RIGHT, SWING THRU, COUPLES 1 AND 4 BOX CIRCULATE - THEN TRADE, COUPLES 2 AND 3 TRADE - THEN BOX CIRCULATE, ALL SINGLE HINGE, MEN BOX CIRCULATE - THEN TRADE, LADIES TRADE - THEN BOX CIRCULATE, ALL SINGLE HINGE, LADIES TRADE THE WAVE, THOSE FACING PASS THRU, ALL TAG THE LINE, LEADS U TURN BACK, SWING, PROMENADE.

**These two take the dancers to a set-up where all are facing the caller - announcement time!**

- COUPLES 2 AND 3 - 1/2 SASHAY, SIDES SQUARE THRU, STEP TO A WAVE, ENDS CIRCULATE, SWING THRU, CENTRES RUN, BEND THE LINE, PASS THRU, WHEEL AND DEAL, CENTRES SWING THRU DOUBLE, EXTEND, SWING THRU, CENTRES RUN, WHEEL AND DEAL, STAR THRU, CALIFORNIA TWIRL, (all facing caller here) BEND THE LINE, RIGHT AND LEFT THRU: **(PL)**

- COUPLES 2 AND 3 RIGHT AND LEFT THRU, HEADS LEAD RIGHT, MAKE A WAVE, LADIES TRADE, COUPLES 2 AND 3 BOX CIRCULATE **AND** TRADE, COUPLES 1 AND 4 TRADE **AND** BOX CIRCULATE, ALL SINGLE HINGE, CENTRES TRADE, MEN RUN, (all facing caller here) OUTFACERS PARTNER TRADE: **ZERO LINE (PL)**

*What about the good old "IF YOU WANT TO" routines:*

- **(CB):** TOUCH 1/4, SCOOTBACK, MEN RUN, PASS THRU, WHEEL & DEAL,
  - IF U WANT: CALIFORNIA TWIRL,
  - IF U WANT: PARTNER TRADE,
  - IF U WANT; 1/2 SASHAY,
  - IF U WANT: U TURN BACK,
 ALL FACE THE ONE BESIDE YOU, PASS THRU, BEND THE LINE, PASS THRU, WHEEL AND DEAL, CENTRES SQUARE THRU 3/4, (all are facing corner but some are in a half-sashayed position) ALLEMANDE LEFT, (Where's your partner?) RIGHT AND LEFT GRAND.

*Some general Get-outs:*

**EXACT ZERO BOX (CB):** STAR THRU, PASS THRU, TAG THE LINE....IN, (carefully) SQUARE THRU, RIGHT AND LEFT GRAND, BOW TO PARTNER (at Home).

**ZERO BOX (CB):** DO SA DO TO A WAVE, CENTRES TRADE, SWING THRU, LADIES CROSS FOLD, SWING THRU, ALL 8 CROSS FOLD, ALLEMANDE LEFT.

**EXACT ZERO LINE (PL):** TOUCH 1/4, CENTRES BOX CIRCULATE, MEN ON A DIAGONAL..DOUBLE PASS THRU, LEADS U TURN BACK, ALL PASS THRU, CENTRES PASS THRU, "Tap 'em on the shoulder". ALLEMANDE LEFT, RIGHT AND LEFT GRAND: **HOME**

## **THOROUGHLY PLUSSSED** with Barry Wonson

This month's modules feature a variety of themes; all using choreography that is just a tad 'unexpected'.

- HEAD LADIES CHAIN, HEADS SLIDE THRU AND SPREAD, PASS THE OCEAN, CENTRES TRADE, CENTRES RUN, CENTRES HINGE, MEN TRADE TWICE (for body flow reasons), In the wave: SWING THRU, ALL FLIP THE DIAMOND – **AND - JUST THE MEN ROLL**, LADIES (take a peek) TRADE, LADIES EXTEND TO A LH WAVE, LEFT SWING THRU, MEN FACE IN, LADIES TRADE THE WAVE, EXTEND, HINGE, MEN TRADE, WEAVE THE RING, PROMENADE.
- HEADS PASS THRU, U TURN BACK, SIDES STAR THRU, TRADE BY, SWING THRU, RECYCLE, TOUCH 1/4, FAN THE TOP, SPIN THE TOP, ENDS ZOOM AND FACE IN, OTHERS FACE OUT, **BOW TO CORNER**
- HEADS RIGHT AND LEFT THRU, PASS THE OCEAN, EXTEND, SINGLE HINGE, LADIES RUN, PASS THRU, PARTNER TRADE – **AND - ROLL**, PASS THRU, CENTRES SQUARE THRU 3, OTHERS TRADE BY (**CB**)
- HEADS RIGHT AND LEFT THRU, 1/2 SASHAY, SIDES STAR THRU, PASS THRU, ALL SLIDE THRU (same sex), ALL 8 CIRCULATE 1-1/2, HEADS TRADE THE WAVE, SIDES SINGLE HINGE, Column of 6: SCOOTBACK, HEADS LEFT SWING THRU, SIDES TRADE **AND ROLL**, HEADS LEFT SINGLE HINGE **AND ROLL**, ALL BOW TO PARTNER. **HOME**
- HEADS RIGHT AND LEFT THRU, 1/2 SASHAY, SIDES STAR THRU, DOUBLE PASS THRU, TRACK 2, EXPLODE THE WAVE, CHASE RIGHT, FOLLOW YOUR NEIGHBOUR, CENTRES FOLLOW YOUR NEIGHBOUR, ALL FLIP THE DIAMOND, LINEAR CYCLE, STAR THRU, LEADS CALIFORNIA TWIRL (**CB**)

## **NOTES FROM A TEMPO WORKSHOP**

5 NOVEMBER 1992

ORGANIZED BY DON BECK WITH CALLERS SHAWN CUDDY, JOHN HENDRON, EVERETT MACKIN AND JIM MAYO

3 1/2 squares of dancers were invited ranging in age from the early 30's to past 75 and in dancing experience from 3 years to more than 30. The dance material used was standard PLUS which was comfortable for all those in attendance.

We started by asking each caller to call a segment (less than 1/2 a record) using a familiar record set at whatever speed (RPM) felt comfortable. The range of tempos went from 118 to 122. The dancers reported noticeable differences in "speed".

Further discussion suggested that these differences could be attributed to the "style of delivery" which means how many filler words were used and very minute differences in timing.

We then asked the dancers to execute a series of long calls (square thru and relay the deuce) without music. The tempo that they settled on was about 120 and it increased slightly as they moved through the movements.

We then asked the dancers to form a circle and promenade to a tape, recorded with segments ranging from 115 bpm to 135 bpm. They reported the 115 as feeling slow and the 135 as too fast but from 120 bpm to 130 bpm was agreed to be comfortable.

Next we set a record that all callers found comfortable (JoPat Sunshine) at 124 bpm and let each caller call a segment. Again the dancers found noticeable differences in the sensation of speed. Discussion determined that these had to do with the use of filler words vs essentially "prompting" delivery. One observation that began to surface in this part of the program was that callers using more words also tended to use slightly tighter timing. The timing differences were agreed by the observing callers to be less than 1 beat (1/2 second).



One of the callers then tried using the same tempo to call first with a prompt style and then with added filler words. This did increase the sense of speed but also the dancers and observing callers agreed that the timing was tightened slightly when the extra words were added.

Another caller then tried calling first at 128 bpm and then at 132 bpm. The dancer consensus was that 128 bpm was comfortable but that 132 was noticeably less comfortable. Further discussion suggested that the caller was less comfortable at 132 bpm and that this affected the calling making it less smooth (well timed.) The dancers reported that at 132 bpm they "had to wait more."

An additional experiment involved using less familiar arrangements and formations at 124 bpm and this produced noticeably more ragged dancing even though the material was well within the capability of these dancers. In both this situation and when the tempo was above 130 bpm with standard choreography the observers noted that the dancing began to look "ragged." The dancers did not move "as a unit" as well as they did at slower tempos. Some dancers who had been stepping on every beat started walking "off the beat" when the tempo got too fast for them personally at tempos above 128 bpm.



Additional discussion revealed that the dancers experience differences in "speed" during the course of an evening with a caller who is using the same tempo for all music. There was substantial agreement with the statement that timing is much more important than tempo in determining the dancer's sensation of speed. The dancers also agreed that they were comfortable dancing at tempos anywhere in the range from 118 bpm to 128 bpm. At tempos faster than 128 bpm there were many who found the dancing too fast and many agreed that even 128 bpm would be too fast for the whole night although they would enjoy it for a tip or two early in the dance.

*From Barry: Tempo has always been an important aspect of our calling. Over the years we have changed our 'standard tempo' from around 130 beats a minute (back in the 60's) to today's average of around 124-125 BPM. I have found that at 124-125 BPM, the dancers are able to dance most of the evening without getting tired. I was at a dance recently where the caller was mostly at 128 and above.....the dancers were tired around the halfway mark, and crowd dropped by over half for last two tips of the night. The tempo we use has a definite affect on both physical and mental abilities. The faster we set the tempo, the more tired the dancers will be.*

## ***Editor's Final Words*** ... well at least for now.

I mentioned in the last couple of issues that we are in the process of creating a Web Site for Behind the Mike. Jaden Frigo is the one who is doing all the work on this. It is in the final stages and should be ready soon. Once the website is up and running, Callers will be able to look up all the back issues, download the Sound Archive files, check the individual articles in various sections (Educational Material, Choreo, etc.), and even subscribe via a special link. My thanks go to Jaden for all the work that he has been putting into this mammoth task.

Please feel free to pass this Newsletter on to any of your friends who you feel will gain some form of benefit from the contents.

Your ideas and comments are always welcome.

Don't forget to put January 20/21 in your diary - this is the SARDANSW Caller Education weekend.

Best wishes  
Barry



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**featuring  
MEL WILKERSON**

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# Square & Round Dance Association of NSW



## 20-21 January 2018 Callers' Weekend



This two day Conference will be held on the weekend of January 20-21, 2018 at Corrimal RSL Club. Cost will be \$125.00 per person which will include full hot lunch on both days, entrance for Saturday Evening Dance and all sessions and materials.

As part of SARDA NSW's commitment to Caller Education a subsidy is available for SARDA NSW members of \$50.00 per caller. This means that the cost for members will be \$75.00 per person. Partner cost is \$40 (meals and dance included)

### Program:

- Saturday morning 10:00am to 12:30pm
- Saturday afternoon 1:30pm to 4:30pm
- Saturday night dance 7:30pm to 10:30pm
- Sunday morning 10:00am to 12:30pm
- Sunday afternoon 1:30pm to 4:00pm

As with January 2017 weekend, our presenter will be Mel Wilkerson. Mel is planning a good follow-up to last year's sessions and will lead everyone through the next steps. Weekend Education sessions such as these are an essential part of our continuous goal of self-improvement...not just for newer callers, but for all callers

### RSVP BY 13th January 2017

Please send form and payment to: SARDANSW PO Box 2146 Carlingford 2118

Or Direct deposit to CBA BSB 062329 A/C 10436279 (Ref Jan 2017 + Surname)

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