

Flying the Square Dancing Flag

By

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The American Callers' Association in its attempt to be of service to all callers, dancers, and square dance associations provided current, timely, and effective information on new dancer recruitment from 2000 to 2017. ACA really appreciates the positive comments, encouragement to continue, and contributions from dancers, square dance association and callers all over the country and from 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 dance programs.

This month's ACA Viewpoint is predicted on the fact that “an effective square dancing membership campaign depends on the club members and club callers of every club in square dancing to **“proactively get out the word.”** Some square dancers argue that we should not **“toot our own horns”**. This may lead to the conclusion that the square dance community is for putting self-praise aside. Nevertheless, one can conclude that square dancers must remember there are benefits in **“tooting our own horns.”**

The history of country and western square dancing is long, honorable, and full of good people having fun. The roots of square dancing lie in folk dances from many countries. Despite this rich history, many dancers, callers and clubs are hesitant to tell of the glamorous history and fun of square dancing. If we do popularize and promote the benefits of square dancing, the story will remain untold, and good people will not be attracted to join square dancing.

National Caller Associations, National Dancer Associations' and National Festival Associations are devoting significant time and resources to recruit new dancers. Despite their best efforts, square dance membership can only grow when we as square local square dancers and square dance callers tell our non-dancing friends and acquaintances about the benefits and fun of square dancing. No national advertisement campaign, no matter how well designed, can do more than supplement local square dancers, club callers and clubs' personal efforts.

It is up to each one of us to inform non-dancers about the fun of square dancing and invite them to visit a dance or an open house, and when they come to make them feel welcome and get on the floor dancing. We as square dancers and callers have much in which to take pride. How many other social organizations have been providing the fun, friendship, and exercise for the past 70 years? No other social organizations have dedicated their efforts to such a global combination of fun, friendship, and health.

We have local clubs and callers in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and numerous foreign countries providing the fun and benefits of square dancing to a worldwide population. Despite the efforts of the national organizations like the American Callers' Association to tell the world about square dancing and to assure square dancing's place in the future, the "**real word**" must come from the "**local family**" of square dancing, which is the club members and club callers. These are the people who operate and made square dancing grow and can reverse the steep decline in the number of dancers, clubs and callers.

Square dancing as an activity makes positive differences in the lives of thousands of people every day of every year. Square dancing offers a path of adding new quality life style benefits to each person who starts square dance lessons. Square dancers do this in a setting of "**fellowship, friendship and fun**", filled with excellent exercise and health benefits. In a fragmented society, square dancing offers **connectedness, friendship and fun.**

Clearly we have much to be proud. If we as dancers and callers do not share the story of square dancing with non-dancers, they will never know, and all of these wonderful benefits will be denied to them. Take the time to show the banner and communicate the benefits of square dancing. You will find that they will want to join you in this marvelous and healthy activity.

Moral of the story: If you ask them, they will come. If you bond with someone's head, you will enjoy them for a little while. If you bond with someone's heart and enjoy them for a lifetime. If we want to recruit and retain square dancers, bond with them in friendship and make them feel wanted and welcome, and they will stay a lifetime.

Any individual, club, caller, or association who wishes to communicate his/her opinions on this subject is encouraged to contact the American Callers' Association at Loulet@aol.com or Dr. Patrick Demerath at pdemerath@gmail.com. Please visit our website and newsletters @American Callers.com/news.

Until next time, Happy Dancing.