

# **American Callers Association**

## **Viewpoint**

### **Creative Contributing Changes**

**By**

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The American Callers' Association in its attempt to be of service to all callers, dancers, and associations provided current, timely, and effective information on new dancer recruitment for most of the years 2000 – 2017. The American Callers Association appreciates the positive comments, encouragement to continue, and contributions from callers all over the country and from abroad to continue these initiatives. The American Callers Association 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' Viewpoints discusses the inception of creative dancing programs to help attract new dancers. New dancer recruitment appears to be at an all time low as both square dance clubs are having difficulty recruiting new students. Square dancing appears to be losing 10% of its dancers per year as membership declines.

ACA supports his opinion, on promulgating a “new way of thinking,” which is thinking beyond the tired traditional and mechanical ways. He recognizes that different

clubs in different parts of the world will apply square dance calling and teaching differently. Square dance calling and teaching, with its traditionally based programs, lists, and levels may be based upon economic, human, and logistics factors such as hall cost, availability, and club (people) preferences. It can be argued that callers and teachers should attempt to hang on to the principles of standardization when possible, but this is not the only **end** in itself.

Rather than the traditional set of weeks for lessons, clubs and callers can try ten to twelve week programs using the ACA one-floor program. One night stand activities are also a promising way to attract new dancers. The American Callers' Association International One-Floor 10 – 12 week programs fits into these ideas of creative thinking categories. Each of these items when applied by a club or caller may offer the caller and club opportunities to increase its number of new dancer graduates as it may offer many unique methods to present the art of square dancing.

It can be argued that for square dancing to grow, we need to embrace a thinking that invites ideas and innovations and one that is not bound by the baggage of the past.

Perhaps, a complete overhaul of the square dance product such as new lists of movements; no requirement for dress codes, ten to twelve week lesson programs, and competition would be positive contributions.

ACA further challenges all callers to change his/her thinking. The ACA challenge is that change is not necessarily a bad thing, and that we as callers and dancers should be open to change. In fact, the American Callers' Association was founded because a large percentage of the existing callers wanted to have a one-floor program not segregated levels or programs.

ACA encourages all callers and square leaders to help get the wheels moving. ACA concludes that the solutions to the serious and critical decline in the number of dancers, are not easy to find, but they are out there for the taking. ACA further encourages experimentation with any phase of square dancing and report back about experiments they are trying and their degree of success. ACA is encouraging callers and square dance leaders to use a new and creative mindset to look for solutions. Despite the serious decline in the number of dancers being recruited, ACA argues that changes in attitudes with more talk of changing square dancing to repopulate the activity and to stop the decline in the number of dancers are surfacing and will not go away.

The American Callers' Association is willing to work with square leaders and organizations to further square dancing and to help test some of the initiatives to search for those changes, which would reverse the decline of square dancing. ACA will also serve as a venue to receive any communications and to publish the results with credit to the contributor.

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](mailto:Loulet@aol.com) or Dr. Patrick Demerath at [pdemerath17@gmail.com](mailto:pdemerath17@gmail.com) . Please visit our website and newsletters @American Callers.com/news.

Until next time, Happy Dancing.