



American Callers Association

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TIME FOR CHANGE

If you are not willing to change to what most people can fit into their busy life style of today. You should look for something else to do besides Square Dance because in case you have not taken a close look at the state of Square Dancing today. It's down from the highest number I can remember by about 90 per cent, I have been calling and teaching dancers for over 55 years. Did you ever stop and wonder why so many of that 90 per cent quit Square Dancing? Find the answer to that question and you have found the way to turn this activity around and Make it something that everyone would like to be a part of again. Time for Change is now and if we can find a way to change?

Square dancing leaders have denied the real problem of **lengthy** dances classes, while In reality, the product **is** the problem. The worldwide decline in the numbers of square dancers is proof that the product is the problem. Yet I fear that the some people will hold on to the same old thing and not want to change. To deny the fact that the absurdly long amount of time square dance lessons take for new dancers and the stressful unequal and segregated dance programs. Then time will make the choice for you.

The greatest need today is to have enough dancers to keep the square dance clubs that are left going while we rebuild square dancing. In my opinion fewer calls and fewer levels would be a Good Start.

Let us look at why people join square dance lessons and clubs. They join because of the new friendships and to enjoy the fun that square dancing once offers. If either is missing, the new dancers will drop out.

The One Floor Program which will keep putting more people into Square Dancing and can be taught in as little as 10 -12 weeks and if we do not push them into the next level but let them dance where they are for a year and help with the next 10-12 week class we can build this activity back. Plus they will bring in your next class. They will give you a broad contact list for the next class.

ACA WEB PAGE

We are working on the new web page we should have all the changes completed very soon. The person that is working on this for us has been called to Washington DC on his job. We hope to have everything posted soon. Thanks for your understanding. Mac Letson

When you come to a square dance please check your importance at the door, for in here there are only square dancers, a caller or two, and all are of equal importance.”

This is a requested re-run of the article by Wes Morris of calls that could be called directionally and the use of the better of two calls that gets U to the same place .

Gentleman: After speaking with other callers and discussing with them a plan for an Entry Level/One Floor Program, we came to the following conclusion. If the two largest callers associations cannot come up with a shorter, workable program, then it will be and is being attempted at the “grass roots level.” It’s time for callers to become LEADER, take the “bull by the horns” and wrestle it to the ground.

I have a list of calls that I would eliminate and my reasons for elimination from the Basic /Mainstream List and or One Floor Program and removing restrictions on two moves. They are as follows: (Lose the name and call directionally.)

Rollaway half sashay - Many of our aging population (ladies) say it affects their equilibrium and in many cases when done from circling some men don’t stop or hesitate long enough to make it comfortable to complete and also have had arms yanked or pulled on excessively. The standard half sashay, ladies in men sashay, or even men in ladies sashay are certainly smoother dancing.

Backtrack – Let’s give this a rest just based on its usage.

Do Pa so- This can be called (directionally) without giving it a name.

Star thru- Use (Slide Thru) in place of it. Many of our aging dancers have sore shoulders, back ailments, etc. and find any moves requiring high arm movements uncomfortable to accomplish.

California Twirl- Use partner trade in place of it. A better call that does the same thing.

Circle to a line- Drop it based on usage and the fact that doesn’t dance well/smoothly.

Dive Thru- Use pass to the center. Aging dancers high arm movement.

Box the Gnat- One of my favorites, but it can be replaced with pass thru, U turn back, plus it can be an arm twister. Or (Touch ¼ & Roll)

Balance – Come on folks who balances any more? Or swing for fear of losing their balance.

Walk and Dodge – Most use is from box /split circulate formation followed up by call partner trade. So use instead split/box circulate boys or girls run which accomplishes same thing. For facing couples have ladies or gents pass thru on a diagonal, and get a little creative on you own.

Dixie style to a wave- Left hand waves can be set up by from facing couples by Left touch $\frac{1}{4}$ with dancer they are facing. Left hand waves can be set up from right hand waves by designating ends or centers cross run etc. and get a little creative on your own.

Spin Chain Thru- A time waster teaching. Most dancers break down unless it's cued as they dance. If core moves are taught well you can call the move directionally.

Recycle (from a wave only) – Can be called directionally ends cross fold (centers turn back a full turn 360 degrees) or just plain ends cross fold. This way you can call it safely with boys as centers of wave or any combo thereof. I know you can't sweep a quarter after the call to facing couples but if you had done recycle according to definition that wouldn't have been the ending formation.

End any restrictions on the use of the term Extend.

End any restrictions on use of Tag the Line $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{3}{4}$, etc.

As far as any of the PLUS calls on the One Floor Program are concerned, ELIMINATE them. You can still use many of the PLUS calls by calling them directionally using core moves.

If we as callers teach the core moves of Square Dancing and teach them well, so the dancers can dance them effortlessly, then there are very few other moves that cannot be called directionally using the core moves. I realize that this might require callers to put in some time planning dances, but if they cannot call a fun filled, interesting dance using only the core moves of Square Dancing, then perhaps they should take their microphone and move onto karioki.

You now have my input. I'm sure others will have more to add with reasons good or bad. If we don't try we have nothing to lose but the activity of Square Dancing. Hopefully we won't be too late to save our activity and can come up with a product agreeable to most callers who are bringing new dancers into our activity. We must take back the leadership of square dancing if it is to survive.

Respectfully submitted – Wes Morris

Wes made some very good points about the way we use calls and the fact that we could and would call a much better dance. If core moves are taught well, you can call many moves directionally. Wes gave us a way to get to the same place with other calls or by directionally calling the call. By eliminating some of the calls that he suggests and keeping the better calls, this would cut down teach time . Thanks Wes

A special thanks to Bill Chesnut CCI & Bobby Keefe CCI for their work on this teaching order. Of course everyone is going to adjust to their liking but all calls on the list are included.

LESSON 1 BASIC SQUARE

1. Dancer Naming-Partner/Corner-Heads/Sides-Couples
2. FORWARD AND BACK
3. ALLEMANDE LEFT/ARM TURNS
4. PROMENADE (full, 1/2,3/4 and single file)
5. RIGHT & LEFT GRAND/WEAVE THE RING
6. CIRCLE FAMILY (circle 4/8-right/left-1/2, 3/4 and full)
7. SWING
8. RIGHT HAND STAR/LEFT HAND STAR (boys, girls-heads/sides & from single file)
9. STAR PROMENADE
10. PASS THRU
11. PARTNER TRADE
12. DO SA DO
13. SEE SAW

LESSON 2 review previous week & teach 2

14. COURTESY TURN
15. LADIES CHAIN FAMILY (two ladies, four ladies and 3/4)
16. STAR THRU/SLIDE THRU (** star thru only)
17. SQUARE THRU(1-5)

LESSON 3 review previous & teach 3

18. PASS TO THE CENTER
19. BEND THE LINE
20. RIGHT & LEFT THRU

LESSON 4 review previous & teach 4

21. LEAD RIGHT/LEFT
22. VEER RIGHT/LEFT
23. CIRCLE TO A LINE **

LESSON 5 review previous & teach 5

24. SASHAY FAMILY (ladies in men sashay, roll-way) * (just roll-away)
25. U-TURN BACK
26. GRAND SQUARE
27. WHEEL AROUND

LESSON 6 review previous & teach 6

- 28. OCEAN WAVE (right hand/left hand/Alamo style)
- 29. PASS THE OCEAN
- 30. SWING THRU (left swing thru/Alamo swing thru)
- 31. EXTEND

LESSON 7 review previous & teach 7

- 32. RUN FAMILY/CROSS RUN (ends, centers, boys, girls)
- 33. TRADE FAMILY (from lines facing out boys, girls, ends, centers & couples)
(from ocean waves & two faced lines, boys, girls, ends, centers & couples)

LESSON 8 review previous & teach 8

- 34. WHEEL & DEAL FAMILY (lines out & two face lines)
- 35. DOUBLE PASS THRU
- 36. CENTERS IN
- 37. CAST OFF 3/4

LESSON 9 review previous & teach 9

- 38. TOUCH 1/4
- 39. TRADE BY
- 40. FLUTTER WHEEL/REVERSE FLUTTER WHEEL

LESSON 10 review previous & teach 10

- 41. CIRCULATE FAMILY (couples, boys, girls, ends, centers, eight, split, box, columns)
- 42. SWEEP 1/4
- 43. SPIN THE TOP

LESSON 11 review previous & teach 11

- 44. DIXIE STYLE TO A WAVE **
- 45. SCOOT BACK
- 46. FERRIS WHEEL

LESSON 12 review previous & teach 12

- 47. HINGE FAMILY (couples, partner, single) *Hinge is 1/2 of a Trade.*
- 48. WALK & DODGE **
- 49. FOLD/CROSS FOLD

LESSON 13 review previous & teach 13

- 50. CLOVERLEAF
- 51. TAG THE LINE/HALF TAG (in, out, right, left)
- 52. RECYCLE **
- 53. TURN THRU

(The calls that have a ** by them are calls that Wes Morris suggested could be Called **directionally or dropped**.
If what you are doing is working please keep doing it and share it with everyone.)

THE STATE OF SQUARE DANCING TODAY

As I see it and I know that I am not the only Caller or Dancer that is concerned about the decline in our activity today. If we look at the National Square Dance Convention we can see that the number of dancers at the convention are from all over the Square Dance World and they are down by about 85 per cent from the highest number that has every attended. That means that we have 15 per cent left to rebuild this great activity. In my opinion that means we will have to concrete on the Basic & Mainstream levels and get rid of some of the calls like Wes Morris suggested.

The way I see it we need to start working together to bring back growth to this great activity. If you have been in square dancing for any length of time the name Jim Mayo will mean something to you. Jim has been calling and teaching Square Dancing for over 57 years and has given so much to Square Dancing . The following was taken from an article that Jim Mayo has written. Clearly we all have a Common Interest turning this activity around.

Excerpts of Jims Article

We have known - even before we knew the term - that square dancing is a wonderful way to build social capital. It brings together people from all walks of life into a cooperative, usually community-based group. We have all seen the strength of the sense of belonging and genuine lifelong friendships that are created in square dancing. We now have an advocate to tell us with overwhelming evidence how important are these contributions to the health and strength of our society. Square dancing is not only fun, it is also a valuable gift that we can give to all who take part and to the communities where we live. Let us redouble our efforts to make the joy we know available to our neighbours. Included in the research data showing a steady decline in community participation over the generations is a bright sliver of hope.

The data show that the newest generation is a bit more likely to volunteer in programs that benefit the community than folks in the previous generation. Whether or not there is a change in this trend, it seems clear to me that one place where we in the square dance world might focus some energy is with that next generation. We have the time and the talent to share the fun of square dancing with young folks at every level of school. Learning to square dance is an investment in social capital. The earlier we teach the values of working and playing together, the more likely we are to re-inforce the appreciation of social capital. We can do well for square dancing while doing good for the community.

Jim Mayo

Jim's knowledge of the square dance activity is legendary and he is the author of the only book about the complete history of modern square dancing, "Step By Step Through Modern Square Dance History".