

American Callers Association Viewpoint

By

Patrick Demerath

Words Have Meanings

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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, winning ways to retain club dancers, and pitfalls to drive square dancers away from 2001 to the present. ACA really appreciates the positive comments, encouragement to continue, and contributions from callers and dancers 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 presents a pedagogical view that words have meanings, and **can** form the outlooks of people who read or speak them. In reading this article, please remember that the main purpose of square dance clubs is to provide fun and healthy activities for its members.

In posing a pedagogical question with challenges to each and every dancer and callers alike, let's look at two definitions. Something all square dance callers are dependant upon. Let's look at one word in particular, mainstream. According to Merriam Webster, to be in the mainstream is to be in the "average" or norm or a C grade. Let's look at one more, plus. In math, it means positive, in other general terms it means, having, receiving, or **being in addition to average**. Now, let me ask you, given a choice, which do you want to be? Well, I've got news, **NO ONE WANTS TO BE AVERAGE AND NO ONE WANTS TO BE IN ADDITION TO AVERAGE!** This brings me to the point of this writing. I would like to challenge all of our caller membership and other dancers not to use either one of these terms, **EVER**, when it comes to the dance program they have. First of all, there is no need for these imperfect terms. It is high time we, as members, start to use our own terms.

We, AMERICAN CALLERS ASSOCIATION, have 60 calls, on our **NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL SQUARE DANCE PROGRAM**. I would suggest what might work very well for many callers and dancers. Make sure that you have plenty of copies of AMERICAN CALLERS program at the door at every one of your dances. At your regular club dances this is very easy and will let the visitors know what they might expect to hear on any given tip, not just, say MS/Average or P/Addition to Average. Let them know, if you or your club members don't already know these folks, if they are not familiar with some of the calls listed, to let you, the caller, know so you can stay away from those particular calls when those folks are on the floor. This gives control of the dance back to where it should be, **TO YOU the DANCERS**.

In the event of lessons, where you might be splitting up the number of calls for a given set of instructional periods, just simply let the new dancers, as well as the angels, know you will be covering the first 60 calls, or any other combination you are going to instruct. But, I really feel, you should NEVER use the terms we have already defined and debunked . Lets establish our identity as the dominant force, which we are, and eliminate **DIVIDING PEOPLE INTO CLASSES!**

In closing, I want to challenge each caller and dance leader out there to use the AMERICAN CALLERS published dance program as the standard by which all others are measured. And, to the Callers, to memorize, if you haven't already, Burleson's Square Dance Encyclopedia, at least the calls you will be using and instructing. Don't let yourself get into situations, which we have all seen, where the dancer is trying to tell the caller/instructor how a move is performed. Remember, Burleson definitions are the ONLY official definitions, use them. And lastly, start using the AMERICAN CALLERS ASSOCIATION term SQUARE DANCING. Stop taking the easy way out, using old hat terms that insinuate your dancers are just mediocre or privileged. This is not the American way.

Any individual, club, caller, or association who wishes to communicate his/her opinions on this subject or communicate its success stories in recruiting is encouraged to contact The American Callers' Association at Loulet@aol.com or Dr. Patrick Demerath at pdemerath17@gmail.com. ACA will print your success stories and credit you with the success. Please visit our website at American Callers .com news/