



American Callers Association

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April, May, June 2018 Newsletter

WELCOME our New PRESEDENT Tom Roper



Tom became involved in the Square Dance activity in 1975. After dancing about 6 months, the "calling bug" bit him and he called his first tip shortly thereafter.

In 1977 Tom began booking dances in his Tri-State area and soon after was club caller for 3 clubs. He continued calling for these clubs until the company where he was plant manager closed, at which time he decided to start calling and traveling full time.

Beginning in 1982 Tom started traveling some 75,000 miles a year, calling in almost every state of the U.S. and the overseas countries of Saudi Arabia, England, Norway, and Sweden.

Starting in 1998 he began calling a winter program in the Rio Grande Valley of South Texas when he spent 12 years at Lakewood RV Park in Harlingen, Texas calling 12 sessions per week from Beginner Square Dancers thru the Advance level.

Tom calls all levels thru C-1, has recorded numerous records on such labels as Coyote, Jo Pat, Lou Mac, Global, Four Bar B, Crown, Hi-Hat, and Solid Gold.

He has attended 33 National Square Dance conventions since 1977 and has been featured caller at many State conventions and festivals around the country.

Tom makes his summer residence in Omaha, Illinois, a small town in the Southeastern corner of the state from Mid-April thru early October traveling some 40,000 miles during the summer.

He is resident square dance caller at Tower Point RV Resort in Mesa, AZ from Mid-October thru Mid-April each year.

From the beginning of the dance, till the final tip of the evening, you can feel the excitement in his music and share in his enthusiasm.

Tom strongly feels that regardless of the level one dances, square dancers, should "HAVE FUN DANCING."

Thank to our Past President Tom Davis for all that he Has done for ACA



A great big Thank You to Tom Davis for all the help you have been as President of ACA and for serving an extra Year as President. You will now become a member of the Advisory Board.

BOARD MEMBER ELECTION

We need to add one member to the Board. A couple of members have asked their name be added for this place on the Board. Your vote will be for one of them. They are both fine callers with years of Experience. Bill Chesnut from Florida and Jim Steel from Oregon

Candidate for ACA Board

Bill & Mary Chesnut-
P.O. Box 335 -
Melrose, Florida 32666
H-352-475-2550 -C352-256-8628

Bill Called his first dance in September 1966-Attended first Florida Callers Association clinic and joined FCA 1967.

Caller for teen group 1968. Joined U.S. Navy Submarine Service Nov 1969- Jan1974

Re-joined FCA in May 1974 -Caller for OAC Squares 74-76- joined Callerlab 1980

Became caller for Square Wheels Camping Club NSDCA 128 in1981and continues now

Became caller for Gator Twirlers 1982 and continues as Mixed nuts now

Treasurer for Florida Callers Association1989-90

Vice President Florida Callers Association 1990-91- President Florida Callers 1991-92

Bill is currently President of Rural Callers Association

Bill & Bobby Keefe Help the American Callers teaching list

Current calling Beginners classes through A-2

PERSONAL: Married to Mary since 1986 -We share 3 children, 6 grands and 2 great grand children
Retired from office supply industry.



Jim Steele (Jan)

Candidate For ACA BOARD

PO Box 1661
Prineville, OR 97754
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541-279-7019

I have been dancing since 1952 where I started back in Nebraska where I'm originally from, and my wife, Jan has been dancing since 1972. We have been married as a Square Dance Caller/Instructor team since May 1985.

I began calling in 1959 when I graduated from Caller's school in June 1960 where I went to NW Callers Association (NWCA) taught by Mel Stricklet, an exceptionally great man! I then worked and taught under my dad, Clyde A Steele for 2 years, (he was a Caller for 22 yrs) My dad & I started a Teen Club together in 1961 'Hixs & Chicks' of which I took over as Caller and I worked with them for 8 years, amongst several other Teen Clubs.

I was known in the Northwest and mainly in Oregon from 1961-1980 as 'the most in demand, hottest Teen Caller'. I also started with my dad, a Teen Exhibition Precision Group in 1962 that we called 'Tandem Teens' with up to (40) teen dancers. I was the choreographer for the group from 1962 until 1979.

I was a professional caller that traveled on the road for weekend dances, festivals, etc. from 1969-1976, I had to stop being an on the road caller due to marriage issues with my first wife.

I have called in 30 different states and (2) different countries. I have taught/instructed at least 1-2 sets of Mainstream lessons a year for the past 58 years. I have called for one-night stands, after parties, (12) different home clubs, State and area Festivals, (4) Far West Festivals and National conventions throughout the 58 years. I call from Mainstream, Plus through A-1 & A-2.

I have started a new way of Fun for the dancers in my area, by having a weekly MS Workshop and Plus Workshop on two different days of the week and gives the dancers, seasoned or new dancers, a place to come work on problem dance moves and floor time, and work them in different positions, with my directional calling skill of 58 years. The workshops are growing strong and the dancers are absolutely loving it!

I'm the owner of El Dorado Record Company, of which I purchased all inventory and rights from Caller, Jerry Bradley in late 80's.

VOTE - Members Name _____ Vote for one. Jim or Bill
This will be a 2 Year term on the board of Directors of American Callers Inc.
Jim Steele _____

Bill Chesnut _____
Hard Mail to P.O. Box 2406 Muscle AL 35662 - Email to Loulet@aol.com

The false information about American Callers Assoc.

It has been brought to our attention that some misinformation has been put on Face Book and other internet pages about American Callers Association license Country-Western Line Dancing and Square Dance instructors. This was completely false. American Callers Association has been licensing Dance instructors for the past 27 years. We pride ourselves in the ability to provide license for ASCAP and BMI including liability insurance at an affordable price for all the above uses.

If you have any further questions about the License that you get through American Callers please do not hesitate to call our office at 256-383-7585 or you can call BMI or ASCAP for yourself. The lady that takes care of the ACA license at ASCAP is Michele Wright at 615-727-5955 in Nashville TN. At BMI it's Robin Whicker at 615-401-2857.

We have been dealing with this for several weeks at a time that we should have been working to get out your renewal on your License and membership in American Callers done. The lady that put this on Face Book was told to do so and almost got herself in a Lawsuit. As we investigate this further we found out that it got started by someone that did not know what they were talking about and someone at ASCAP did not check to see that American Callers had been doing this for them for 27 years for ASCAP.

Mac Letson

THE DECLINE IN OUR SQUARE DANCE ACTIVITY

I get letters and phone calls from all over this great country people ask what has happen to the square dance activity and not just in the USA. As I read information from Australia they are having a difficult time there keeping square dancing going. They are having the same problem that everyone is having.

You can get them in Line Dancing because you can learn a couple of line dances in a night, but Square Dancing takes too long and there is to many other things that they can do in a shorter time. I remember a time when we first started square dancing you could go for 2 hours class one night a week for 8 weeks and you were able to dance with the club. The people now days are looking for something that is easy to learn EASY to do and you get through in a short time. I believe we burn them out before they every get to enjoy square dancing with long rush rush classes and they leave and tell everyone.

I do believe that if you bond with some ones heart and make them feel welcome and wanted you will enjoy them as a friend for a lifetime.

Mac Letson

What is Success – Square Dance “The Movie” vs Square Dance the Board game

Over the last year or so, Behind the Mike a newsletter for callers from Australia has focused on bringing articles related to caller development, progression and self-improvement. Interspersed within the pages, are articles of interest, history, training and development ideas, and occasionally even a little choreography to share. – Why not share it – it does no one any good sitting in our own little box of cue cards. Common themes that have developed over the last several years are *“the good old days” * “we used to do that, but...” * “We have lost so much”

I am a strong advocate of Basic and Mainstream as a level which should be danced and enjoyed. Many articles have been written on this topic, focused on putting the dance back into dancing, making it fun for the dancers, creative choreography and using the program to the fullest. Many of the writers who have submitted articles on caller development and improvement have also expressed the theme of keeping the activity alive. The single underlying theme however is rarely expressed. Personal development to become a successful caller boils down to a single thing and a willingness to work toward that thing. Calling success really is simple.

Remember that it is ABOUT THE DANCERS and NOT THE CALLER. Dancers are not babies, nor are they incapable. Many have different learning styles and speeds. It is up to you as a caller to be able to find the style of teaching and presentation that each dancer needs to succeed and to cater to each and every one individually, as well as collectively as a group. Most of all however, you as a caller have to find a way to get them in for the long haul. It is the difference between watching a movie or playing a favorite board game. I was reading an article the other day about a regional area association of Square Dance Clubs and Callers that take in new students every 3 months. The average class size is about 40 students of which about 4 squares graduate. (Some drop off along the way or have other commitments). The various regional callers share the teaching program. They run an intensive training course for new dancers and successfully graduate dancers who are free to go to any of the other clubs in the area. They host dances collectively and generally promote this as a successful campaign. This has been running now for 6 years. some drop off along the way or have other commitments). The various regional callers share the teaching program. They run an intensive training course for new dancers and successfully graduate dancers who are free to go to any of the other clubs in the area. They host dances collectively and generally promote this as a successful campaign. This has been running now for 6 years. I thought it was a great idea personally and that if it works for them then keep on going. I was interested so I asked and researched a little more.

I am a passionate advocate of square dancing as an activity and calling as a vocation commitment (professional or not). I thought that in all this discussion of how bad things are getting, here is a group that is succeeding, and I wanted to know more. Being the ex-Military Intelligence analyst that I am I started to dig.

Here is what I found out about the success. 25 years ago, there were 19 square dance clubs in the region all with an average of 7 squares. (smallest was 3 squares and the largest was 26 squares over three levels in the same club – different nights) 15 Years ago there were 9 clubs with an average of 5

squares 7 years ago there were 4 plus clubs with an average of 3 squares. (the large club still had 9 squares over two nights – basic through A2).

BEHIND THE MIC by Barry Wonson

6 years ago, the joint revitalization program to get new dancers started. Over 60 squares have graduated. Today the club stats are as follows: There are 4 clubs. 1 is a plus club, 2 are plus/Advance and one is MS/Plus/A1 star tip with a Advance/Challenge club on a different night. Each club has from 1.5 to 6 squares average of 3 per club Total squares dancing 7 years ago – 19 squares Total Squares new dancers Graduated over last 6 years – 62+ Total average squares dancing 2017 - 2 squares Once per year there is a Plus class of 8 weeks intensive to welcome the graduate dancers into the area clubs There is only one club in the entire regional area at which graduate dancers can dance mainstream, and they attend for less than half an evening dance. For me personally, and I admit openly that I am not a professor of mathematics, but 62+ squares of new graduate dancers that have only one place to go and use what they have learned. In this particular area there are no clubs or venues for them to just be and enjoy the square dancing they learned. This is not good math in my books. Once dancers graduate, those that do wish to continue have to either rush through plus or wait to take the annual “blast teaching” and are either pulled or pushed through the programs. (Yes I know there are the few exceptional dancers that do this successfully, but the majority does not). Reality Check: - This methodology on the surface seems like a great idea but it is not sustainable. It is only when you look at the larger picture do you see the inherent problems. There is no social activity here. There is a clique of dwindling clubs and dancers. 40-50 people get together for 3 months for an activity and then move on to something else – no long-term commitment. There is no successful student class. There is a graduation “teach ‘em and leave ‘em” with the hope one or two take up the activity. Chances are they will become the new crop of callers and will teach from what they have learned. There is no growth in the method. Clubs have gone from 19 clubs to 4 and in the last 6 years of this program, club attendance and membership has dropped across the board, despite graduating over 500 dancers. There is no venue to share and enjoy what was learned and get better at it. There are however plus and higher venues where the rare few graduates can aspire to be “as good as we are” at plus and higher. The usual response is: “No thanks, my new friends and I have just heard about a line dance group starting classes, and then there is a Country-Western group we thought we would try”.

American Callers would like to thank Barry Wonson and BEHIND THE MIKE For Their fine newsletter. The last two pages were taken from their newsletter.

Barry has it listed a News Notes’n Nonsense.

I think it News notes and great Sense.

Mac Letson