

Square Dancing's Christmas Thanks to Local Club Callers

By Patrick Demerath

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 from 2000 to 2019. ACA really appreciates the positive comments, encouragement to continue, and contributions from callers all over the country to continue these initiatives. ACA will continue to provide information that will help the square dance community recruit, retain and retrieve square dancers. ACA has received several positive comments about the last three to four months ACA Viewpoints the fragility of recruiting student dancers, the fragility of students in lessons, and the fragility of graduated square dancers the first year of club dancing.

This month's ACA Viewpoint is dedicated to club callers everywhere who contribute so much to square dancing and receive very little recognition and often much criticism. ACA recognizes that many of today's dancers in the modern generations including Millennials demand a more instant gratification for their time and money spent. Unlike the earlier generations, these newer generations want a simple way to start having fun. They appear to state that they do not want long-term sets of instruction.

These desires compound the problem for club callers' survival. What is a club caller? How do we define the role of a club caller? The answer is very simple to describe and very hard to do. Being a club caller is more than being a part time job. Some people may see the caller on the stage calling to his/her club and comment to the caller that it would be nice "to have your job. You come once or twice a week to stand up on the stage calling, teaching, and having a great time." Many callers might shake their heads at this type of a statement and wonder how many people have similar impressions of the job of a club caller. Perhaps, they do know that the job of club caller is its own special category long on duties, responsibilities, and time unknown by many people.

It is true that many people see the caller during his or her, two to three hour performance at a club dances. In reality, the club caller is very generous with his/her time behind the scenes supporting his/her club with great affection. When not up on the stage, many club callers are working full time jobs, raising a family, mowing the yard, helping in the house, and raising a family.

In addition to this, the club caller, must prepare for each dance with a dance program, practice calling techniques, maintain and often repair square dancing equipment, studying square dance literature, assisting the preparation of class recruitment, visiting ill and shut-in dancers, attending funerals of deceased square dance friends, attending callers and square association meetings, participating in fund raiser activities, scheduling and attending square dance presentations for rest home patients, AND A WHOLE HOST OF OTHER DUTIES. Very often free time including weekends are preempted for various square dancing related activities.

ACA believes that for the record, the club caller is quite often the strength of the club and local square dancing. The caller teaches the classes, serves as a gentle advisor, confidant, diplomat, and comforts the conflicting, visits the sick in the hospital. At the same time, the caller continues to call the dances and teaches the students week after week, month after month, and year after year.

In many ways, the caller becomes the charismatic leader of the club and puts out the fires of conflict. People come to the caller for information and direction. The caller may be described as the eyes and ears of the club and local square dancing. Club callers understand and practice altruism, favoring fun, friendship and service over monetary rewards. Callers training for club calling and teaching often extend over several years.

In their professional lives, local club callers are bankers, sales executives, public servants, teachers, university professors, business executives, plumbers, electricians, and computer experts.

One fact is certain, no matter the background; he is a considerate and concerned servant to the square dancers dedicated to the health of square dancing, his/her club, and square dancers. To serve as a club caller is a priceless honor and extraordinary avocation. It includes so many obligations taken for granted. Remember these local club callers are the spirit and backbone of square dancing. Just support them. They offer so much to the square dancing activity.

ACA is pleased to present this tribute to the local club callers and wish them a very Merry Christmas and Happy and Healthy New Year.

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 pdemerath17@gmail.com

Please visit our website and newsletters at americancallers.net

Until next time, happy dancing

ACA wishes all square dancers and their callers a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year