



# American Callers Association

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From the President, January 6, 2020

Happy New Year to everyone, I hope that this finds you healthy.

I have been in the Square Dance activity for over 43 years and have been a full time caller for 38 of those years. I spent 12 years in Harlingen, Texas at an RV resort and the last 11 years here in Mesa, Arizona at a very similar resort. I have watched the square dance activity decline for over 30 years.

I spend 7 months here in Mesa, Arizona yearly where my situation is quite different from that of other callers. Many of the residents that come here for the winter come for only 2-3 months, some for 5 months and some live here fulltime. In my Beginner class I teach only Basics, if they are able to stay longer than 3 months we are able to teach the Mainstream list. For those that are unable to stay thru the Mainstream list, they can continue when they leave here, or do the Mainstream program when they return the following season.

I am able to run 2 sets of Beginner classes, this year I had 5 Squares in the first part of the season, and will begin the second half of the season soon. My classes are **FREE** each and every week and I have a dance every week for the **Beginners** using the calls that have been covered in class, they pay for the dance, at least  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the students come to the weekly dance. To my knowledge, there is not another **Beginner** or **Basic** level dance anywhere in the country.

I truly believe the reason my classes are successful is that we have **FUN** not only in the class but also at the weekly dance. We all must agree that the most fun we had was when we were new square dancers.

Sometimes I feel that we have chased away more dancers than we have retained. When the new dancer comes into the hall, they have no idea if there are 10 calls or 100 calls, we tell them that they have to be there for a certain number of weeks to learn it scares them off and they never return. If they do return, we take them thru Basic and Mainstream class, teach them a few Plus calls then let them go to dances. In some cases they are not able to dance to the caller, which they blame for not calling what they dance, they get discouraged and quit dancing.

I recently watched a video taken at a weekend. It was advertised as a Plus weekend, the portion that I listened to had 3 of the 4 callers calling separately. A total of 4 plus calls were used, 1 of which was a combination of 2 calls, (follow your neighbor and spread), what happened to the other plus calls on the list? I have often said that 80 % of the callers only call 20% of the calls. If we are not going to use the entire list, then let's consolidate it. It's time that we as callers wake up, we are not being fair to the dancers.

Today many people use the clothing issue as an excuse, that's just what it is, an excuse. If we don't look like **Square Dancers** no one knows that we are. When we go out to eat before or after the dance if we don't dress like **Square Dancers**, we just look like everyone else in the restaurant. I compile the schedule for the Apache Trail Callers Association and in the schedule my phrase about square dance clothing is; "**Square Dance Clothing is Admired But Not Required.**"

Callers need to step up to the plate and do whatever it takes to teach people to **Square Dance**. There are too many that want to “pick the fruit off of the trees.” It seems that not enough callers want to go the extra mile to teach new dancers. When one comes along and calls the entire list and the dancers are not able to do the calls, then they blame the caller.

Maybe we are not able to get young people or even middle age people into the activity, but what about the folks that used to dance? They may be 60-70 years old, but today that is not old, and think about it, they won't need lessons, just a few **brush up's**.

This is just my opinion and observation of what is happening to the activity that I love and even though I call and dance all levels, I am proud to say that I am a **Square Dancer**.

Good luck to everyone, but remember this; “If you don't put water in the well, it will eventually run dry.”

#### Wheel Around Workshop #1

HEADS square thru 4  
swing thru  
GIRLS circulate, boys trade  
boys run, bend the line  
pass thru  
    { When we do a wheel around, the girl's position walks  
    forward, the boy's position backs up }  
wheel around  
right and left thru  
pass thru  
    { She walks forward } wheel around  
square thru 3  
    { She walks forward } wheel around  
slide thru  
box the gnat  
right and left grand

#### Wheel Around Workshop #2

SIDES pass the ocean  
extend  
swing thru, boys run  
couples circulate, bend the line  
pass thru  
    { She walks forward } wheel around  
pass thru, wheel and deal  
double pass thru  
LEADS wheel around  
slide thru  
square thru 4  
trade by  
right and left thru, roll away  
pass thru  
right and left grand

#### Wheel Around Workshop #3

HEADS star thru, pass thru  
right and left thru, veer left  
couples circulate  
bend the line  
pass thru, tag the line, face in  
pass thru  
    { Since the boys are in the girls normal position {on the  
    right}, he'll walk forward, she'll back up }  
wheel around  
pass thru, bend the line  
pass thru  
    { He'll walk forward } wheel around  
touch 1/4  
CENTERS walk and dodge  
Other boys run  
box the gnat  
right and left grand

#### Wheel Around Workshop #4

SIDES right and left thru & lead left, veer right  
couples circulate, bend the line  
pass thru, wheel and deal  
CENTERS wheel around  
pass to the center  
CENTERS wheel around  
right and left thru, veer left  
couples circulate, bend the line  
pass thru  
{ Where are the heads? } HEADS wheel around  
couples circulate  
girls trade  
wheel and deal  
Do-sa-do  
scoot back  
right and left grand

#### Wheel Around Workshop #5

HEADS lead right, right and left thru, veer left  
couples circulate  
girls trade  
{ Those facing out } LEADS wheel around  
pass the ocean, girls trade  
swing thru, boys trade, boys run  
girls trade  
{ Those facing out } LEADS wheel around  
flutter wheel  
slide thru  
swing thru ; spin the top  
girls run  
bend EACH line  
right and left grand

#### Wheel Around Workshop #6

SIDES star thru  
double pass thru  
Those facing out wheel around & roll away  
square thru 2  
CENTERS California twirl, Others cross fold  
CENTERS pass thru  
square thru 2  
ALL wheel around, dixie style to a wave  
girls trade ONCE  
boys trade TWICE  
left allemande

ACA Members,

As you were told in a previous Newsletter, the site [www.americancallers.com](http://www.americancallers.com) was hacked. In many cases what these hackers do is to take the web site and try to sell it back to the owner at an inflated price. We felt this was not the best thing to do so we changed the web page to [www.americancallers.net](http://www.americancallers.net). This webpage is now up and running with all the correct applications. What we members need to, on a regular basis go to your search engine such as Google type in [www.americancallers.net](http://www.americancallers.net) and do the search. The more we do this, the more it will over ride the old website which will eventually become obsolete.

Also, members of American callers also need to spread the word about our organization. Feel free to go to the ACA web page and print out a copy of the ACA application and pass it out, the more we spread the word, the more members we will acquire. American Callers is another alternative to ASCAP/BMI license and liability insurance however, we are about \$50.00 a year less than what you pay for the same service. We do not have the over head that other associations have and we try very hard to keep your cost as low as we can therefore passing the savings on to you our members.

We as callers should have a choice as to where we get our license and insurance and not be forced to belong to any one organization; this is another reason to spread the word about the American Callers Association.

We think square dancing has gotten so small, if we cannot get new people into this activity and keep them, we sure cannot keep them in all ten levels that are being pushed today. With the dancers on the floor getting older and having to drop out for health reasons, we should try our best to share our love of square dancing with as many people as possible to keep this activity alive. We have made it too hard for most people that still work and have kids at home to be a part of dancing today. Let's not look at how good we are at this advanced level dancing but, let's make time to bring in and help new dancers. Many clubs today are trying to keep all the people that they have left so, they only cover a tip of Mainstream. And they may have anyone care to dance at Mainstream level because they have not had a class in the last five years. However, callers can still call a Plus tip and an Advance tip to cover all the likes of all the people that are there for the dance.

You know the thing that attracted me to Square Dancing in the first place, over sixty years ago, was the fun and fellowship that was present at the first dance that I attended.

I remember that there were so many people at that dance they all could not get in the hall at the same time. They would have to dance a tip and the go outside so other dancers could get to dance. My hope is to see this dance activity turn around, not with ten levels but one, where the fun and fellowship can return to square dancing.

Mac Letson