

Lá Fhéile Pádraig sona do gach Damhsóir Cearnóg

(HAPPY ST. PATRICK'S DAY TO SQUARE DANCERS)

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The American Callers' Association in its attempt to be of service to all callers, dancers, and associations has provided current, timely, and effective information on new dancer recruitment, winning ways to retain club dancers, and pitfalls that drive square dancers away from 2000 to the Present. ACA really appreciates the positive comments, encouragement to continue, and contributions from callers and dancers all over North America and 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.

History teaches that St. Patrick lived in the 5th Century and was either from Scotland or England. He was kidnapped by pirates from Ireland where he was enslaved and grew up. Later he escaped and went home where he entered the seminary and was ordained a priest. He returned to Ireland and ultimately converted the Irish people to Christianity. Historically, St. Patrick's Day was celebrated as a special **Religious Holiday** in Ireland **similar** to Easter.

Today the current way that St. Patrick's Day is celebrated with all the orange and green and parties were started in Boston, Massachusetts.

What is admirable about St. Patrick? He feared for his life daily defined courage as acting in the face of danger.

What does this have to do with Square Dancing? One may state that square dancers are very hesitant to invite good people to square dancing for fear of being told no and personally feel of being rejected. One partial comforting solution to this is to bring up at club meetings that the person saying no is not saying rejecting the square dancer but is not interested in square dancing. Therefore, do not take it personally syndrome fits here. If we read professional Sales and Marketing books or journals, the authors argue that 90% of sales come on the 5th request after four turndowns.

The lessons of both are to act in the face of fear and rejection and ask people several times over periods of time to visit a square dance. When a person agrees, the communication of **welcome** must come from the dancers and the **caller** to the **visitor**. Make them feel that they are at a St. Patrick's Day party regardless of the month. ACA advocates that square dancing has the potential to be of interest to all visitors and does not have to **fail** if we all **focus** on the **visitors' needs and preferences**.

One might say St. Patrick focused on the positive side of his mission of Christianity and we as square dancers can focus on a positive side of Square Dancing.

. Who are the Modern St. Patrick's?

- Square dancers, who work to **recruit** new dancers, **retain** current dancers and **retrieve** former dancers.
- Square dancers who have helped support church activities and entertained the infirmed.
- Square dancers who take offices in clubs and associations because no one else will take them.
- Square dancers who work as volunteers, unrecognized, in support of square dance activities such as jamborees and most importantly club dances.
- Square dancers who start new square dance activities where there were none and expand the fellowship and fun for new dancers/.

During these times of conflict, unrest and decline in Square Dancing, let us focus **over riding our fears of rejection** and put our **attention to serve new dancers**. Let's touch the "**heart**" of square dancing, by focusing on their needs of visitors to make them feel welcome, appreciated and needed.

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

Go dtí an Chéad Uair Am Damhsa Sona

(Until next time, happy dancing)

St. Patrick would say "**C'est Mille Failte**".

(A Thousand Welcomes)