



# American Callers Association

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Jan-Feb-Mar 2017 Newsletter

By Tom Davis  
PRESIDENT

## The Optimistic Evolution of Square Dancing

It is with the greatest of enthusiasm and optimism on behalf of the Executive Board of the American Callers Association that we would like to wish all square dancers and callers a very happy and prosperous 2017 with lots of happy dancing..

The **American Callers; Association** was formed over twenty years ago with a mission to simplify the cumbersome dance program for the dancers and with a firm belief that square dancers, clubs, associations and callers are under too much **stress** as they attempt to recruit, teach and dance too many movements with too much teaching. The **fun level** is at an all time low as is **recruiting** new dancers, **retaining** current dancers and **retrieving** former dancers. ACA's answer was and is to simplify the square dancing program.

Throughout the past twenty plus years ACA has grown steadily and quickly find a respected place in square dancing. The ACA philosophy was "**Offering More Fun and Friendship by Reducing Stress on the Dancers.**" Another way it could be said is the anachronism "**KISS**" – "**Keep it Sweet and Simple.**" Square dancing may be described a hundreds of ships taking in water but not sinking. This significance may be argued that square dancing may continue to shrink but will find its **own new home at the club levels.**

The expressed remedy means to continue to communicate with the square dance market to ask the dancers and callers **what they prefer**, unlike the past 30 to 40 years where dancer and club feedback was all but non-existent. Recent data have shown

that the number of square dancers has decreased by 78% since our high periods in the 1970s. In fact, the numbers of square dancers are **decreasing each year**, What does this tell us? At the first level it tell us that square dancing's continued existence is in nothing short of crisis despite the fact that square dancing can be the most fun-filled and rewarding activity in the country.

Why is square dancing aging and declining in the numbers of dancers and callers. Perhaps the decline is and was from the aging of the **seniors generation** and changing life styles of groups like the **Baby Boomers** and **Generation X** and the **Millennials** not accepting the complicated entry programs designed with good intention for past demographic groups of people.

Perhaps today the main mission of square dancing is to generate public awareness and promote growth and acceptance of contemporary Square Dancing under an umbrella of Folk Dancing by encouraging square dance groups who support and promote healthy lifestyles through dancing events that provide **fun** and effective **exercise** for both mind and body, all within a unique system of **social interactions of fun and friendship..**

In support of the square dancing, The American Callers' Association through its newsletter urges its member callers to bend and accommodate the self fulfilling prophecy or journey in the evolution in square dancing to what the dancers wish. Square Dancing's future looks promising as it accommodates itself to the **life style changes** in society and by living this lifeblood. It appears that these changes will preserve **square dancing and it will evolve its own way in the future** evolving into a more dancer friendly activity.

Any individual, club, caller, or association who wishes to communicate his/her opinions on this subject or communicate their viewpoints is encouraged to contact the American Callers' Association at [Loulet@aol.com](mailto:Loulet@aol.com) or Dr. Patrick Demerath at [pdemerath@hotmail.com](mailto:pdemerath@hotmail.com) Please visit our website at AmericanCallers.com

Wishing each of you a happy and prosperous square dancing fun 2017 New Year.

# Valentine Family Square Dancing

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, winning ways to retain club dancers, and pitfalls to drive square dancers away from 2000 to 2017 ACA 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.

Historically, ACA searched effective square dancing programs, which demonstrated successful methods of getting people into square dancing. This month's ACA Viewpoint presents an interesting and exciting narrative on square dancing of a very successful club with children and seniors dancing side by side.

February is the month of St. Valentine's Day. St. Valentine was a 4<sup>th</sup> Century priest who in violation of Roman law married Christian couples. Valentine was executed for crimes of marrying Christians. The celebration of St. Valentine's Day is called a day for lovers and at the same time encourages family unity. It can be done in square dancing.

This successful program features lessons and the club dances weekly. *How* often have we heard that it is necessary to get square dancing back into the elementary school systems in order to revive square dancing? Often we look at re-starting square dancing in the elementary schools as an all but impossible action. Several square dance clubs have found ways of doing it in a very encouraging and unique way.

This article features square dance clubs who feature family unity and family dancing. The programs feature senior's (grandparents) square dancing every week with groups of young people. Together, they are swinging their partners, promenading, and circling left and right. The American folk dance may be in decline across the world, but square dancing shows no signs of decline in some clubs.

Where do the family unity youth dancers come from? The answer is very unique. Club members bring their grand kids to take lessons. Another profitable source is from home school organizations, as well as former dancers returning to square dancing bring their grand kids with them. The main rule is that parents who wish their kids to learn square dancing are not required to take the lessons, but they are asked to stay in the hall for the lessons. This system has proven to be very successful in the martial arts classes, where the kids who earn their black belts are the ones whose parents come to the martial arts lessons. If the parents either participate in the lessons or stay for the lessons, the kids continue to earn their black belts or square dance diplomas.

If one looks around they will see a solid number of squares in the class with some angels filling in. One might see a family with four kids, a single mother and her daughter, and at several grand children. Senior dancers often comment that they love dancing with the children as they learn are eager to help out in the square.”

One positive encouragement to all the readers of this square dance journal, try it may work very well.

This article demonstrates that square dancing can be successful with different generations of people “braking down the age barriers” which separate them with dancers of three or four generations dancing together. Square dancers of all ages can build energy and enthusiasm and can easily merge into square dancing while at the same time richening family unity of St. Valentine...

Any individual, club, caller, or association who wishes to communicate his/her opinions on this subject or communicate their success story in recruiting is encouraged to contact the American Callers' Association at [Mac@americancallers.com](mailto:Mac@americancallers.com) or Dr. Patrick Demerath at [pdemerath@hotmail.com](mailto:pdemerath@hotmail.com). The American Callers' Association will be pleased to publish your story.

Please visit our website and newsletters @American Callers.com/news.

Until next time, Happy Dancing.

# NOW CALLER TRAINING COMES TO YOU

## ONLINE TECHNOLOGY ALLOWS ACCESS ANYWHERE

In the past, Callers seeking to improve their calling skills had to set aside vacation time, journey to a distant site, and participate in a room of Callers of varying abilities while trying to learn the aspects of calling they sought for their individual improvement. This means while the Caller Coaches were working with another Caller on singing calls, the Caller seeking to focus on choreography was simply put on-hold until their turn came around. As their turn came to learn choreography, the other Callers many times were lost in the conversation. Obviously, this was not a quality use of time nor the funds expended to participate in the training for either group.

Just as technology has changed allowing Callers to update their music library to MP3's and computers rather than cases of records, technology now allows for Caller training online. Eddie Powell, a Caller Coach from Reynoldsburg, Ohio USA and author of "So You Want To Be A Caller" is the first to make this available.

Eddie is a college professor that utilizes online (distance) learning in a number of his classes ranging from marketing and advertising to retailing or career development. In each case, students are provided learning materials and asked to complete assignments to encourage their comprehension of the subject matter. At times, audio's, video's, chat rooms, bulletin boards, and live engagements are employed to enhance the interaction and allow for greater student success.

Similar strategy is employed with offering distance learning for Callers. Modules are provided on a regular basis and after reading the material the student is asked to complete the assignment then submit online via email. The submitted assignment is reviewed, suggestions made, and added enhancements encouraged, as need, for the individual student.

Eddie has found that for a large percentage of Callers, choreography is the biggest obstacle. With that in mind, the beginning modules work on the area of choreography, developing your dance, resolving squares, body flow, and other important aspects of calling. This allows the maximum amount of time to focus on this area and really gain the understanding along with the creative use of the calls at a variety of levels.

Remembering that dancers are seeking to be entertained as well as surprised, challenged, and successful in their dancing routines to keep the dance FUN, then it is important that Callers be able to do so no matter the level of the floor at the given dance. Choreography, entertainment, showmanship, and other aspects are all presented in the course.

Later in the course materials, singing calls, timing, and actual critiques of student presentations are included. Students will be required to record MP3's of hash and singing calls for review. Many students appreciate that these instructor critiques are one-on-one, not in front of a group, thus, alleviating much of the possible embarrassment and trepidation. From time to time, Bonus Conference Calls are planned allowing for engagement and interaction with other students, guest Callers, or focused on a particular issue or event relevant to the dance activity. Viewpoints are exchanged openly with the idea that the more items are discussed and brought forward, the less intimidating they are. New Callers may want advice on doing one nighters, planning their first club dance, doing guest tips, teaching classes, or how to best develop their own class or club, for instance.

Eddie Powell's Online Caller's College begins with the basics of choreography development, the mindset of keeping choreography interesting, dancing from formation to formation, set-ups and get outs, and matching your material to the dancers abilities for a FUN and entertaining dance event. Nearly any caller can gain added perspective from the materials presented in these modules to build or refresh their program.

***Dream Of Becoming An Amazing Caller?  
Your Desire and Commitment is Required.  
Eddie Powell's Online Caller's College is ready to help YOU now.  
Contact: Eddie Powell at [Eddie@EddiePowell.com](mailto:Eddie@EddiePowell.com)***

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Learn, Dance & Grow  
Education at the 66th National Square Dance Convention®  
June 21-24, 2017

## **Attracting New Dancers**

*What reason(s) got YOU into dancing?*

All activities (square dancing, businesses, churches, etc.) must continue to attract, gain, and retain new people or they cannot sustain themselves. New ideas and techniques must be utilized to relate to our potential audience. Messages must be accurately communicated. Action tracking should be in place to move these dancers through their entire dance career starting with their initial contact.

Come, share ideas, learn what's working, and gain valuable insight you can share with your club or federation to produce immediate and long-term results. Take notes as Eddie Powell and Panel work to present a system-like approach to the random efforts currently undertaken in many parts of the country. Scheduled: Saturday, June 24, 2017.

See You At The 66<sup>th</sup> National Square Dance Convention® In Cincinnati, Ohio!

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4 sets - Yak Stak speakers with "Y" cords \$300 each set  
1 Hilton 300B – s/n 684038 - \$500  
1 Hilton 300 – s/n 677853 – \$400  
1 Hilton Micro 75 A – \$300

All prices are negotiable – plus shipping of course

Ed Laudenschlager  
1373 Gilead Ct.  
Galloway, Ohio 43119  
614-851-3233



# American Callers Association

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THROUGH AMERICAN CALLERS ASSOCIATION INC

The National Association of Dance Instructors and Leaders

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**AMERICAN CALLERS has two schedules: Fifty Dances or Less and Fifty Dances or More.**

The fees apply **ONLY** to Callers, Round Dance Teachers, Contra Prompters, and Clogging Instructors.

**GO TO THE WEB PAGE TO COUNTRY - WESTERN & LINE DANCE for license & Insurance**

**Membership Application for BMI/ASCAP License & Liability Insurance**

**April 1, 2017 through March 31, 2018**

**Caller \_\_\_\_\_ Rounds Teacher/ Cuer \_\_\_\_\_ Contra Prompter \_\_\_\_\_ Clogging \_\_\_\_\_**

Please check one: New Member \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_\_\_

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These licensing rates include the BMI/ASCAP fee, annual dues, and all members are insured under the group LIABILITY insurance coverage. Fees listed herein are established by the respective BMI/ASCAP Boards.

Fees are Non refundable. For all or any part of the year. The fees listed below are for **Caller, Rounds Teacher/ Cuer, Contra Prompter and Clogging**

51- DANCE EVENTS - per year (OR LESS) \$ 165.00      52-DANCE EVENTS - per year (OR MORE)  
\$ 213.00

*For members that join after Oct 1, 2017 BMI will allow you \$20,00 off the price listed above. If you have BMI/ASCAP license through another source, ACA allows you to join with membership & insurance \$75.00 per per year.*

Note: all information on insurance must be directed to the ACA office Member or spouse badges are: \$10.00 each for pin back and \$13.00 each for magnet back. Price includes postage. Badges will be shipped direct from our badge maker to you. Please allow 30 days for receipt of license. Please feel free to copy and distribute this application

*Make Checks Payable to AMERICAN CALLERS Inc and mail P.O. Box 2406 Muscle Shoals, AL. 35662-2406*

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