

DANCERgram

September 2024



THIS &
THAT

... for the latest news in the square and round dance community.

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FCA President's Message

Hey all Fellow Callers, Cuers and Square Dancers,

With September 1st now here we are getting even closer to the Florida Callers Association Caller Clinic with 46 days before the exciting weekend arrives. Are you getting excited yet! This year's clinic runs from October 17, 18 and 19, 2024 and will be held at The Villages with Kip Garvey a caller from California being the clinician for the weekend. The weekend closes out the FCA Callers Clinic with the Plus Dance with Rounds from 7pm to 9pm on October 19 at The Villages, Seabreeze Recreation with Kip Garvey as the caller and Ruth & Lloyd McKenrick are the cuers for the evening. So I hope all the callers are marking their calendars to attend the clinic and dancers are preparing to square up for a great dance. (For more details contact Keith Stevens at keithuns@yahoo.com or Keith Stevens 863-660-8839).

The Florida Square Dance Federation has been very busy with the planning of the 70th FSSRDC Convention “Spin The Big Top” on January 17 and 18, 2025 which is now 138 days away! I sure hope you have your tickets for the convention. If you haven't you can head on over to Convention Benefit Dance that will be on November 9, 2024 from 4:00 to 8:00 pm at the Wildwood

Community Center, 6500 Powell Rd., Wildwood, Florida. More details to come. So in the meantime mark the date on your calendars!

Did you know that the month of September is National Square Dancing Month! Let's celebrate the month, get your boots on and square up with lots of dancing!

I know many dancers have been traveling all over the country this summer to the various State Conventions and club dances in their areas and I know that they had a great time wherever they “ squared up”. That's the most rewarding thing about square dancing, when you see your friends at the dances at your local clubs and then you travel to other states and there are your friends! Who is “ following your neighbor” ? Then as you “square up” and “spread” our “lines” we invite even more new friends to be made for a lifetime of fun.

So to celebrate the month of September with kids headed back to school how about grabbing some of your non-dancing friends and bring them to a square dance class so they can experience the same fun and fellowship that we do.

The month of September is another quiet month for special days. September 2nd is the official Labor Day holiday for all the workers out there, so kick back and relax at your local square dance club. September 11 is now called Patriot Day which does not really help us to remember that awful day on September 11, 2001 which definitely cast a shadow on our country.

Well we finally close out the summer with the 1st day of Fall on September 22, 2024. Fall colors and our favorite fall comfort foods are on the way even if it is still hot outside.

Well until next time be safe out there as we continue thru 2024 which continues to “zoom” by. As always wherever you are dancing smile, help to “motivate” the new students and those of us with all our aches and pains with lots of encouragement and make more new friends for a lifetime of dancing.

Until next time.

Rod Barngrover, FCA President September 2024.

Sam is back!

Just a short Note to Let You Know that I intend to start dancing here in Sebring in January. If Sebring is too far for you to travel, talk to your park and I will come to You.

Your options are SSD dancing, Mainstream, Plus and advanced dancing or classes in all cases. I am currently looking for clubs to call for. Any day is acceptable for dancing and any time is ok with me.

Please share your input with me along with a club name

Sam Dunn
111 Pinetree Lane
Sebring, Florida 33872
sam@samdunn.net
www.samdunn.net

Inspirational Quotes from Ed Foote

“The more a man knows, the less he talks.” ...Voltaire, French writer

“The most important thing is, even when we’re apart...I’ll always be with you.” ...A.A. Milne, author of Winnie-the-Pooh

“No problem can withstand the assault of sustained thinking.” ...Voltaire, French writer

“The starting point to ruin is selfishness on a massive scale.” ...Ben Stein, author and political commentator

“Three grand essentials to happiness in this life are something to do, something to love, and something to hope for.” ...Joseph Addison, English essayist and poet”

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Smooth Dancing by Buddy Weaver

What is Timing?

In square dancing, “timing” is the art of executing dance steps and movements to a specific number of steps. Timing in square dancing does not refer to dancing in sync with the music although it is a big part of it.

CALLERLAB, the international association of square dance callers has a timing list for every program. A guideline stating the number of steps (or dance beats) it takes to execute any given call. The timing charts reflect the timing of an accomplished dancer, one who has danced over a period of time and learned to react automatically to the calls while moving smoothly with the rhythm of the music. The importance of timing for all dancers is to avoid rushing or falling behind.

Newer dancers, who not yet learned how to react automatically may sometimes need an extra beat or two between calls. This short pause provides “think time” and as the dancer's experience grows, the need for pauses vanishes as reaction time improves.

The number of steps it takes for dancers to do some movements depends upon their position in the square when the call is given. Lets discuss the call SQUARE THRU. It takes ten (10) steps to complete – when it is danced from a couple facing another couple for example when you are in a square then the head couples step forward, turn their backs on their partner to face the side couples. From here the call SQUARE THRU takes ten steps. However, if the example is when you are in a square and the call is HEADS SQUARE THRU, it will add a couple of steps for the Heads to move forward to do the call.

As a dancer: allowing ten steps to dance SQUARE THRU, means that we are dancing smoothly. If you had one dancer stray away from the center or turn back or go the wrong way, it would no longer be smooth, in fact, it would probably break the square down. For any dancer struggling with the call SQUARE THRU, it is extremely helpful to know they MUST dance the call in ten steps; not eleven or twelve.

The way that I teach a call like SQUARE THRU is to introduce everyone to the hands, the reach, the turns. The dance path. Then after a bit of practice, we dance the call in proper timing, which sounds like: “ready for SQUARE THRU?”

Go. 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, DONE!” One or two folks might still be going, so we reassemble and ask everyone to get it done in ten steps. Do it again.

Many people (dancers and callers) confuse timing with tempo. Timing, as discussed, is the number of steps that translate to number of beats of music, it takes to do the call comfortably. Tempo is the speed at which those beats are played. Tempo is variable; everything from very slow for dancers with mobility issues to very fast for “hot hash” dancing. While the tempo changes, the timing does not. In the example of counting steps for the call SQUARE THRU, timing is unchanged, but there is a big difference between 10.....9.....8.....7.....6.....5.....etc. versus 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, etc.

Much like Rounds and Contra, Square Dancing is a team dance. Everyone is doing their part to create a great experience for the team and like every good team activity, every move is timed.

Great dancing is the wedding of a comfortable tempo with intelligent timing. It is the caller's job to keep the tempo from being too slow or too fast and it is a collaboration of dancer to execute the calls with proper timing along with the caller to strictly adhere to proper timing

Here are some of our commonly used fundamental calls along with CALLERLAB approved timing. Use this to help yourself and others.

Allemand Left (Right)	8 steps for a full turn
Ladies Chain	8 steps from a square
Circle to a Line	8 steps
Dosado	6 steps from face-to-face dancers
Ferris Wheel	6 steps
Flutterwheel/ Reverse Flutterwheel	8 steps from face-to-face couples
Line go Forward and Back	4 steps
Grand Square	32 (when danced properly)
Lead Right	4 steps
Pass the Ocean	4 steps
Promenade	8 steps all the way around
Recycle	4 steps
Right and Left Grand/Weave the Ring	10 steps
Right & Left Thru	6 steps from face-to-face couples
Scoot Back	6 steps
Square Thru	10 steps from face-to-face couples
Swing	4 or more (more next month)
Wheel and Deal	4 steps

Social Square Dancing with Barry Johnson

The Social Square Dance (SSD) program's shorter lesson time and the advantage this provides for new dancers to bring their friends into the activity far more quickly. While important, that's far from the only benefit to the shorter lesson program.

Numerous cultural studies have shown dramatic shifts in the way that people are willing to invest their time. Many social and fraternal organizations are seeing the same giant drop in membership as our activity: Simply being able to gather with others is not as motivating as it used to be. People are not as willing to make long-term commitments to activities, preferring instead to sample a broader variety than pick one and stick with it. Longer workdays and the necessity of having multiple wage earners in the family while increasing the time required for school activities and commitments leave most younger parents exhausted from their grinds.

In today's society, there is a world of difference between "you'll be dancing in 90 days" and "join us next September for our six-month lesson plan." A twelve-week commitment is more palatable than even a sixteen-week set of lessons, with a noticeably higher percentage of people willing to sign up for the shorter program. There are generally cost differences, too – the total cost of the shorter program is usually lower, and that reduces the barrier for people to begin.

The size of the SSD list was very carefully chosen. Years of experience has shown that many dancers begin to become overwhelmed by the variety of calls right around the time they move from Basic calls to Mainstream. While the SSD program was being developed, callers pointed to this inflection point as a spot where they begin to lose dancers: Someone misses a week, then dreads coming back the next week and misses the next one, and finally stops coming altogether. By carefully adjusting the size of the program so that we stop teaching just as new dancers hit their capacity (instead of pushing them beyond that point), there is a significant improvement in the percentage of dancers that complete the lessons.

Finally, newly graduated dancers are often filled with enthusiasm and proud of their accomplishment. By starting another class "in just a few weeks!", we can

harness that fresh enthusiasm and energy for recruiting! “Friends bringing friends” has always been our most effective tool.

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Mike Hogan on Marketing

A Well-Defined Problem

Albert Einstein once said, “A well-defined problem is half the solution”. The CALLERLAB Square Dance Marketing Manual was written a few years ago with the goal of providing callers, dancers, and dance organizations with the education and guidance needed to create solutions to the existing challenges our activity faces.

So, let’s begin by defining some of the problems. Here is a list of problems seen in many areas of the country. Feel free to add any to this list:

- Demand is down – small crowds.
- Customer base is unable to dance as often as in the past.
- Declining dancer population due to health reasons.
- Halls are expensive.
- Declining caller population.
- Dancers don’t want to hold office.
- Business plan hasn’t changed in decades.
- Can’t get anyone to take lessons.
- Can’t get a big enough crowd to pay our bills.
- There aren’t enough of you – the current dancer.

The manual was developed by CALLERLAB members in support of our mission: “To foster the art of square dance calling and improve caller skills.” Just like the square dancer population, the number of square dance callers today is dramatically smaller than 30 years ago. For CALLERLAB to increase the population of callers, we must start by growing the population of square dancers, thereby providing more opportunities for callers to call, and developing a population base from which new callers will be recruited.

It is CALLERLAB’s goal to provide square dance callers, square dancers, and square dance organizations the tools they need to recruit new dancers in their local markets. This includes:

- Education about marketing fundamentals, which will provide a review of the many things you need to consider about our activity when you begin marketing square dancing.
- Accurate research about the state of our current activity and an understanding of the general public’s image and awareness of our activity.
- Defined marketing strategy elements and exercises for groups to determine target demographics, benefits sought by each target demographic, analysis of our product versus products we compete with, a list of our marketing challenges, and a position statement.
- Brand management tactics.
- A large list of marketing tactics with “How To” instructions for each.
- Collateral marketing material to support specific tactics.
- Recommendations.
- Case studies to demonstrate successes that are repeatable.
- Fundraising ideas.
- Face-to-face training programs to assist local dance groups in their marketing efforts.

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The Big Picture by Buddy Weaver

In the June 2024 issue [*of American Square Dance*], I started the conversation on perception versus reality. Perception: how we view people, groups, ideas, pretty much the world around us. These views motivate our behaviors and decision making.

What greatly shapes our perception is biases. Confirmation bias leads individuals to favor information that confirms their existing beliefs. Anchoring bias causes people to rely heavily on initial information when making decisions. Hindsight bias, which causes people to think past events are predictive and unavoidable. Finally, a mental shortcut where people rely on immediate examples that come to mind when evaluating a topic; the more recent or emotionally charged these examples are, the more reliable an indicator of their actual probability.

Reality is the objective state of affairs, but perception shapes the subjective experience and interpretation of that reality, often holding greater sway over actions and outcomes. This is why, in the business world, how a company is perceived can be more crucial than its own performance. Its a good article (if I do say so myself); stop, go back and read it.

A wonderful dancer who is also a subscriber, sent along an email with her thoughts on this topic to share.

“Your Perception approach to square dancer biases invites discussion/debate, however, your Reality examples omit some of the current trends that I have observed as a dancer.”

“Promoting the “social” aspect of square dancing has been successful in recruiting all types of participants, ultimately increasing the clubs' memberships. In Reality, those dancers who enjoy the “dancing” part of square dancing, learning the calls, etc., must cope with the biases of those in the square who participate strictly for the “social” aspect and who care little about developing competent square dance skills. In reality, those participants who are unable and/or unwilling to successfully master the square dance calls, are avoided by those who have taken extra classes and/or expanded their learning from other clubs. Peer pressure can be an effective tool to encourage a change in behavior. “

“I agree that the biases of some experienced dancers attempt to adversely affect the changing trends in square dancing: those experienced dancers who rely on gender identification in their dancing, and who want only "traditional couples” in a square. Dancing is dancing, and as competency level increases, gender is not a determining factor. In my opinion, callers should be referring to dancers as “left” or “right”, but biases and experience are hard to modify, even in callers.”

The author continues, “another Reality observation: attendance at classes tends to exceed attendance at dances. Classes are generally friendly, welcoming

environments for all participants, regardless of skill level. Dances, though, expect a basic level of competency and the less experienced, less competent, but determined dancers often struggle to enjoy the experience, especially when attending as singles.

Dances are still a “couples” environment, a comparatively cheap date night with an overabundance of round dancing to satisfy the “old timers”. However, without the support of fellow club members, new dancers are likely to become discouraged and quit or only participate at the class level.”

The author concludes, “square dance clubs traditionally exist for the love and benefit of square dancing. Those who love the dancing are more likely to volunteer to fill club administrative positions and to “angel” new dancers than those who primarily attend only classes, for the “social” aspect. Clubs are hurting for volunteers and this situation deserves to be addressed.”

There is a lot to unpack here with many good points. On the first point, the positive reality is recruiting all type of participants and experiencing increasing club membership. On the negative side is seeing dancers who don't/can't/won't develop square dance skills enough to make them a team player. Much like my comments in the Smooth Dancing section this month, square dancing is a team effort and if only one out of eight is not participating in the role of team player, then the square falls apart. If that dancer is chronically not playing as a team then there will be frustration with that dancer.

What do we do?

On the second point, the positive reality is we are seeing more “non-traditional” couplings. In our club, where the author is a member, as a single lady dancer graduates from class, she is often encouraged to take the class again, learning the “man's” position. In this way, she will almost never be without a partner at a dance. The negative side is not all clubs are accepting, much less encouraging, of this practice and our terminology does not lend itself to genderless dancing. I believe this is evolving and only time will judge the success.

The third point shines a positive light on our class settings. Yes, its true that our classes regularly have more dancers than the average club dance in the same 2,758 square mile area. It is unfortunate that every club experience is not as enjoyable and the elements brought out are certainly something that every club should discuss.

As the person who originated “perception vs. reality”, some of the reality brought out in this email, didn't match my own perceptions. Well deserving of discussion that accept statements as they are – without bias. This will certainly be brought up in our think-tank sessions and I will revisit this topic in future issues. In the meanwhile, what are your thoughts?

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All Things Considered by Ed Foote

AS A DANCER, WHAT I LOOK FOR IN A CALLER

This is a continuation of an article I began last month (*pub; actually in May 2024 IN American Square Dance*). In it I mentioned that (1) frequent Left Allemandes, (2) smooth choreography and (3) few to no uses of Do-Sa-Do are things I look for when I dance to a caller. This month we add to the list.

4. ENTHUSIASM. Callers have this to different degrees, but the key is whether it is genuine and relates to this particular floor. Dancers can spot "rote enthusiasm" right away, where you know the caller does the exact same thing and says the exact same thing at every dance. This is a turnoff. On a related note, rapport with the floor is very important, but it must relate to this particular floor.

5. CREATIVITY. A little variety is wonderful and goes a long way. There is a difference between "hard" and "creative", and successful callers know this difference. On the flip side I attended a Plus dance where the caller did nothing but Basic Program gimmicks the entire night, with virtually no Plus calls used. This was a giant letdown. To rephrase an old saying: Too much of a good thing might not always be wonderful.

6. MUSIC JOCKEYS turn me off. This term means cranking the music up loud after each command, then turning it down before the next command, and continuing on and on with it. This is distracting to the dancers, and implies that the caller does not have enough ability to carry the floor in a normal manner. Occasionally turning up the music is fine, such as during a long call (Spin Chain Thru, Spin Chain the Gears) or for the Left Allemande. But some callers will jockey the music every call or two, and this is excessive.

7. DRESS. Most callers dress fine, but I am always amazed when someone shows up who just looks sloppy. This type of "I don't care" attitude is a slap in

the face to our activity and is a real turnoff. Women callers always dress well - it's the men who have the problem.

8. SOUND. Is the music balanced well with the voice, are the caller's words clear and crisp, is the music too soft so the dancers feel they are walking to a voice rather than dancing to music? All of these are problems I've seen with callers. National traveling callers don't seem to have these problems - it is usually local callers and ironically often it is callers who have been calling a long time and just don't realize what is happening

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FLORIDA FEDERATION WEBSITE

www.floridasquaredance.com

The Florida Federation is now in its 25th year of representing and promoting Square and Round dancing in the State of Florida. The website has been averaging close to 400 visits a month.

Created in 1999 by webmaster Bruce Morgan and now supported by webmaster Clifford Reiss, the website has 19 active main pages, more than 500 pages of content occupying 7Gb (gigabytes) of disc space, and links to 59* active clubs in the State of Florida. Webpages for 29 of these clubs are maintained by the webmaster; links are provided to the websites of the other 31 clubs that maintain their own web. (***the 60th club, a member of the Florida NE Association, is just over the state line in Georgia.*)

The main website pages grouped by category are:

- The Federation website home page and a web page for each of the 4 Federation Associations – Northwest, Northeast, Central, and Southeast. West Coast is no longer an association but still maintains a web page on the Federation site;
- Web page links for four Caller and Cuer associations: Florida Callers Association, Round Dance Council of Florida (the RDCF website is maintained by the Federation webmaster), Camping Dancers, and the Suncoast Callers & Cuers Association;

- pages with content, listings and information about: Florida Clubs, Dance Halls, Vendors, Publications, the Florida Square Dance Hall of Fame Era Mile Award, Links to other Dance websites, Square Dance Insurance, Federation history and Federation documents.

Recognizing that Facebook groups now play an increasingly important role in communicating timely information about Square Dancing, and that Facebook groups also allow group members to post relevant information, each of the Federation and four Association webpages feature a prominent link to their associated Facebook group pages.

One important section of the Federation website features each year's State Convention. Information about the 2025 State Convention, scheduled for January 17-18, 2025 includes Flyers, Registration forms, an Online Registration link, Hotel and Camping information, Benefit Dances, the Trail-In Dance on January 16th, the Convention sponsored Dinner Dance, and much more.

Timely information and flyers for Federation and State Association sponsored events and state wide events are updated regularly on both the Federation main page and each of the Association web pages. Links are also provided to each of the upcoming National Square Dance Conventions – Shreveport Louisiana in 2025, Waco Texas (the 75th anniversary NSDC®) in 2026, and Loveland Colorado in 2027.

The “Map” function on the website, listing all 60 of our active clubs by county and region, remains an important tool for out of state visitors to find dances. Clubs should make sure their information is current. Updates to Club and Association information should be sent to the webmaster.

Efforts remain underway to retrieve Picture Galleries and Graphics images that had been previously removed from the website due to space limitations. The website is now hosted on the DANCERgram platform that is provided and supported by the West coast Association and disc storage space is no longer a concern.

Clifford Reiss
August 19, 2024
dgramwebmaster@yahoo.com

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but it would be more exciting if you are!



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**Created specially
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ONE SIZE FITS ALL



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pm

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STURGIS,**
CUER CHAIRMAN
**SUSAN
SNIDER,**
CO-CHAIRMAN

**ADMISSION
PRICE:
DONATION
AT
THE
DOOR**

**BILL
CHESNUT,**
CALLER CHAIRMAN
**DAVE
VIEIRA,**
CO-CHAIRMAN

**Alternating
MS & PLUS**
5:15-7:15 pm
Adv. Tip
7:20 pm

**CONVENTION
REGISTRATION,
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and RAFFLE
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AVAILABLE AT
THE DANCE**

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the
cause**

**70 TH FSSRDC
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SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2024

**Wildwood Community Center
Washington & Jefferson Room
6500 Powell Road
Wildwood, FL 34785**

Convention Chairman
Dawn DeWitt & Charles Tharp
561-252-7729 & 561-252-6236
cdewitt03@bellsouth.net

Fri. Dinner Show \$45pp

Dry camping on site

Two full days of Dancing

MS, PLUS, ADV. & C SQUARES

Phase 2-5 Rounds

Trail End Dance Thursday nite

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70TH FSSRDC

JANUARY 17-18, 2025

The Center at Deltona
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Deltona, Florida 32725

TO REGISTER
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June 25-28, 2025

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Register today at
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Come Dance on the Wild Side!



Looking for Callers and Cuers who want to Call on the Wild Side!



DECEMBER 31, 2024

is the deadline for Dance Leaders to register and submit a caller profile,

1. Sign up online today at www.74thNSDC.com

to receive your registration number for the 74th NSDC,

2. Then you can go to <https://sdconvention.com>

to complete your Dance Leader Profile to

Call on the Wild Side!



74th NSDC

June 25-28, 2025

Shreveport Convention Ctr.

Join our 74th National Square Dance
Convention® Facebook Group



Florida should be well represented in Shreveport. It's right at our back door!

The DANCERgram magazines are written and published by a square and round dancer concerned about preserving our dance activity. The magazines include *Planner* (weekly), *This & That* (monthly), *Joys, Concerns, & Sympathies* (as needed), and *Directory* (as needed). All of the magazines are under the DANCERgram banner. In the event of new information between publication dates, notification is sent via the *Flash*. The Editor reserves the right to edit, condense, or rewrite any submission to the DANCERgram magazines. Opinions expressed in any DANCERgram magazine or on this website are not necessarily that of the Editor. All new information (since the previous issue) in these magazines is highlighted in yellow. Distribution of the DANCERgram magazines is encouraged via forwarding or hard copies. All of the Magazines, as well as additional content, can be found at www.dancergram.com. If you would like to receive the DANCERgram Magazines via email or you would like to submit information to any of the magazines, please contact the Editor at sqdnxfan@gmail.com or 863-224-3393.

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DANCERgram Magazines

Planner (weekly)

Joys, Concerns, & Sympathies (as needed)

Directory (as needed) • WC Key Contacts • WC Dances • SCCA • Links

This and That (monthly) • Reprint of articles • New Articles

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