

DANCERgram

December 2024



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

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Federation President's Message

To the Square and Round Dancers, Callers and Cuers of Florida,

Cal and I want to thank you all for the support you have given us for serving on the Federation for 6 years. We have learned a lot and have met a lot of wonderful people. We are encouraged

by all the enthusiastic people who still love to dance. We want to announce that the Rebiks and Vieras will be bidding on the 2028 National Convention to be held in Lakeland, FL. at the Convention Center , June 21-24, 2028. The Florida Federation has approved the bidding process and the Board knows that you will become excited about it and do as much as you can to help make the National Convention happen.

Thank you all for making the November 9th State Convention Benefit Dance in Wildwood a success. We had a good turnout and a sufficient amount of money raised and it was a lot of fun. Don't forget to register for the Florida State Convention in Deltona at the Deltona Center for January 16,17 and 18, 2025. The Spin the Big Top is on its way and we need you all to make it a huge success. The Italian Dinner and Circus performance will enhance Friday evening. Thursday evening will bring us all together at the Trails End Dance. We can't wait to see you all there. "The more the merrier. " We want to thank Dawn Dewitt and Charles Tharp for their commitment to the 2025 convention. If you are a first time Convention "goer" , please check out the Convention Book that is on the Federation website.

The chairman for the 2026 State Convention already have a theme and a lot of their key players. We will continue to use the Deltona Center. Please give Carol and Richard Douget your help and support.

Don't forget to make sure your Associations and Areas process the dancer insurance.

Have a wonderful Holiday Season! May it be Merry and Bright! Blessings for the New Year!

See you in a Square!

Ann and Cal Maki
Florida Federation Presidents



FCA President's Message

Good Day! First, my thanks to you and all the FCA members for expressing your confidence in me by electing me your president for the next fiscal year. I hope I can live

up to your expectations as we all search for the right things to do to make square dancing better for all of us.

For those of you who could not attend the recent clinic with Kip Garvey I must tell you that you missed a very good clinic. Kip, a Callerlab accredited caller coach, had many good personally targeted suggestions for the callers who participated in the calling experiences at the clinic. Generally a main focus of his clinic was “relationship calling”. It is a system for tracking dancers. It allows a caller to know at all times the relationship of all dancers in the square. You know, for example, what current partners are with each dancer. Are the partners opposites, or corners, or right-hand ladies? It allows the caller to know this by focusing on only two dancers. Kip spoke of “groups”, “transitions”, “conversions” and how this system expands what many of us learned with use of the “chicken-plucker”. Kip suggests the use of the relationship system allows the caller to be in complete control of formations, arrangements and relationships at all times. And a get-out is just three calls away. You might wish to learn more about the system. Kip made his papers and documents about the system available to all who attended the clinic and your contact with an attendee would enable you to get the papers and documents for yourself. (I’d be happy to share my printed versions if you ask me.)

No sooner had we completed the clinic when we were immersed in the preparations for the Florida State Round and Square dance convention coming in January. Immediately after the annual meeting adjourned about ten am on Sunday, the programming committee went to work on the convention. It was schedule-preparation day for the caller chair and the programming committee of the FCA. The committee spent the rest of the morning hours arranging callers into slots in the convention schedule. By the way, thanks to you if you have volunteered to call at the convention. Your convention schedule should be in your possession now. Bill Chesnut e-mailed it several weeks ago.

At the start of the annual meeting we were saddened as we paused to spend some moments remembering callers who have passed and particularly those who have lost lives in this year. This year we remembered, among others, Ted Hughes, Bobby Keefe and Sam Dunn.

During the annual meeting callers asked that the governing documents of the FCA be adjusted to meet the realities of our time. The annual meeting which is set by our Articles of Incorporation to coincide with the annual clinic on the third Saturday of the month of October may be changed. Availability of clinicians and the desire to have more flexibility in the schedule may prompt a change in that clause. And the standing rules will be updated, too. Nothing

major – just some word changes to recognize that not all overnight accommodations are hotels these days. The standing rules providing for expense reimbursement will now include B & B's, campgrounds, RV parks and the like. The change in wording of the standing rules will be sent to you when the executive committee finalizes the text.

I mentioned that the convention is coming in January. It is not too soon for all of us to be thinking about possible ways to improve the convention experience for both callers and dancers. In my year as your president I plan to help start a conversation about the convention and I'll be offering some ideas that will suggest it might be time to reconsider "the way we've always done it". It might be time to think about doing some different things at the convention and re-examine some of the things we do "because we've always done them that way". Sometimes a new look at old practices allows changes for the better. We'll talk more in January and after the convention when you've had a chance to attend the convention and reflect on what you see there. I hope you might have some suggestions for changes we can talk about.

Until next month my wish for you is enthusiastic new dancers, multi-square dances and a most healthful and happy end of the calendar year.

Keith Stevens
President

The Free Ranch Chicks by "Margaret Hatcher"

In the spring of 2022, four single women from Spokane, Washington were on their way to a square dance festival and discussed how hard it was for singles to attend festivals. Issues of expense, safety and the discomfort of not having a partner were brought up.

They decided to form a social travel club called The Free Range Chicks. A Facebook group was created for their area where dance flyers and chicken jokes were shared. Rides were arranged and motels or campgrounds booked.

Soon most of those who danced as a single in town had joined. Someone made aprons from a chicken wire print fabric, another started making chicken shaped magnetic badges from plastic canvas and yarn, and one Chick bought stuffed chickens for everyone to dress up and take to festivals. Many more

items were made from chicken fabric like bibs, toilet kits, fleece blankets and pillowcases to travel with.

Some of the women knew how to dance the left hand side and others began to learn. Then, when a group arrived at a dance they had cheap transportation, affordable housing, partners to dance with and a feeling of safety and belonging. Roosters began to join and were given rooster ties. Friendships were formed and strengthened as we drove...backseat driving became an art form. Chicks from other towns offered hospitality. Rubber chickens appeared in our apron pockets. The fun grew and became infectious.

Callers began realizing that more singles were attending festivals and local singles had a better time as they were welcomed into the flock. We brought a fun, wacky energy.

In the fall of 2024 we have chicks in five states and two countries. We would encourage other areas to start their own group. Single dancers are a large proportion of new dancers.

They need support and a safe way to discover the fun of festivals. From Spokane we often follow our favorite callers to out of town dance evenings then drive back. We do regular visits to the home clubs of chicks from other towns. Let's get this all the way across America! Get two singles together, make a Facebook page, plan a trip and you are on the way.

Want more information? Contact the author at: bronwynred@yahoo.com

Reprint from *American Square Dance* November 2024 Volume 80 Number 11

Florida Federation Approves Sponsorship of the 77th (2028) National Square Dance Convention[®]

At their Fall meeting in Jacksonville on Sunday, November 3rd, the Florida Federation Board voted to sponsor the 77th (2028) National Square Dance Convention[®] should our bid be accepted. At this time, it is not official we will host this convention. We have to prepare a bid and present it at the next National Convention, where there will be a vote as to whether the bid is accepted or not. Work will now begin to create the bid package.

Initial contact has been made with the R. P. Funding Center¹ in Lakeland to hold the convention there. A site visit will be made soon. The National Convention is usually held the third week in June.

Bill and Leslie Ribek have agreed to be the General Chairpersons and Dave and Michele Vieira have agreed to be the Assistant General Chairpersons should our bid be accepted. Working with two couples from the National Executive Committee (NEC), who are past National Convention Chairpersons, they will prepare the bid package.

There is a lot of work to do and a lot of committees to fill. If you are interested in being a part of the Committee, please contact the Ribeks at lribek@calpoly.edu.

Florida Federation Announces 2025 Officers

President Linda Tester (NE)
VP/Parliamentarian Jenny Green (Central)
Secretary Annie Minor (SE)
Treasurer Shirley Wright (NE)

Challenge Dancing at the 2025 Florida State Convention

We are pleased to announce there will be Challenge dancing at the next convention. The complete dance schedule will be posted on the Federation Website and published in the *Bow & Swing* in December.

If you haven't registered for the Convention yet, you can do so online at www.floridasquaredance.com. In the upper left hand corner, click on the date next to Florida State Convention and scroll down to Online Registration.

¹ This was the site of the Florida State Convention for many years.

General Chairpersons Appointed for 2026 Florida Square Dance Convention

At the Federation meeting, President Cal Maki announced that Carol and Richard Douget (Central) have been appointed as Chairpersons of the 2026 Florida Convention. The theme will be “Surviving the Callers’ Curse at the 71st”.

Menu Announced for 2025 Florida Convention Dinner Show

Have you registered for the dinner show on Friday, January 17, 2025, at the Florida State Square and Round Dance Convention? **The deadline to purchase your ticket(s) is January 3, 2025.** The menu was recently published. It will be an Italian theme and will include

- Chicken parmesan
- Sausage & meatballs w/marinara
- Baked ziti (meatless)
- Creamy Orzo with hers
- Italian green beans with garlic
- Steamed California blend
- Fresh green salad
- Assorted dinner rolls and butter
- Brewed sweet tea and water

USDA² Announces Increase in 2025 Insurance Premium

Effective January 1, 2025, the annual insurance premium will increase to \$6 per person. The minimum fee for a club will increase to \$48; a club must have at least eight (8) members listed on their roster to register for insurance.

The USDA square dance insurance program, especially designed for USDA dance groups, provides Accident Medical insurance, which helps protect club members from financial loss due to a covered accidental bodily injury, and

² United Square Dancers of America

Liability insurance, which protects the club and its members and association officials from financial loss due to unforeseen incidents which may develop into litigation against members and dance organizations.

Additional information on the insurance program can be found at <https://www.usda.org/Insurance.php>.

The Florida Federation Insurance Chairperson is Carol Poole – 386-717-0870 – cpoole19@cfl.rr.com.

Hello to all Square & Round Dancers

We are John & Dolly Ide, Presidents of the **National Square Dance Campers Association (NSDCA)**. If you did not know that camping and dancing can be enjoyed together, read on please. We are constantly meeting square and round dancers who also love camping and frequently camp close by an event rather than check-in to a Hotel/Motel, but did not know that our camping/dancing clubs existed.



The NSDCA has more than 40 clubs across the USA and Canada, with 3 located in the state of Florida. You are able to camp and dance in almost any month of the year with one or more of these clubs. Florida clubs generally meet for a 2 or 3 day weekend somewhere here in the state and occasionally in South Georgia, each month of the year.

Our NSDCA TIMES publication keeps our members up to date with the dates and locations of NSDCA camping weekends throughout the USA and Canada. It is loaded with Chapter Chats and pictures from their past weekend adventures, helpful camping hints and lots more great information about upcoming events.

Once a year, all our NSDCA clubs gather together for an International Camporee somewhere in the USA. Our 2025 Camporee will be held in Shreveport, Louisiana, June 19, 20 & 21. If you happen to be planning to attend the NSD Convention in Shreveport, La. we invite you to come and party with us the week before the convention. Our camporee is being held at the Shreveport Fairgrounds which is also the 2025 NSDC campers venue and you may stay camped in the same site throughout both events. This will allow you time to tour the area and relax a bit between these two great events.

Our camping weekends and Camporees are not limited to campers, you are welcome to stay at a motel/hotel and attend our Camporees. Please consider attending one of these fun events, but be careful, if you are not a camper you just might get hooked on all that camping & dancing fun!

Camping & Dancing News

Greetings from the RoadRunners Square Dance Campers Club, Chapter 193.

We have no campout in December. We are however planning to attend the Florida State Square Dance convention in Deltona, January 17 -18.



Although our camping location is not confirmed at this moment, we are looking forward to a really great "Spin The Big Top" convention. If you are interested in camping with us please call John Ide (352) 208-5980 for the details.

We are "Remembering Sam Dunn" with a collage of many special moments our club enjoyed with him. Sam was our caller for several years, a great caller and friend too. His special little service dog, 'Petey' was always by his side. He helped make the our dances fun, challenging and a little crazy too. I can still hear him reminding us "tighten-up that square, you could drive a VW through there." Sam loved camping, we never knew just what camper he would come in next, but he always got there. He especially enjoyed cooking breakfast with the guys. Sam began calling back in the seventies, he and Sue, (his wife of 56 years), were setting up camping/ dancing weekends long before he found the NSDCA or maybe we found him.



Sam will be laid to rest on December 20, 2024 at the Sarasota National Cemetery, 12:30 PM**

The service is open to all his friends & family. (9810 SR 10, Sarasota, Fl. You may want to arrive early for parking ease.)

Submitted by John & Dolly Ide
Chapter 193 Presidents



** Time Changed to 1:00PM

Keep Your Recipient List Private

- **Keep the recipient list private** Bcc can help you to be respectful of others' privacy by keeping them in the loop without disclosing their identities. For example, if you send a job announcement to multiple people, you may want to use Bcc to keep the identities of the potential job seekers private.

Tip: Consider using mail merge in Microsoft Office Word 2007 as an alternative to Bcc. With mail merge, you can quickly send the same email message to individual recipients. Mail merge allows you to do a mass mailing with just one name in the **To** box of the message.

- **Help curb a conversation that has gone wild** Here is one situation in which using Bcc for a distribution list or a large number of names can be helpful.

Suppose you send a message with a large number of people listed in the **To** box. The discussion starts to get lively, and everyone wants to give an opinion. The number of messages increases drastically because many recipients reply with the sentiment "please stop replying all to this message." The problem is that when they do this, they click **Reply to All**. One way to curb the use of the **Reply to All** option is to respond and put the name of the distribution list in the **Bcc** box. For example, you can click **Reply**, put only your name in the **To** box, move the distribution list to the **Bcc** box, and write a message similar to the following:

"I appreciate people's thoughts on this issue. If you have further comments, please respond to me directly. (I have put this distribution list in the **Bcc** box to cut down on the reply-to-all messages.)"

- **Reduce spam** Although people who send junk email or spam may like to use Bcc, they won't like it if you use it. If you hide the recipients' names by listing them in the **Bcc** box, no one will be able to copy the recipients' email addresses from your messages.

Copied from the Internet 10/23/24

CREATING AN EFFECTIVE FLYER AND HOW TO ADVERTISE

As the editor of the DANCERgram, I read a lot of flyers! Some of the things I see (or don't see)!

Let's talk about them.

- ❖ Some flyers have so much information on them; it's overwhelming! A flyer should be "short and sweet". You only need to list the highlights. What information should you include?
 - The month, day, and YEAR! We all know when you post something on the Internet; it's hard to remove it. I have seen flyers show up on the Internet for dances a year or two ago, but there's no YEAR so how do people know it's an "expired" flyer?
 - The full address of where the event will be held. Don't just say it's going to be at the First United Methodist Church. I'm from another state; how am I supposed to find that place? How can you search the Internet without a city and state and how many First United Methodist Churches are in the US? Just because you put flyers on the table at your dance, doesn't mean they won't show up two states away or even in another country!
 - If something is several days long, why do you have to list every single day i.e. 21, 22, 23, 24, & 25? Why not just put 21 – 25? It takes less space on the flyer.
 - The start and end time of the event. For a convention or weekend festival, you don't have to list every single thing that will happen with the time for each one. All you need to show is the convention starts on Friday at 8:00 a.m. and ends on Sunday at ??, or if the times are different each day, list each day separately with the time. The complete schedule will be in the Program Book.
 - For a convention, it is good to list what all is included i.e. Squares, Rounds, Clogging, Line Dancing, etc.
 - Don't use "lingo" that might be unfamiliar to someone from another area or country, i.e. appropriate square dance attire. What does that mean? Traditional square dance attire (with long sleeve shirts, crinolines, etc.); is it casual? Some people might even question what casual is. Is it flip-flops, bare feet and chests, etc.?
 - If your flyer is recruiting people for a class, don't use square dance language that a non-dancer won't understand i.e. Mainstream, Plus, Workshop. What's a Teach?

- If you welcome children to your classes, be sure to state what age is acceptable. Check with the caller as to what his/her preference is. Sometimes they say “children who are capable of following directions from someone other than their parents.” Children mature at different speeds. Some five year olds might be able to learn; some may need to wait until they are 10 or 11. If you say “all ages welcome”, there will be parents that will bring their kindergartners and expect them to participate in the class. There might be some that age that can learn it, but the majority of them will be too young. It is better to state up front “children who are capable of following directions from someone other than their parents.” Then there won’t be any problems at the dance.

Some other things you might include on a flyer –

- Square dance attire is admired but not required.
- A partner is nice but also not necessary.
- Smooth-soled shoes are recommended.
- Do not state “If you can walk fast, you can learn to square dance”! We have numerous experienced dancers that can’t walk fast.
- For safety reasons, closed toe and closed heel shoes are recommended.
- DO NOT use negative statements like “You must have a partner”, “You must wear traditional square dance attire”. Always use positive language!
- ”What level is the dance? Don’t just say “alternating Squares and Rounds”. If it’s only a Plus or Advanced dance, a Mainstream dancer isn’t going to be interested. If it’s going to be “calling to the floor”, then say that BUT explain that phrase. New dancers or dancers from out of your area might not understand what it means!
- Don’t use terminology that new dancers might not understand i.e. 2X2, Star tip, etc.
- Don’t forget to include contact information! You should always include a phone number (with area code) and an email address. Don’t just put a website address. Sometimes there are questions that aren’t covered on a website. Someone might be on the road looking for your location and they can’t find you (not everyone knows how to use a GPS, and frankly, sometimes GPS is wrong). They need to be able to call someone at the dance to help them. The contact person should be someone that knows what’s going on with the event.

- If your flyer is for a large event that has several committees, be sure to include the committee chairperson's name, phone, number, and email address. For example, a flyer about registration should have the Registration Chairperson's contact information.
- Remember, not everyone is on Facebook and the Internet.
- Proofread. Check for spelling, missing words, correct phone numbers, and email addresses. Better yet, ask someone else to proof your document. A fresh pair of eyes is always good!
 - CALLERLAB is all caps.
 - Cue is spelled with a 'C'; not a 'Q'
 - Ensure Callers' and Cuers' names are spelled correctly
- ❖ Now that your flyer is ready, how do you distribute it? Every time you attend a square dance event, be sure to take your flyers for their flyer table. In Florida we have a list of publications to send dance information on our dances. The list not only includes the name of the publications, but also the submission deadlines, the contact person's name, phone number, and email address. For a copy of the Publication Deadlines list, email the DANCERgram Editor at sqdnxfan@gmail.com.

INSPIRATIONAL QUOTES from Ed Foote

“Do not hire a man who does your work for money, but hire him who does it for the love of it.” ...Henry David Thoreau, American author

“Real success is finding your lifework in the work that you love.” ...David McCullough, author

“One of the greatest sources of energy is pride in what you are doing.” ...author unknown

“When someone does something good, applaud! You will make two people happy.” ...Samuel Goldwyn, American film producer

“To devote a portion of one's leisure to do something for someone else is one of the highest forms of recreation.” ...Gerald B. Fitzgerald

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Smooth Dancing by Buddy Weaver

To the majority of square dancers, it isn't the number of calls used at a dance, nor is it the level of difficulty important. While the enthusiasm of the dance is significant, it is the friendliness, smoothness, uniqueness, and warmth that folks find which causes them to remark, "I want to dance with these folks again."

It is the easy smile, ready handshake, the "no-problem" acceptance of mistakes, exhibited by dancers and caller alike. It is the appreciation of a host clubs' extras such as decorations or refreshments, and the personal attention with a sincere "thank you."

At every club dance, it is the club member who takes the initiative to smile and speak first to strangers, making sure they get a dance and are lead to the refreshment line. Club members who see that each visitor takes away a memento of the dance if only the memory that they met some nice people. It is no accident that a club with these members are looked upon as an especially nice group of people.

Today we have every one of our square dance calls clearly labeled and defined, but no such comprehensive list of the basic attitudes is as readily found. We might have to write our own. We may start by looking at some of the dancer friends that we respect for their attitudes, then list the traits that set them apart.

- Dancer #1 – Always on hand to help with beginners, greet strangers, and are never cross or scolding with dancers who make mistakes.
- Dancer #2 – Are prompt to call and offer help, never wait to be asked and as a couple, often split up to help newer dancers.
- Dancer #3 – Always smiling and happy to be around. Everyone enjoys having them come into their square. Ready to help dancers who may be having problems in ways that are not confusing or embarrassing to others.
- Dancer #4 – Among the best dancers in the area but never make others feel inferior to them. Helpful to other dancers and may be frank in telling callers what they liked or didn't like in a gracious way. This starts the conversation and next month, we will continue to explore ways to develop good attitudes. (Based on ideas presented by Jack Murtha)

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Mike Hogan on Marketing

In business, especially retail, a special event might be a grand opening, an open house, or a sampling event. For square dancing a special event would be an opportunity for the public to try square dancing without taking lessons – so, a beginner event.

Many callers are booked to do beginner dances every year. The challenge is converting these into recruiting opportunities. Callers need to use their discretion when determining to what extent they can recruit new dancers from these events. In most cases, they were hired to entertain the participants and a big sales pitch on square dancing would be out of line. This could, however, be a place where you could have your business cards available for people to pick up, maybe a brochure about square dancing, or a simple announcement about how to find out more about square dancing would be appropriate.

Dance Party

Try a dance party! A dance party, or party dance, or whatever you choose to call it, is simply a beginner event where the goal is to give people the chance to experience square dancing without feeling the obligation to take a class. These are usually sponsored by a local club, but could be sponsored by your dancer association, caller association or marketing team.

A dance party is not lessons, and it is not your club dance. It is a single night where your group invites non-dancers through whatever methods you chose to come be entertained and sample square dancing. You can choose a theme if you like and decorate accordingly, and you can provide food and beverage if you choose. You can have prizes. Whatever you like, just be sure the participants are entertained.

As a part of the event, you will have the opportunity to gather the participant's information for your database, provide them with information about square dancing, and invite them to participate in a class.

Many clubs offer the first night or two of lessons free to give consumers the chance to sample the activity before making a commitment to a class.

You can make the first night of class a party dance; however if you do that, you must publicize the event as a party dance, not the first night of lessons. If you associate the party dance with lessons, consumers will sense an obligation to take a class and would be less likely to participate in the party dance. You also must make extra effort to make it a party, not lessons disguised as a party.

Retread Recruiting

How many dancers quit dancing when they started their families? How many quit dancing due to a temporary health condition? How many just got busy and stopped going dancing? We have all witnessed former dancers reentering the square dance activity. Why not make an actual effort to recruit former dancers back into square dancing?

Here is where a database is needed. Build a database of all the former dancers you can think of. Try and find copies of old club rosters. If you kept track of the names of lesson takers over the past years, add them to the list. Perhaps you could do this as a club effort, or as an association effort.

Recruiting them can be done in several ways. Here are a few:

- Host a reunion dance and invite them to attend.
- Invite them to a private club event, like a Christmas party.
- Host a party dance for new and former dancers and invite them to attend.
- Have dancers they are still friends with call and invite them.
- Mail party invitations to them and follow up with a phone call to get their RSVP.

However you do it, getting these former dancers on the floor and moving will cause some of them to re-join the activity, and certainly more than if you just hoped they would find their way back on their own.

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Social Square Dancing by Barry Johnson

Last month, I made the rather challenging claim that if you're losing more than 50% of your new dancers during lessons, then you're doing the activity a net disservice — overall, you're creating more people that are unsatisfied with their experience than people that are satisfied. The crux of the article was focused on the length of lessons and the potentially overwhelming amount of material we try to teach.

A reader gently reminded me that the material being taught is not the only thing that matters: The environment must also be friendly, welcoming and supportive. That's very, very true — the material being taught perhaps isn't even the most important part. Thank you, Lonnye, for reminding us all that the

“social” aspect of square dancing (not just in SSD) is probably the most important piece.

Think about it this way: How many people do you know that continue to attend dances even after they can no longer dance themselves? Turn that thought around — do you know anyone that continues to come to dances after they’ve decided that they don’t like any of the people?

The social connections formed within the activity are far stronger bindings than the complexity of the material itself. I don’t mean that the material (the choreography and its presentation) is irrelevant, but for our newest dancers it is usually of lesser importance. Over time, an individual dancer’s tastes and desires will often evolve, but at the beginning the social environment has to match their expectations or they simply won’t come back.

Unfortunately, not every new dancer has the same expectations. A small “helping nudge” may be welcomed by some dancers but be considered “too pushy” by others. Subtle differences in vocal inflections can turn an angel’s attempt to be helpful (“go over there”) into a perceived insult (“go over THERE!”). A neutral expression on one person’s face may appear to be a smile — or may appear to be a frown.

Personally, I make conscious efforts to smile at newer (or lesser skilled) dancers and to tell them that I enjoy dancing with them. Use the breaks between tips to build those social bonds. Engage in conversations. And teach shorter, simpler lessons more often — the SSD way!

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All Things Considered by Ed Foote

THE LOOMING CALLER SHORTAGE

Many areas of the country are reporting a shortage of callers. There appear to be three reasons for this.

1. **FEWER DANCERS.** A person has to become a dancer before becoming a caller. With fewer dancers coming in to the activity, this means the pool of available dancers from which to recruit dancers is smaller.
2. **FEWER DANCERS - PART 2.** Established callers are dropping out because there are fewer clubs for which they can call. Full-time callers can no longer support themselves from square dancing, so they get

another job. This means they either cut back sharply on their calling, or drop out altogether due to work demands.

3. **LACK OF AVAILABLE CALLING OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEW CALLERS.** A new caller needs a place to call. There is nothing more discouraging than for a new caller to return home from callers' school all enthused, only to find no available place to call.

Yes, they could start a club, but this is often not an option, for a variety of reasons. So they languish, calling an occasional tip at their home club and getting an occasional booking during the year. The result is that they do not improve their skills due to lack of practice, so eventually they become discouraged and stop calling.

SOLUTIONS:

1. **PROMOTE "AMATEUR NIGHT" AT CLUBS.** Years ago many clubs sponsored an Amateur Night, where anyone in the club could try calling. The club caller would provide the music, and stand beside the person as they called. This inspired some people to say: "Yes, I can do this," and they would continue with calling. Unfortunately, Amateur Night seems to have fallen into dis-use, so people never get a chance to try calling. If Amateur Night could be revived, this would help bring new callers in to the activity.
2. **SCHOLARSHIPS TO CALLER SCHOOLS.** There are a few of these available - from Callerlab and from some local caller organizations - but not many. We need more scholarships. BUT, a normal scholarship only covers school tuition - ie. \$250 -300. The actual cost includes lodging and travel, which can easily total \$1000. So the dollar amount of scholarships needs to be greater. This means that dancer organizations need to sponsor scholarships, as well as 2 or 3 clubs combining resources to give a scholarship.
3. **PLACES FOR NEW CALLERS TO PRACTICE CALLING MUST BE PROVIDED.** This can be done by caller organizations, dancer organizations and clubs. Ideally, all of these groups should provide these opportunities.

One of the biggest complaints new callers who have been to callers school report is the lack of calling opportunities once they return home. There is no place for them to practice what they have learned at callers school. Many of them are not in a position to start a new club right away. So they get discouraged and quit.

Solution: (1) The local callers association should provide one day a month for new callers to practice. (2) The local dancers association should sponsor

a new caller dance four times a year. (3) Local clubs should offer new callers the chance to call one tip a night. If there is more than one new caller at a club, schedule one of these callers each week.

SUMMARY. If this problem of caller shortage is not addressed, then this problem will become a crisis. In fact, it is already a crisis in various parts of the country.

Reprint from *American Square Dance* November 2024 Volume 80 Number 11

CALLERLAB Viewpoints by Mike Seastrom

The Proposal

As I step into the dance hall, surrounded by the infectious energy of fellow square dancers, I am filled with a sense of joy and belonging. This cherished activity has brought me countless friendships, laughter, and memories. However, as much as I adore square dancing, I recognize that our community has faced pressing challenges. We still have declining participation in many areas. That's why I wholeheartedly support The CALLERLAB Proposal, a visionary initiative designed to revitalize our beloved dance.

The CALLERLAB Proposal offers a bold solution: standardize and streamline the entry program for new dancers. By establishing a unified global program with only the most important calls, we can empower newcomers to join and learn the core calls more frequently than once a year. This shift has far-reaching implications, holding the key to increased growth potential, social benefits, and a stronger sense of community.

The benefits are multifaceted. With more frequent classes, we can capitalize on interest and enthusiasm and use our existing new dancers to bring their friends and dance with them immediately. This, in turn, can lead to exponential growth and revitalized popularity. Our dance community can then flourish as we welcome diverse perspectives, ages, and backgrounds, and inject fresh energy that comes when we bring new dancers into our ranks.

History validates this approach. In square dancing's "heyday," frequent new dancer classes fueled its remarkable growth and success. We can learn from the past, recognizing that only bringing new dancers in the door once a year limits our growth potential. Marketing experts have been very quick to tell us

many times in the past 25 years that infrequent starts hinder our ability to grow and spread the joy of our dance.

Encouragingly, many groups have already begun using shortened programs with multiple starts, and most have experienced promising growth. These groups have demonstrated that innovative action and attention to the social connection of our new dancers to our club members can reverse a decline in our numbers.

The CALLERLAB Proposal resonates deeply with many callers and 40 dance leaders' long-time vision for square dancing's future. This vision is a vibrant, global community united by music, dance, and social connection. By embracing this proposal, I firmly believe square dancing can reclaim its status as the "best and most enjoyable social recreation on the planet."

Three underlying goals drive this initiative:

1. Revitalize square dancing's popularity, ensuring its relevance in modern times and in the future.
2. Make the activity more accessible and appealing, dispelling misconceptions and highlighting its unique social and recreational benefits.
3. Create a unified global community with everyone opening their doors more than once a year.

I urge fellow CALLERLAB members to join me in supporting The Proposal. Together, we can unlock square dancing's full potential, cultivating lifelong friendships, cooperation, and an enduring appreciation for dance.

To achieve this vision, we must:

- Embrace change and innovation.
- Foster collaboration among callers, dancers, and organizations.
- Develop effective marketing strategies, targeting diverse and specific demographics.
- Provide resources and support for new dancers and struggling clubs.
- Celebrate successes and share best practices.

By seizing this opportunity, we can shape the future of our beloved team dance, train new callers, and ensure that we preserve this historical dance form for future generations. The CALLERLAB Proposal marks a pivotal moment in square dancing's history. Let's unite to propel our community forward, creating a brighter, more vibrant future for all.

Reprint from *American Square Dance* November 2024 Volume 80 Number 11

**ViSiT the onsite,
lunch time food
trucks on Friday, 1/17
& Saturday 1/18
11:00 am - 2:00 pm**



Rustick Road



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Angel's Frozen Delights



Check out the food truck
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The Center at Deltona
1640 M.L.K. Blvd
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Dedicated dining tent
**SPIN THE
BIG TOP**
70 TH FSSRDC

Check out the menus at www.floridasquaredance.com. Scroll down the list in the upper left hand corner. Click on the date for FL State Convention Website. Scroll down the page to the blue bars and click on “Food Tent Flyer & Menus”

Friday, Jan. 17, 2025 4:15 pm to 6:30 pm **\$45pp**
at

The Center at Deltona

Dinner

By popular opinion, we present an Italian themed dinner!

Menu

- Chicken parmesan
- Sausage & Meatballs marinara w/onions & peppers
- Baked ziti (meatless)
- Creamy Orzo w/herbs
- Italian green beans w/garlic
- Steamed California Blend
- Fresh green salad
- Assorted dinner rolls & butter
- Brewed sweet tea & water

Show CIRCUS

BY RAVELLI



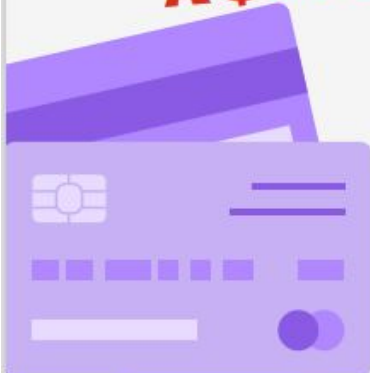
\$45 pp
Purchase
ONLINE
Deadline
1/3/25

Your purchase helps
support the
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WIN
A prepaid
VISA GIFT CARD!
A \$500 value



Raffle Tickets
1 for a \$1
10 for \$5
25 for \$10

Pay with cash, check or credit card.
Get your tickets from convention
committee members
or from your local association

Drawing to be held at the 2025 Florida State Square
and Round Dance Convention on, Saturday,
January 18, 2025. You need not be present to win,
but it would be more exciting if you are!



Your purchase will help
support the
2025 convention

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BIG TOP

**Get your new
DANCE
SOCKS here!
\$10 per pair**

\$10



**Created specially
for
square and round dancers**

**Black band
with
white logo**

ONE SIZE FITS ALL

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Made in the USA

**Your purchase will help
support the
2025 convention**

**SPIN THE
BIG TOP**

**MS,
PLUS,
ADV. & C
SQUARES**

**Phase
2-5
Rounds**

**Fri.
Dinner
Show
\$45pp**

**Dry
camping
on
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**Trail End
Dance
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**Two full
days of
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70 TH FSSRDC

JANUARY 17-18, 2025

**The Center at Deltona
1640 Dr. MLK Blvd.
Deltona, Florida 32725**

**TO REGISTER
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Make check payable to:
70th FSDC
Mail to: Jenny Green
108 Mound St.
Longwood, FL 32750
Service Charge for NSF or
returned check : \$35



*The 74th NSDC invites you for Food,
Fun, Fellowship and Great Dancing!*
Shreveport Convention Center
June 25-28, 2025

Follow the 74th National Square Dance Convention®
group on Facebook for the latest information and events



Register today at
www.74thNSDC.com



Come Dance on the Wild Side!

Photos courtesy of Shreveport-Bossier Convention & Tourist Bureau







Photo courtesy of Swanberg Ministries

The 74th NSDC is excited to bring to you
“America’s Minister of Encouragement”
Comedian • TV Host • Motivational Speaker
at the Shreveport Convention Center
Wednesday Evening, June 25, 2025


Tickets are: Show only, \$30 per person,
with catered Cajun Dinner, \$60 per person

Dinner is served at 4:30 p.m. followed by
Dennis Swanberg from 6-7 p.m.

Order tickets using the Registration Long Form
www.74thNSDC.com, *Event is open to the public*



Scan me for a video clip and information



The Cajun Dinner will be either Blackened Catfish or Grilled Chicken, your choice. You will indicate this on your long form when you make the request and pay. If you want to make a change later on, you can contact Cheryl Rush, Peppercatt2@gmail.com and request your choice be updated.

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!

WE NEED YOUR HELP

PLEASE VOLUNTEER!

We need YOU to help us to have the best 74th National Square Dance Convention® ever and to ensure that operations run efficiently and smoothly June 25-28, 2025 at the Shreveport Convention Center.

REGISTRATION

We will need people willing to work at the registration desk at the 74th NSDC. We are looking for people to give an hour or two of their time to help others check in to the convention. Please contact Assistant Registration and Housing Chairman Cheryl Rush at (251) 222-4495 or email peppercatt2@gmail.com if interested.

INFORMATION DESK

For many dancers, this will be their first big dance and we need to be sure they are able to enjoy all the activities. We need friendly volunteers to provide guidance concerning dance locations at the convention, to hand out pamphlets, etc. as well as other information about Shreveport/Bossier City and the region.

DANCE CLINICS

Clinics are an educational activity primarily involving demonstrations and exhibitions and are presented in either classroom settings or in dance hall. Volunteers may be needed to serve as Dance Directors who will engage in demonstration, exhibition and a brief discussion of their topics, followed by audience participation. Clinics may be held for square dancing, round dancing, country and western and line dancing, contra and clogging. Clinic leaders will ensure the room is properly prepared, all materials are available, collect statistics (the number of participants, number of people observing, etc.), close the session, etc. If you are interested in volunteering or need more information, contact Nelda Eaton at EatonSDCaller@gmail.com or call (903) 278-8068.

EDUCATION PROGRAM

Volunteers are needed to assist in the Education Coordination Room to help greet presenters, distribute presenter packets, coordinate Leadership Certification Program participants, collect statistics, serve as Education and Sewing Session Room hosts, monitor the NEC Archives Room, assist with the Showcase of Ideas, and support sewing activities such as Make and Take, Pattern Tracing, Mending, Raffles, etc. For details, contact Education Chairman Bonnie Abramson at bjsquaredance@gmail.com.

VOLUNTEER TODAY

Many of the volunteer positions can be accomplished sitting, so while you are taking a break from dancing to rest those tired feet, please consider donating an hour or two of time. You can message one of the 74th NSDC Chairman listed above and they can help you find the right position to fit your interest or need.

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 sqdnfcfan@gmail.com or 863-224-3393.

The Editor is not responsible for errors in reprinted articles or articles submitted by others.

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

DANCERgram Staff

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