

CALLERS CORNER

A forum for the exchange of information
between Callers & Dancers

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Where did the fall season go? It just seems like yesterday when we held our Open Houses and welcomed a new crop of dancers to our favourite activity! So, how are they doing now that they've learned the first 30 moves or so and have been 'prepped' by their club Caller for the Halfway Dance? Are they excited about going to their first big dance?... they should be!

Have all you 'experienced' club members taken them 'under your wing' so that they get maximum enjoyment and a real positive experience dancing with "all those people". Don't you remember your first big dance – almost 500 people there? I remember thinking – gees, I don't know what I'm doing here, I hardly know what I'm doing. But that was quickly allayed when the 'pros' from my club came & danced with us, assuring our success! That was SO important at that early time in our 'career' and a great influence on us going forward! Oh sure, they didn't have to dance with us 'newbies' in the Basic hall - afterall they were Plus dancers, and we knew that. But the fact that they did come & dance with us said "hey, we care", and we want you to succeed! At that point, we felt 'special' and were now members of a "club" of dancers who cared about their newest recruits! *We've never forgotten that experience!*

Hey, you folks out there shy? Why no Questions? Don't forget you can send them directly to me, either by email at: askthecaller@squaresandrounds.com or by "snail mail" to the Square Times Editor, who'll pass it along.

Until next time..... Geoff



ASK THE CALLER

I've been asked on several occasions by newer dancers... "What are the Square Dance Levels that we hear about"? and "When should we start learning to dance.... Mainstream or Plus "?

First, let's look at the Square Dance "Programs" (ie: levels) that we have today and the number of 'moves' (or family of moves) that each contain. These are listed in the 'order' which one may wish to progress. **NOTE** : that in many areas (eg: USA) the entry point is the Mainstream program which includes all the moves in the Basic & MS list. **However**, in this area, (EOSARDA) we take a full year to teach the Basic program & then do Mainstream the following year.

BASIC – the 'entry point' for all that wish to learn to square dance. It has 53 moves (or families of moves) & is sometimes referred to as "Mainstream 53".

MAINSTREAM – the next level that most Basic dancers move on to when ready. It contains 16 moves.

PLUS – for those that have danced at least 2 full years Mainstream & are ready. Plus has 31 moves.

ADVANCED – is split into two dance programs – Advanced 1 (A1) and Advanced 2 (A2). By its very name, it implies a significantly more challenging level of dancing. The A1 program consists of 48 moves, the A2 has 37.

CHALLENGE – the most complex and most difficult levels of square dancing. Challenge is broken into several groups with each group having upwards of 75 'concepts' within it. The groups are C1, C2, C3A, C3B & C4 with the latter 2 groups not yet detailed in Callerlab.

In our area (EOSARDA) you can dance Basic through to A2. However, although there has been some C1 dancing here previously, it is currently not active although we do have a Challenge Caller in our midst.

Now, having briefly described the various Dance “Levels” that are available, I want to add further comments on the whole question of “moving up” to the next “Level”.

Far too often, dancers want to take a workshop for the ‘next level’ **before they are READY!** End result is frustration for them & others around them.

THERE IS NO RUSH to move up!!

However, rather than me ‘create’ the words to go with this, I’m going to quote the recommendations that CALLERLAB have on this topic. **Are YOU ready? – consider what is being said below & talk to your club Caller before rushing to that next workshop!**

CALLERLAB recommends that dancers stay & enjoy each program for as long as possible. Moving on is NOT a recommended way to become proficient at one’s current dance program. Also, moving on is not implied or expected simply because subsequent programs exist.

ALL dancers who wish to learn the next program should have:-

1. Thorough comprehension (intellectual knowledge) of the material called at their current & prior programs.
2. Competency in execution of the calls. (physical response)
3. Exposure to multiple Callers at the current program.
4. The ability to execute calls according to **definitions** in one’s current program and all prior programs.
5. Sufficient floor time to give automatic dance responses to the calls in one’s current program. (amount will vary from one person to another)
6. The ability to help dancers on the floor at the current program.
7. The interest to explore more complex ideas found at the next program.
8. The time commitment to learn a new program.

Dancers who wish to learn the Advanced & Challenge Programs should also have :

1. The ability to recognize formations and one’s position within a formation.
2. The ability to understand concepts & to apply this to unfamiliar situations.

WHAT THE
CALLER
SEES !!



OUCH !!

I’ve dealt with this issue in previous columns (March 2003), but the problem persists. So I guess I’m going to have to continue to “harp” on it until we finally get the message across!

Much too often, dancers are getting their arms wrenched, shoulders twisted, thumbs sprained - physically abused by other **inconsiderate** dancers! And not just the guys! I continually get feedback from dancers who complain about ‘rough’ handholds on Right & Left Grands; ‘thumb grabbers’ on Swing Thru; “won’t let goers’ on other moves. All resulting in someone getting hurt!

Hang on folks....sure, Square Dancing is a ‘full contact sport’, but the key word is CONTACT not grappling or arm-wrestling!. Contact means exactly that – touching! Not a grabbing, holding on, macho style, but a firm, yet gentle & considerate ‘touch’ with other dancers. Yes, on R&L Grand, a firm “I’ll be back” acknowledgement is desirable, but LET GO as you move by. If you’re using a forearm touch remember it’s a TOUCH! Lay your hand along side your partners arm, do NOT grab or squeeze. A hand touch means that, no interlocking thumbs, grabbing or hanging on, palm to palm hand touch – especially in Ocean Waves. **BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHERS!**

TOUCH, TOUCH, TOUCH – Please !!!

AND SMILE, IT’S ALSO CONTAGEOUS !!



Until next time..... Geoff

Email: askthecaller@squaresandrounds.com