

“Sussing” a Floor



As a caller, it means asking a series of strategic “questions” to help position my program for that particular group at that particular event.

I want to be able to do so with accuracy no later than 2/3 of the way through the patter portion of the first tip.

“Sussing” Is Emotional & Choreographical

Before the dance:

- 1) Faces coming in - smiles?
- 2) Attitude of sponsoring club - greeters?
- 3) Circulate & greet (knowns vs unknowns)
- 4) Workshop or Round dancers’ skills

Squared up:

- 1) Say something positive to the group over the mic: “Turn to your corner and say, ‘Have you ever SEEN me dance?’”
ARE THEY SMILING??? AM I SMILING??? (facial mimicry)
- 2) “Bow to Partner, Corner too” - hand holds? Pre-programmed?
- 3) First 2-3 sequences vanilla, straight forward.
watching for timing, listening, hand holds & positioning, automatic responses, getting them used to my voice, cadence, how do they react to a resolve? (enthusiastic shout, hand pat for Allemande Left, stopping short at home, etc.)
ARE THEY SMILING???? AM I SMILING???
- 4) Tester calls:
Scootback, Split Circulate, Dixie Style, Tag Line, Cloverleaf, RLG get-out
ARE THEY SMILING??? AM I SMILING???
Spin Chain Gears, Flip Diamond, FYN, Chase Right, Peel Off

Between Tips

- 1) Circulate & greet - pick out specific people who might need a word of encouragement
- 2) Be AVAILABLE & RECEPTIVE to verbal feedback: “Can you do such-and-such a song?”
“We can’t hear in the back!” “You’re too loud!” “Where’s Jon?”

Note: “Sussing” is ongoing (to a certain extent) throughout the dance event. Fine-tuning is required as the hour and fatigue level of the dancers evolves.

Success isn't permanent, and failure isn't fatal.

Mike Ditka

Presented at CALLEERLAB Convention, Kansas City, MO, April 2009

by

Deborah Carroll-Jones



Evaluating a Floor

Barry Clasper

CALLERLAB Convention 2009



During one of my first CALLERLAB conventions, I happened to eavesdrop on a group of experienced callers, several of them icons in the field, discussing how they go about “reading” a floor. By that they meant how they judge what sort of choreography and presentation will probably be most successful with the particular people they have in front of them at the time. The general consensus seemed to be that they didn’t know. They all agreed they “did something”, but they weren’t exactly sure what it was or how to explain it to somebody else. I found this immensely reassuring, since it conformed precisely to my own feelings on the subject.

Since that time, being more aware that there was some sort of subconscious process at work, I paid more attention to what was going on and have evolved a general set of principles that seem to be at work, at least for me.

If you are hoping to see revealed the magic silver bullet – the “do these three things and it works every time” sort of thing – then you’re going to be disappointed. What follows is more along the lines of recipes that say things like “put ingredients in a bowl and stir until thick”. Such instructions invariably generate additional questions such as “How thick is thick?” In other words, much of what I’m going to say leaves lots of room for interpretation and probably generates as many questions as it answers.

As I considered the subject, I came to a couple of realizations. First, I realized that I go through this “floor reading” process for every single dance – even with groups that I call for every week. That is because every dance is unique, even if the same dancers attend each time. Individuals bring parts of their “real life” to the dance with them: something bothering them at work, allergies acting up, pain from an injury, change of medication, household guests, barometric pressure, phase of the moon, new shoes – an endless list of external factors that can change the “mix” of a dance floor and thus change how the floor as an aggregate behaves. These same factors affect my performance as well – some nights I can’t find a corner to save my life, others I go dyslexic and call a lot of wrong-way grands, and every once in a while my fairy godmother sobers up and I can do no wrong. So, a second part of that first “inspection tip” is to evaluate how I’m feeling that night.

The second thing I realized is that the process is not one-way. It is not solely a case of my evaluating what the floor seems in the mood for, but I am also communicating information to the floor: my vocal habits, my sense of timing, my expectations of how they will move, flow patterns they can expect, etc. So, in a sense, it’s a sort of conversation: I’m telling them what I’d like to do, and they’re telling me if they want to do it.

That said, it's time to get into some specifics.

As is so often the case, the first steps happen before I start calling. I usually try and get to the dance in time to get set up and put on some "interlude music". This is non-square dance music that nevertheless tends to put people in the mood to dance. It should have a strong rhythm, although it does not have to be one you could square dance to. It should have an upbeat emotional tone. It helps if it's familiar to the crowd. But it should not be too intrusive – it should just form a pleasant pro-dance" background. During this time I watch the floor. What is their mood? Are they tired or rarin' to go? Is there lots of conversation or are people sitting around by themselves? Sometimes people dance to the interlude music – that's always a great sign.

Based on those observations, I choose the music for my first tip. The music for the first tip has to have certain characteristics. First, it can't be too extreme: not too fast, or too slow; not too energetic, or too quiet; not too intrusive, but noticeable enough for the dancers to move to it easily; no strange or unusual rhythms – go with basic boom-chuck. Basically, I want the dancers to focus their attention more on me than the music, but I want enough music to give them the impetus to dance. From my own perspective, I want music that I find easy and natural to work with. I have enough on my mind without diverting brainpower to the task of calling to the music.

The first two or three sequences will be absolutely vanilla, simple, familiar choreography. I tend to use shorter calls to increase the rate at which I deliver calls. This provides the opportunity to habituate the dancers to my voice, my vocal phrasings, my patter filler, etc. During these sequences I evaluate the general dancer performance. How well do they move to the music? Do they shortcut? How is their reaction time? Do they seem confident or hesitant? Do they touch hands and make clean formations? Do they have any special stylings that I might need to accommodate? This is also the time to evaluate how well the sound seems to be working for the room. Do the dancers seem to be having to concentrate to make out the calls?

Based on my observations of the first two or three sequences I start to make adjustments. If they appear to be having problems with the sound, I generally pull the music level back and adjust the tone controls to provide maximum prominence for my voice. I will also reduce the amount of "noncall" clutter I provide to ensure the commands stand out. Conversely if the dancers appear hesitant or unsure of calls I may increase cueing and adjust my timing to allow them more time to think.

I then move on to some more specific tests. These tests vary by level, of course, but here are some examples that are fairly generic:

- Dancer "pre-programming" – the expectation that certain calls will ALWAYS be followed by certain other calls. If I call Swing Thru from zero waves (RH waves, boys on the ends), do I get an automatic Boys Run and Bend The Line? If I call Centers In

from a completed DPT, do the dancers automatically Cast Off $\frac{3}{4}$? If from facing lines I call Right and Left Thru and Half Sashay, do the dancers do a Roll Away or what I actually called?

My reaction will depend on the level of pre-programming that seems to be evident. If the floor is heavily pre-programmed, I usually just go with it and give them the combinations they expect to hear. If the floor seems less hide-bound about it, I make a game out of “de-programming” them. For example, I’ll call Centers In and pause, and give those that started the Cast time to undo it, then call something else such as Centers Trade.

- Listening Skills: I try to make sure they are listening to what I am actually saying rather than what they think I might say. This is related to the earlier point, but slightly different. For example, if I call Centers Pass Thru from facing lines, is that what happens, or does everyone Pass Thru? If I call Touch $\frac{1}{2}$, what happens? If I call Wheel and Deal from 2-face lines, do I get a Ferris Wheel?

- Tolerance for “Unusual” Positions: If I call a Slide Thru that leaves some people facing out of the set, do they turn around to “fix” it? Will they “fix” left-hand waves? Will they accept same sexes together in waves or lines? Will they “fix” sashayed couples?

- Tolerance for Calls From “Unusual” Set Ups: For example, Centers In from an Eight Chain set up; Cast Off $\frac{3}{4}$ from inverted lines; Follow Your Neighbor with the girls looking in; Scoot Back with mixed sexes going into the center, Spin The Top starting with boys on the ends.

Don Beck has written an informative article titled “Non-Destructive Testing” that provides another take and some additional detail on how some of the tests described above can be carried out. It is available on Don’s website at http://www.summersweet.org/Square_Dance_Articles_of_I.html.

Just in case you were thinking this evaluation business only takes place in the first tip – think again! The second tip may be different because there is a different mix of dancers in the squares. Granted, it won’t be completely different, but you need to be aware that the floor in general may perform better or more poorly than they did the first tip, and you will need to adjust accordingly.

I don’t claim that I do all these tests, in this order, every time. Rather they are just examples of things that I do when I judge the time is appropriate. We’re back to “how thick is thick?” As with so many elements of calling, exactly what you should do at any given time is a matter of judgment. Unfortunately, developing good judgment usually requires the prior exercise of a lot of bad judgment. Skill comes only with practice and experience. But there are things you can do to speed up the process:

- When you are dancing to other callers, pay attention to the sorts of items we have been discussing. Ask yourself, “What would I do with this floor?” Watch what the person calling does with it. How successful does their approach seem to be?
- Talk to callers you respect about what they do. Not everyone can articulate it well, but you almost always pick up something.
- Evaluate your own performance when you call. If things are not going well, try to understand what is contributing to the problem. When things are going right, try to remember how it feels so that you can recreate it next time.

If this all seems too much for you to absorb or cope with, do not despair. The important thing is to develop your “connection” to the floor – a thorough awareness of how they are reacting to what you are doing. You will find yourself making appropriate adjustments in material and delivery more automatically than you might imagine.



GROW YOUR BUSINESS
2009 CALLERLAB CONVENTION
KANSAS CITY, MO
BILL BOYD

Before we start on grow your business, first we must recognize that we are or have a business. When we hear the word business, we think about all of the buildings, banks and store fronts we see along the street. Some are independent, some are franchises and some are part of national or international organizations. Of all these businesses the independent business men have the most challenging problems. They are their own production department, marketing department, sales department, bookkeeping department, accounting department, tax department, records department, Personnel Department their own janitorial service and maintenance department and it seems like the list can go on forever.

Not visible from the street, is the home base business. The home base business has all of the above problems plus the fact that the home environment causes its own distraction, daily chores, television, family and most of all, self discipline to set your business hours in the home apart from your family life.

Almost all callers are a home base business. Unfortunately most all callers treat their business like a part time hobby.

You have a much harder time growing a hobby than you do a business.

When I first went into business, I was told that there were three reasons a new business would fail. The first was **mismanagement**, the second was **undercapitalization** and the third was **under advertisement**.

The funny thing is square dancing is still in existence today, in spite of the fact that we, for the most part we are, undercapitalized, under advertised and in most cases virtually without any management.

That we are still in existence means we must be doing something right or offering a product or service that must be in high demand!

Let me restate the above truism. The fact that we still have square dancing today is that people still want and need a recreational outlet that is fun, creative, has both physical and mental benefits and is acceptable to all.

I need for you to ask yourself some self probing questions. Are you ready to treat your calling as a business?

In today's market no one gets into calling for the big bucks. Most get into calling as a part time hobby, hoping to make enough to cover expenses.

Calling is easy and calling is an inexpensive business to get into, yes I said inexpensive.

Square dance calling and Round dance cuing have very inexpensive start up costs. There is the cost of equipment, a little training and a hall once a week. Most start up business requires a minimum of \$50, 000 upwards of several hundreds of thousands of dollars. For less than \$5000 a person can buy pretty good equipment, an assortment of records, attend a caller's school and get free tutoring from another local caller.

The only thing missing is training on the very difficult work of running a business.

Management

Most callers have had no experience owning, operating or running a business. Many are retired military, retired from a "real" job, and many of us are on social security, hoping to just add a few dollars to our income. Owning, operating or running your home base business is difficult, challenging but it can be very rewarding.

Any good business should start with a business plan.

How many clubs or callers do you know that have a business plan. We, as callers and clubs are a recreation, but, we are also a business. Very few callers, clubs or organizations treat their dances as a business.

A business friend of mine stated that if you could write a perfect business plan, including a mission statement, narrative, marketing management, financial plans and a good summary, you could walk into the bank and they would lend you're your startup capital and your first years operating expense, based on your information. Nobody is that good.

A business plan should list a narrative, and several financial worksheets. The real core value of creating a business plan is not just having the finished product in hand; the value also lies in process of researching and thinking about your business. Systematic planning helps you to think things through, aids you in study and research, and if you are not sure of your facts, study here will help avoid mistakes.

If you are really and I mean really to think of your calling and clubs as a business, it is time to start on a business plan.

Start with a general description.

I am a square dance caller. My purpose is to provide entertainment to a variety of people, age groups and provide support to the activity as a whole.

My goal is to become one of the best club callers.

My goal is to increase membership in all clubs for which I call.

My goal is to insure a high level of entertainment to all who attend my club. Write down your goals as a part of your business plan. Note these goals are just examples, take a few minutes, more time if needed to establish and write your own goals.

Next, take a minute out and write this down – **What is important to me in this calling career.**

Who do you plan to market your calling to, existing clubs or, are you starting new clubs.

Are you going to do this all by yourself or is there an opportunity to form a coalition with other clubs? There will be more on this later.

We have a potential of great growth, both with new clubs and new members, we must be ready to take advantage of this growth potential.

Products and Services

In our field we have one primary product, recreational fun.

However, we know all of the side benefits, improved health, more smiling and physical contact, sociability, memory improvement, physical activity and more.

Marketing Plan

There has been a lot of research done about our Square Dancing. I am not sure how much of this research is of use to a local caller or club. I might suggest locally that you visit local dance clubs and see what they are currently charging. Look up dance in the yellow pages and price out lessons and continuing education and dance parties. Many clubs will not share this information but some will, it is a real eye opener when you find out how much ball room dancing costs.

Economics

Let's gather some real facts, what is the total size of your market?

What percentage of the market do you now have?

What is the current demand for your market?

In the community of Apopka there are about 40,000 people. We know that all of these people will not enter into square dancing, but how about one percent? Wouldn't it be nice to get 4,000 new dancers? How about just 1/10 of one percent, which is still 400 new dancers.

This might be a starting point, develop a business plan, creating direction for the club within clearly defined goals.

If you want to grow your business, it takes work.

One of the first things to think about in growing your business is, "How well are you doing now?" This sound simple doesn't it – I am not doing well or I wouldn't want to grow. I find it interesting that in some parts of the country Square dancing seems to be doing very well, in other parts of the country not so well.

But, a closer look shows that in the same general location, some clubs are doing well and others, one or two squares. Part of the reason is location, part of the reason is sales and marketing, part of the reason is money, part of the reason is space and unfortunately part of the reason may be the caller.

Some of the question we must ask ourselves are, am I a good manager, do I have clear defined goals for my self or club, do I have a plan for now, for the future? All of this and more comes into the play of management.

Do you want your activity to grow? As you can see, with out a management plan it is like driving to an unknown destination without a map and hoping to get there on time.

Under advertisement

In business today there are three primary things to consider when trying to improve your business. #1, Increase your customer base; #2. Increase the frequency of purchase; #3. Increase the volume of business.

As we consider Square Dancing, the first of these three really concern us, increase your customer base. Consider, if you have more dancers, they will attend more functions and if you have more dancers the volume of business will increase.

Dancers are our customers. We exist to service and entertain our customers. Creating a relationship goes far above and beyond saying, thanks for coming, I hope to see you back.

Increasing your customer base starts with keeping your existing clients.

If your dancers are happy and entertained they will return. More importantly cheerful happy dancers will invite their friends.

We have all heard of strategies to help grow our business by increasing our dancer base. The old traditional open house with one, two or three free dances to induce new attendees. The community dance programs where we have a free dance at a community center or club house. A traditional old fashioned barn dance, free lessons with just a tip jar, demonstration dances in public location or public events, in community parades and many more ways to attract attention to our programs.

We have advertised in local newspapers, handed out flyers, posted flyers on community bulletin boards, put out door hangers and use mailings. Some work some don't, but when combined we can achieve results.

Most business will tell you that the best results are their sales representatives. The successful ones are hard working individuals who have learned to take rejection and turn it into a sales advantage. Salespeople will hear the word no more times in a day than most people hear in a lifetime. Successful salespeople persevere and overcome rejection to excel. Most of us are not sales oriented and after our friends and colleagues tell us no for the second or third time, we will never again ask them to learn square dancing. Most salespeople learn to ask in a different way each time they present their product to the same person, they know that if you ask the same question in the same way, you will get the same answer.

Advertising today starts with our existing dancers. Advertising today can be free dance programs offered to the public. Advertising today can be appearances at all public function, parades, relay for life events, city and county fairs and more.

Advertising today can be radio, television, newspapers, flyers, handouts, or door hangers - Stretch your imagination – Club or caller XYZ is having a free community dance at the XYZ civic center. This dance is sponsored by the city of blank. There is no charge and families are welcome. No dance experience necessary.

Don't forget the web. Many people today search the web on a daily basis. Many if not the most square dance sites cross reference information about square dancing in all areas of the country. If you do not have a web site – get one.

Additional information about advertising- mention-Who you are, what you do, why should someone join with you and where are you located. Sit down and give this some thought, you might have a good idea that could be used by others to help increase their business.

As I said earlier – To grow your business takes hard work.

Undercapitalized

As a home base business we save a lot of money. No store front with high rents. No high insurance premiums for building and office equipment, no tangible personal property tax, and more. Building ownership and or building rental will carry with it high expenses, most of which are not germane to a home base business.

And we still undersell our product pricewise. Does our price include hall rental? Does our price include advertising and marketing costs? Does our price include our own pay? Does our price include all of our insurance fees, membership dues and other miscellaneous costs?

A national franchise which can help with marketing costs can range from a few thousand dollars to a million dollars. In the area of dance, what would be the startup fees for an Arthur Murray Dance Studio or a Kidz Dance Studio? How much is the franchise fee, what specific advertising, specific location, what certain criteria within that location, just to name a few.

A local independent business person has no requirements, just courage enough to start their own business.

One of the things that clubs and callers have a difficult time with is pricing. Most business have a model for pricing which includes, direct costs such as material, cost of services travel telephone supplies, and other essential items. Overhead, this includes marketing, insurance, maintenance, postage, professional fees, utilities and more. You own pay and employee payroll.

Let's look at a local but scary example. I want to call fifty dances next year and I want to make \$100.00 per night. My hall rental is \$100.00 per night; this brings me to \$200.00 for each dance. This is as far as most of us think. My license and Insurance is with CALLERLAB at \$206.00 per year, this brings me to \$204.12 per dance. It cost me \$8.00 to drive back and forth to the dance, this brings me to \$212.12 for the dance. Some of us think this far and we realize that one square would have to cost \$25.51 per dancer, two squares, \$13.25 per dancer, three squares, \$8.84, four squares, \$6.62.

The scary thing to me is that some clubs are still charging \$3.00 per dancer, what are we thinking.

I recently sat down with an advertising agent and put together a five day media blitz for a Rotary function. This included three radio stations, one television station, two local newspapers; the cost was \$6,000.00. This did not include all of the donated spots on public television and radio as this is a charity fund raiser.

Now let's take a look at a good program for a start up square dance business. Take your \$212.12 times 50 and you get, \$10,606.00 add in an advertising media blitz package for \$6000.00 and you have \$16,606.00, add in \$100.00 for printing flyers for your club and you now have, \$16,706.00 or, \$334.12 per dance.

At \$3.00 per dancer I need 112 dancers per night to break even, at \$10.00 per dancer, I only need 34 or four squares.

Would a good media blitz work? I don't know, I have never tried it and I do not know of anyone else that has. I did an advertising insert in the local newspaper at a cost of \$400.00 and got six students from the insert. I might also mention, all six students joined the club, brought friends and attended special events sponsored by the club. I also will mention that I will repeat this again next year.

Now is the time to mention a coalition of clubs. Can we cooperate well enough to start classes at the same time? Can we take a chance and say lets pool our resources and really try a major advertising blitz. Can we plan a series of public appearances before and during the advertising to gain attention? Can we make sure that all of the people who attend our dances after we get them there have a fun time? Can we remember that every class is a dance and every dance can be a class?

There are afterthoughts coming, but first, as a business, develop a management plan, set goals, prepare a budget, and don't skimp on advertising.

If you belong to a local callers association, sit down with a business expert. Get someone from SCORE, to work with you (SCORE does not charge for their services and can be found at www.score.org or you can call 1-800-634-0245 to get the office closest to you).

If possible get a telephone number in the yellow pages and for goodness sakes, respond to your telephone calls. Use an answering service if you must but return everyone's calls.

If you can start all of your classes at about the same time that way an advertising blitz of some sort could work area wide.

Work with other callers, we are not in competition with each other we are in competition with every other entertainment venue.

CALLERLAB has many promotional materials you can use. USDA has many promotional materials you can use.

Do-Sa-Do.com Tom not only has all of our records and equipment we need he also has a great web site with multiple cross references.

Running a business is hard work but the rewards are many.

If we really want square dancing to grow first we must understand – It is easier to grow a business than to grow a hobby.

Twenty Minutes on Modular Choreography

by
Calvin Campbell

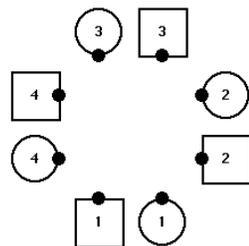
There are four popular techniques for calling square dances. Memory, modular, mental image, and sight. Modules can be used in combination with any of the other three.

The oldest method is memorizing entire square dance routines. Almost everyone who calls uses this method at least part of the time. Many callers rely on memorized figures for their entire program.

Modular choreography came next when callers started to recognize that certain recognizable setups seemed to occur time after time and that groups of calls making up these blocks could be combined in different combinations to produce an almost infinite variety of dances.

There are numerous setups (FASRs) that have been documented by Bill Peters and others, but the three setups (FASR) that are most commonly used in building modules are a **Zero (Static) Square (ZS)**, a **Zero Box (ZB)** and a **Zero Line (ZL)**. Notice that each of these are capitalized because each refers to a specific formation (F), arrangement (A), sequence (S), and rotation (R) or FASR

Using squares for men and circles for ladies and the caller standing at the bottom of the drawing, a **Zero Square** looks like the setup shown to the right. Everyone is in home position.

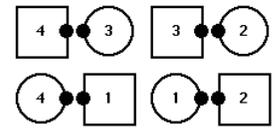


As a caller, you need to recognize that there are three other orientations of a **Zero Square** that are choreographically equal. In each case the setup (FASR) is the same, but the dancers are not at home position. To see these variations just rotate the page 1/4 turn at a time. It is very easy for the caller to recognize this, but the average dancer only recognizes when they are at home position. Figures called from this orientation will feel different than those called from home position.

Zero Square to Zero Box Modules

The second setup recognized by most callers is the **Zero Box (ZB)**. The most common way to

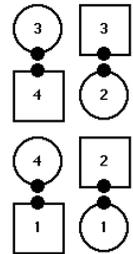
arrive at this setup (FASR) is to have either the head or the side couples Square Thru 4. If the heads Square Thru 4 the result will look like the drawing to the right.



That's one way of getting there. Let's add a little interest to the trip. Try the following module of calls.

Head couples Promenade 1/2 ... Pass Thru ... Separate around one ... In the middle Pass Thru ...

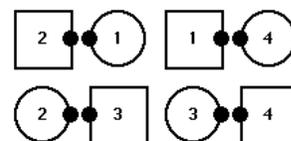
The dancers arrive at the same identical setup. The group of calls becomes a setup module that moves from a **Zero Square** to a **Zero Box** or a **ZS-ZB** module. Keep in mind that the sides can be substituted for the heads and the resulting setup would still be a **Zero Box (ZB)** as shown to the right.



Just as with a **Zero Square** the **Zero Box** can be rotated to four different positions with the head couples starting the sequence and four different positions if the side couples start the sequence. This gives a total of eight **Zero Box** setups where you, as the caller, know the set is resolved.

Modules can be as simple as the Heads Square Thru used in the first example to complex modules that move all four couples around the set such as the following **ZS-ZB** module. Notice that the module also flip flops the set.

Heads Star Thru ... Double Pass Thru ... Centers In ... Cast Off 3/4 ... Star Thru ... Zoom ... Centers Right & Left Thru ... Centers Pass Thru ...



Moving From A Zero Box To Another Zero Box

One of the most useful aspects of modular calling is amount of control you have over the choreography. You can plan a whole tip around an idea or theme. You can work in variations and build toward perhaps something really clever you plan on calling two or three tips down the line.

A good example can be found in a face to face Centers In. Many dancers are just not familiar with the concept and the rate of failure may be high. So you use a short **ZB-ZB** module that you know works to test the waters. This particular module brings the dancers right back to the same point on the floor.

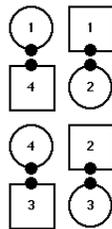
Centers In (Fc to Fc) ... Cast Off 3/4 ... Ends Run ... Right & Left Thru ... Star Thru

Once you have that module working well on one side of the set, move the head couples over to the other side of the set and call the same **ZB-ZB** module. Sight resolve the set if you wish. Now you are ready to move onto a more difficult sequence.

Centers In (Fc to Fc) ... Cast Off 3/4 ... Centers Right & Left Thru ... Pass Thru ... Centers In ... Cast Off 3/4 ... Slide Thru ... Double Pass Thru ... Lead couples Partner Trade ...

At the end of this module you have exchanged the inside and outside couples (a technical zero) and turned the Eight Chain Thru Formation one quarter. You have the comfortable knowledge that the square is still resolved and all eight dancers have been able to dance a very interesting and different pattern.

This particular module can be used effectively twice in a row because we've switched the inside and outside couples and each pair of dancers are dancing a very different feeling part. Two times through returns the set to a true zero and flip flops the set.



The Getout

We've now been through at least two points where the set was resolved. If things are not going well at these points you can bail out with just a Left Allemande. However let's assume the dancers have successfully completed your great choreography. Maybe now is the time for a surprise getout that is just a little different. If you choose to stay with the Centers In Cast Off theme try the following **ZB-AL** module.

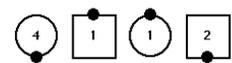
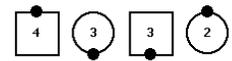
Turn Thru ... Turn 1/2 by the Left in the center... Pass Thru ... Centers in ... Cast off 3/4 ... Left Allemande

Constructing a Module

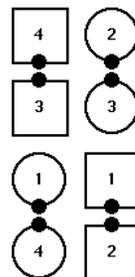
In the above examples, the theme was obviously Centers In followed by a Cast Off 3/4. The focus was a face to face Centers In instead of the usual couple behind a couple Centers In. Something different. How do you go about constructing such a module?

In my opinion, it is unwise to do this extemporaneously on the dance floor. I choose to do it at home with square dance checkers or a computer program

First you have to decide your starting point. In this case let's start from Zero Box. Once the dancers have completed the Centers In and Cast Off 3/4s you have to look at the resultant FASR and decide on your options.



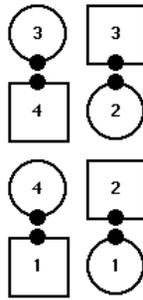
In this case, the motion of the Cast off 3/4 dictates that the ends either need to stand still or do something that continues the direction of their forward motion. We've looked at Ends Run and Ends stopping. A third option could be to have the Ends Fold while the centers Square Thru 3/4.



Now we've got the heads couples nicely paired with their partner. The sides are not paired and they are 1/2 Sashayed. Pass to the Center will get the heads out of the middle and Turn Thru in the center will nicely resolve the 1/2 Sashayed side couples. In the process you've have

exchanged the inside and outside couples so you've made up a technical zero. The total **ZB-ZB** module looks like:

**Centers In ... Cast Off 3/4 ...
Ends Fold ...
Centers Sq Thru 3/4 ...
Pass to the Center ...
Centers Turn Thru ...**



Some Ground Rules for Your Consideration

Most of us are not blessed with a photographic memory. We remember short blocks or sequences quite well, but as the string becomes longer we tend to fail in accurately remembering the sequence. I try and keep modules, that I construct, to less than ten calls. I really favor seven or fewer.

There is a second reason for limiting the modules to this length. I've found that once I've explored a particular theme or idea that it really sharpens my skills to see how few additional calls I need to get them back to a zero point.

Over the years I've pretty much settled on creating only six types of modules out of all the setups documented by the "real" experts in this field.

These are:

**Zero Square to Zero Box (ZS-ZB)
Zero Square to Zero Line (ZS-ZL)
Zero Box to Zero Box (ZB-ZB)
Zero Line to Zero Line (ZL-ZL)
Zero Box to an Allemande Left or RLG
(ZB-AL or ZB-RLG)
Zero Line to and Allemande Left or RLG
(ZL-AL or ZL-RLG)**

Why? It makes my notes easy to file and to find. I quickly figured out that any zero is really a combination of zeros for every formation within the zero. I won't explain that further because that is about a 1 hour seminar by itself.

A Few Words About Equivalents

You can move people around a set with very few calls. Right & Left Thru, 2 Ladies Chain, Star Thru, Pass Thru, Dive Thru/Pass to the Center, and Bend the Line will do a lot. There are modules that mimic each of these. For example Swing Thru ... Spin the Top ... Right & Left Thru = Star Thru. One time I

saw a book that had 1001 equivalents for Star Thru. Most of us recognize that Swing Thru Double is the equivalent of a Right & Left Thru and so on.

Square Dancing is a team effort. When you square up there are seven other people besides yourself on that team. The ideal would be to dance with each of the other seven people at some point during the tip. Sometimes we don't do that. We just keep people comfortably close to the original corner and square dance becomes more a two facing couples facing dance than a four couples dance. If you plan ahead you can give the dancers the pleasure of dancing with all the people in the set.

Let's start out with a simple pattern and see one example of how this could work. Here is a very straight forward setup to a **Zero Box**.

**Heads Star Thru ... Pass Thru ...
Right & Left Thru the outside two ...
Dive Thru (Pass to the Center) ...
Pass Thru ... (ZB)**

By substituting equivalent modules for Star Thru, Pass Thru, and Right & Left Thru and also using true zeros at the points where Eight Chain Thru formations occur you can easily track both the progress of the dancers and provide a lot of variety. Here are some examples:

Star Thru Equivalents
**Swing Thru ... Centers Trade ...
Centers Run ... Bend the Line ...**

**Spin the Top ... Men Run ...
Wheel & Deal ... Pass Thru ...
Partner Trade ...**

Right & Left Thru Equivalents
**Swing Thru ... Centers Trade ...
Turn Thru ... Partner Trade**

Pass Thru ... Partner Trade

Pass Thru Equivalents
Right & Left Thru with a full turn

**Swing Thru ... Men Trade ...
Turn Thru ...**

Now start substituting in various equivalents at the appropriate places and plug in a couple of box zeros and you have more than enough material for a complete patter tip with lots of variety.

Each couple has danced with every other couple in the set. As a caller, you have been able to easily track the progress of the dancers through the routine because you have numerous visual check points where you can physically observe that the square is progressing as planned. You win and the dancers win.

Why Bother???

Why bother to go to this kind of effort when you can just do it extemporaneously on the spur of the moment. First, in going through the process you will learn a lot about square dance choreography that you will not learn on-the-fly. You can take a look at your options and the consequences of what you are calling. You will find that the more you do it the more options you will see.

Second, you will become a much more interesting caller if you take the time to do your homework at home and plan your dance. You can plan how to take an audience from the mundane to the fantastic instead of just hoping it will happen. The plan may not always work, but it's always worth the attempt.

Third and most important, writing modules is the only way you are going to permanently capture your flashes of brilliance and those of your peers. This is also important from a historical viewpoint. Up until about the last ten years most of the innovative choreography was being printed somewhere. They could be used as a reference and a study guide for new callers. Today, much of the innovative choreography is called once and then lost for all time.

The 20 Minute Time Bind

In 20 minutes I can only hope to convince you that modules may be interesting and perhaps worth looking into further. In this paper I've only scratched the surface of how modules work and really explored very little of the vast versatility of this method of calling. If you really want to explore the subject I need at least four hours of your time.

Acknowledgement of the Pioneers

I don't want to leave this subject without giving credit where credit is due. Ricky Holden and Lloyd Litman wrote a book named Instant Hash which introduced the concept of modules to many of us.

This is where we learned about a Box 1-4 and 1P2P lines. You can sometimes find this book in libraries. It's well worth reading.

Bill Peters greatly extended and refined the knowledge of modules in a book named the "Mighty Module." He was the one that first clearly defined the nomenclature for what became Setups, Zeros and Getouts that we still use today.

The rest of us have just tagged onto their genus. Lloyd is dead, but Bill lives on Maui in Hawaii. If you ever see him tell him "Thanks."

References of Interest

"The Mainstream Square Dance Caller's Note Book" by Calvin Campbell

"The Callers Text" Chapter 16. Published by the American Square Dance Society. Chapter by Calvin Campbell

American Square Dance Magazine July 1982 through February 1985. A monthly column named "Mostly Modules" by Calvin Campbell

"The Might Module" by Bill Peters

"Modules Galore" by Bill Peters

EQUIVALENTS

SQUARE THRU FOUR EQUIVALENTS:

- ◆ TOUCH 1/4 - MEN RUN
- ◆ RIGHT AND LEFT THRU - ROLLAWAY-STAR THRU
- ◆ PASS THE OCEAN - GIRLS TRADE - RECYCLE - PASS THRU

STAR THRU EQUIVALENTS:

- ◆ TOUCH 1/4-SCOOT BACK-MEN RUN
- ◆ RIGHT AND LEFT THRU - FLUTTERWHEEL - SWEEP 1/4
- ◆ SWING THRU - SPIN THE TOP - RIGHT AND LEFT THRU

PASS THRU EQUIVALENTS:

- ◆ RIGHT AND LEFT THRU - SQUARE THRU 3 HANDS
- ◆ VEER LEFT - VEER RIGHT
- ◆ RIGHT AND LEFT THRU - A FULL TURN
- ◆ SQUARE THRU 3 HANDS - U-TURN BACK - BOX THE GNAT
SQUARE THRU 3

RIGHT AND LEFT THRU EQUIVALENTS:

- ◆ PASS THRU - PARTNER TRADE
- ◆ PASS THRU - CALIFORNIA TWIRL
- ◆ STAR THRU - SLIDE THRU

Using Zero's - Equivalents and Conversions

BOX ZERO'S

* Also Facing Couple Zero's

Technical Zeros's

- * 1. SWING THRU...BOYS RUN...WHEEL AND DEAL
- * 2. STAR THRU...PASS THRU...PARTNER TRADE...STAR THRU
- * 3. SWING THRU...GIRLS FOLD...PEEL OFF...WHEEL AND DEAL
- 4. RIGHT & LEFT THRU...VEER LEFT...FERRIS WHEEL...PASS THRU (CENTERS)
- 5. STAR THRU...FLUTTERWHEEL...SWEEP 1/4
- 6. EIGHT CHAIN THRU (FOUR)
- # 7. SPIN CHAIN THRU..SPIN CHAIN THRU
- # 8. SPIN CHAIN THRU...GIRLS CIRCULATE...SCOOTBACK
- # 9. STAR THRU...PASS THRU...BEND THE LINE...STAR THRU

BOX HALF ZERO

Call Twice to Zero

- 1. SWING THRU...BOYS RUN...COUPLES CIRCULATE...WHEEL & DEAL
- 2. PASS THRU...TRADE BY

BOX ONE THIRD ZERO

From Ocean Waves

Call Three times to Zero

- 1. SINGLE HINGE...CENTERS TRADE
- 2. CAST OFF 3/4...CENTERS TRADE

LINE ZERO'S

* Also Facing Couple Zero

Technical Zero

- * 1. STAR THRU...RIGHT & LEFT THRU...STAR THRU
- * 2. RIGHT & LEFT THRU...FLUTTERWHEEL...REVERSE FLUTTER WHEEL
- * 3. SWING THRU... GIRLS "U" TURN BACK... WHEEL & DEAL... RIGHT & LEFT THRU
- * 4. PASS THE OCEAN...RECYCLE...SWEEP 1/4
- * 5. SWING THRU...SPIN THE TOP...SLIDE THRU
- 6. PASS THRU...WHEEL & DEAL...DOUBLE PASS THRU...FIRST GO LEFT...NEXT GO RIGHT
- 7. PASS THRU...TAG THE LINE - IN...BOX THE GANT...RIGHT AND LEFT THRU
- # 8. PASS THRU...BEND THE LINE...RIGHT AND LEFT THRU

MODULES	<p>A call, or series of calls, which will move the dancers from one known FASR to the same or different but known FASR</p> <p>Example from a normal Eight Chain Thru Formation and Arrangement (FA), the calls Swing Thru, Boys Run, Wheel and Deal returns the dancers to the same F ASR. From a normal zero box (Box 1-4), the calls Swing Thru, Girls Circulate, Boys Trade, Boys Run Bend the Line, will change the FASR to a zero line (1P2P) another known FASR (SETUP)</p>
GET- IN	<p>A Call, or Series of Calls, to Create a Particular Formation, Arrangement, Sequence and Relationship. Often called a SET-UP or SET-UP Routine.</p> <p>Example would be Heads Square Thru to create a Box 1-4, often called a zero box, which is a particular Eight Chain Thru Formation.</p>
GET-OUT	<p>A call, or series of calls, which enable you to return the dancers to home position, or in some cases to a particular known FASR.</p> <p>Example: From a normal wave in which each dancer is holding right hands with own partner and all are in sequence, All Eight Fold to a Right and Left Grand and Promenade home would work.</p>
ZEROS	<p>There are several different kinds of zeros.</p>
GEOGRAPHIC	<p>A call, or series of calls, which will return the dancers to the same footprints. Swing Thru, Boys Run, Wheel and Deal.</p>
TRUE	<p>A call , or series of calls, which will return the dancers to the same FASR but not necessarily to the same footprints. Sometimes called a quadrant zero. Eight Chain four.</p>
FRACTIONAL	<p>A call , or series of calls, which has to be repeated some number of times to return the dancers to the Same F and A of the FASR.</p>
TECHNICAL	<p>A call , or series of calls, which is sometimes zero- that is to say that it only works when the boys and girls are in the same relative sequence. It will exchange actives and inactives. It may exchange ends and centers. It may exchange infacers and outfacer. When it doesn't zero, it will produce a four Ladies Chain effect. All technical zeroes are ½ zeroes - that is to say if repeated they will zero out. (Star Thru, Pass Thru, Bend the Line, Star Thru).</p>

CHICKEN PLUCKER

SQUARE THRU TO
ZERO BOX
R & L THRU
PASS THRU
TRADE BY
R & L THRU
PASS THRU
TRADE BY

**CONVERT ZERO BOX
TO ZERO LINE (1P. 2P)**

SWING THRU GIRLS
CIRCULATE
BOYS TRADE
BOYS RUNBEND THE
LINE .

**CONVERT ZERO LINE
TO ZERO BOX**

TOUCH 1/4
COLUMN CIRCULATE
BOYS RUN

**INVERT & ROTATE
FROM ZERO BOX**

STAR THRU
PASS THRU
BEND THE LINE
STAR THRU

**INVERT & ROTATE
FROM ZERO LINE**

PASS THRU
BEND THE LINE
R & L THRU

ZERO BOX MODULES

SET UPS	ZERO	GETOUT
SQUARE THRU FOUR	SWING THRU - MEN RUN - FERRIS WHEEL - PASS THRU	STAR THRU - SQUARE THRU 3 - L.A.
TOUCH ¼ - MEN RUN	RIGHT AND LEFT THRU - VEER LEFT - FERRIS WHEEL PASS THRU	STAR THRU - RIGHT AND LEFT THRU - PASS THRU - L.A.
RIGHT AND LEFT THRU - ROLLAWAY - STAR THRU	TOUCH ¼ - GIRLS FOLD - DBL PASS THRU - FACE RT. - GIRLS TRADE - FERRIS WHEEL - PASS THRU	TOUCH ¼ - GIRLS RUN - TOUCH ¼ - BOYS RUN - L.A.
PASS THE OCEAN - GIRLS TRADE - RECYCLE - PASS THRU	RIGHT AND LEFT THRU - SQUARE THRU 4 - PARTNER TRADE - SLIDE THRU -	RIGHT AND LEFT THRU - ROLLAWAY - PASS THRU - RLG

ZERO LINE MODULES

SET UPS	ZERO	GET OUT
LEAD RIGHT - CIRCLE TO A LINE	PASS THRU - WHEEL AND DEAL - DBL PASS THRU - FIRST LEFT - NEXT RIGHT	STAR THRU - SQUARE THRU 3 - L.A.
LEAD RIGHT - VEER LEFT - BEND LINE - PASS THRU - PTNR TRADE	RIGHT AND LEFT THRU - PASS THRU - PTNR TRADE	TOUCH ¼ - GIRLS RUN - RLG
PASS THE OCEAN - RECYCLE RIGHT AND LEFT THRU - PASS THRU - CIRCLE TO A LINE	SLIDE THRU - RIGHT AND LEFT THRU - VEER LEFT - FERRIS WHEEL - PASS THRU - SLIDE THRU	STAR THRU - RIGHT AND LEFT THRU - EIGHT CHAIN 1 - L.A.
TOUCH ¼ - WALK AND DODGE - CIRCLE TO A LINE	RIGHT AND LEFT THRU - FLUTTER WHEEL - REVERSE FLUTTER	RIGHT AND LEFT THRU - DIXIE STYLE - GIRLS CIRCULATE - BOYS TRADE - L.A.

CHICKEN PLUCKER

SQUARE THRU TO
ZERO BOX
R & L THRU
PASS THRU
TRADE BY
R & L THRU
PASS THRU
TRADE BY

**CONVERT ZERO BOX
TO ZERO LINE (1P. 2P)**

SWING THRU GIRLS
CIRCULATE
BOYS TRADE
BOYS RUNBEND THE
LINE .

**CONVERT ZERO LINE
TO ZERO BOX**

TOUCH 1/4
COLUMN CIRCULATE
BOYS RUN

**INVERT & ROTATE
FROM ZERO BOX**

STAR THRU
PASS THRU
BEND THE LINE
STAR THRU

**INVERT & ROTATE
FROM ZERO LINE**

PASS THRU
BEND THE LINE
R & L THRU

ZSZB _____ CastOff 3/4

Head Couples Star Thru... All Double Pass Thru...
Centers In... **Cast Off 3/4**... Star Thru...
Zoom... Centers Right & Left Thru... Pass Thru... (FFset)

Head Couples Star Thru... Zoom... Double Pass Thru...
Centers In... **Cast Off 3/4**... Centers of the Line Square Thru...
Ends of the Line Star Thru... (90CCW)

ZBZB _____

Centers In (**Fc2Fc**)... **Cast Off 3/4**... Ends Run...
Right & Left Thru... Star Thru... (**EZ**)

Centers In (**Fc2Fc**)... **Cast Off 3/4**...
Centers of the Line Right & Left Thru... Pass Thru...
Centers In... **Cast Off 3/4**... Star Thru...
Double Pass Thru... Lead Couples California Twirl... (**TZ**)

2{Swing Thru... Centers Trade... **Cast Off 3/4**...
Ends Circulate... Centers Trade...} (**OWFF**)

ZBAL _____

Turn Thru... Centers only UTurn Back...
Centers In... **Cast Off 3/4**... (FL1/2) Left Allemande

ZSZL _____ Cast Off 3/4

4 Ladies Chain 3/4... 4 Ladies Chain across...
Head Couples Square Thru... Pass Thru the outside 2...
Centers Turn Thru... Centers In... **Cast Off 3/4**... (**4p1p90CW**)

ZLZL _____

Pass Thru... **Cast Off 3/4**... Right & Left Thru... (**TZ**)

Pass Thru... Wheel & Deal... Double Pass Thru...
Centers In... **Cast Off 3/4**... Star Thru...
Double Pass Thru... 1st Couple Left... 2nd Right... (**TZ**)

3{Pass Thru... Wheel & Deal... Double Pass Thru...
Centers In... **Cast Off 3/4**...} (**90CCW**)

3{Pass Thru... Wheel & Deal... All UTurn Back...
Centers In... **Cast Off 3/4**...} (**90CW**)

ZLAL _____

Pass Thru... Tag the Line...
Centers In... **Cast Off 3/4**... Circle Left...
Ladies Center, Men Sashay... (**ZS**)
Left Allemande

EQUIVALENTS

SQUARE THRU FOUR EQUIVALENTS:

- ◆ TOUCH 1/4 - MEN RUN
- ◆ RIGHT AND LEFT THRU - ROLLAWAY-STAR THRU
- ◆ PASS THE OCEAN - GIRLS TRADE - RECYCLE - PASS THRU

STAR THRU EQUIVALENTS:

- ◆ TOUCH 1/4-SCOOT BACK-MEN RUN
- ◆ RIGHT AND LEFT THRU - FLUTTERWHEEL - SWEEP 1/4
- ◆ SWING THRU - SPIN THE TOP - RIGHT AND LEFT THRU

PASS THRU EQUIVALENTS:

- ◆ RIGHT AND LEFT THRU - SQUARE THRU 3 HANDS
- ◆ VEER LEFT - VEER RIGHT
- ◆ RIGHT AND LEFT THRU - A FULL TURN
- ◆ SQUARE THRU 3 HANDS - U-TURN BACK - BOX THE GNAT
SQUARE THRU 3

RIGHT AND LEFT THRU EQUIVALENTS:

- ◆ PASS THRU - PARTNER TRADE
- ◆ PASS THRU - CALIFORNIA TWIRL
- ◆ STAR THRU - SLIDE THRU

THE EFFECTIVE SELECTION AND USE OF MUSIC

By

WADE DRIVER

Owner/Producer RHYTHM RECORDS

Selection of Music:

1. If possible, listen to the complete song. In this way you can hear any special phrases that are present. At the very least, listen to the opener, middle break, and closer. Listen for key changes.
2. If you use a tape service, be sure it is one that allows returns in the event the entire song doesn't give you what you desire.
3. In selecting your singing calls, try to pick songs with a melody with which you are familiar. I realize this is not always possible, but it certainly makes your job easier. With all of the labels currently on the market, you have a vast selection from which to choose. If you are a fan of country music, finding a song should be no problem. Today's dancers, however, are showing an increased liking for alternative music
4. Sometimes the same song will be available on different labels. Use your best judgment in selecting the one that is best for you. Most of the time this is easy to do. Sometimes the difference will be in the arrangement, not the quality of the music.
5. If you are familiar with the song, then listen to the instrumental side only. If you have trouble following the melody, then listen to the called side for verification of your ability to sing the melody. The best results will come from listening to the pop version. You should be able to sing both the highest and lowest note of the melody without having to strain. If the melody is out of your range, but only a little, then you can work with harmonics.
6. Listen to the quality of the music. Does the rhythm track remain prominent throughout the song? Is the chord structure dominant enough to follow? Does the music help you or will you have to do all the work? Are there fills and chases that will enhance your presentation? (This is vital!!) Also listen to the musical introduction and tag – Are they exciting?
7. If you can sing the melody, the music meets the above criteria, AND if you like the song, then buy it.

Presentation of Singing Calls:

The more you can make your singing calls sound like the original pop recording, the more likely you are to be successful. The original artist had a feeling in mind when he or she recorded the song. Try to present that same feeling to your dancers.

Use your music to help you be successful. If you have selected the right songs for your, then you will have many tools to help you do your job. Among square dance callers, some are better singers than others. None of us, however, are on a par with those who make their living in the pop recording field. The dancers will often tell you that you do a song better than the original artist – DON'T YOU BELIEVE IT! That just means that you are doing your job. Accept the compliment for what it is worth and continue doing what you were doing. Very few callers have voices that are prettier than the music. The more you use your music, the better you will sound to the dancer. The dancer will relate the music to your voice and you will come across as a better singer. No matter how many good songs are in your case, it will not matter if you cannot present them properly. (See phrasing example)

Presentation of Patter Calls:

Unlike past years, there is a huge variation in the music that we use for patter calling. Please remember this – just because it is “different” or “sounds great” it may not be the best thing for use as patter music. I suggest you still follow the basic rules of “danceability”. If the dancers have a difficult time putting their foot down to the beat of the music, chances are they will also have a difficult time with the choreography. A good rule of thumb, however, is this: The more complex or busy the music, the simpler the choreography. The dancers, as well as you, must enjoy the music.

PHRASING

AMARILLO BY MORNING
UP FROM SAN ANTONE

*

EVERYTHING THAT I GOT
IS JUST, WHAT I GOT ON

*

WHEN THE SUN IS HIGH
IN THE TEXAS SKY

*

I'LL BE BUCKING AT THE COUNTY
FAIR

*

AMARILLO BY MORNING
AMARILLO, I'LL BE THERE

.....

HEADS YOU PROMENADE HALF WAY
SQUARE THRU COUNT TO FOUR

*

ALL THE WAY AND YOU SWING THRU
BOYS RUN RIGHT, AND FERRIS WHEEL

*

CENTERS SQUARE THRU THREE
QUARTERS 'ROUND THAT RING

*

GOTTA SWING THE CORNER GIRL PROME-
NADE

*

AMARILLO BY MORNING
AMARILLO, I'M ON MY WAY (look for rhyme)



DANCING SMOOTHNESS
N.E. SQUARE & ROUND DANCE CONVENTION PRESENTATION
by **JIM MAYO & YIKES CAMERON**
MASS. NORTH SHORE - APRIL 1999

THIS IS DANCING

Square dancing should be dancing. It is not just "getting through" the figures. The movement calls for a shuffling step. When we walk, the heel hits first. When we dance, the ball of the foot is the first to touch the floor. It's also important to think about how we look. Stand tall. Be proud of how you look when you dance.

Square dancing is also something that we do with other people. It's not a "solo" activity. The interaction between us is sometimes called counter dancing. When we turn, we should counterbalance each other. A swing is not two people walking around each other. The swingers should become a single unit. Some have described the interaction as "giving weight." The same is true of hand or arm turns like Allemande Left and Swing Thru.

Another aspect of counter dancing is the way we move to make dancing easier for others in the square. Actions like Separate Around One require the "inactive" people to move also. In a run, the "runnee" moves into the space the "runner" came out of and on Ladies Chain, the men should move to their right and start the turn before the ladies get to them.

COURTESY

We hope that courtesy is not yet dead in square dancing. If you want to dance with someone, ask them. Don't stand in a square and yell or gesture to them. It's best if you go together as a couple to fill squares and it's not polite to pass a square that needs a couple so that you can dance with your friends in another square.

If you must save a place for a couple that is late getting onto the floor, at least fill that place by separating a couple to put one person in the position you are saving. If you don't want to dance this tip, leave the room if that's at all possible, so that you don't seem to be refusing to dance with the people who are in the square that needs a couple.

Sometimes it is necessary to leave a square - never because you don't want to dance with these people - but you might get sick. If possible, get someone from the sidelines to fill in for you and, certainly, explain to the folks you left as soon as possible. It's also nice to applaud the caller's performance and the pleasure of dancing in your square. THEN, thank those who shared this tip with you - including the partners.

Some dancers seem to enjoy gimmicks like extra spins and twirls. These are not usually a problem - unless you have new or fragile dancers or folks you don't know in your square. Be careful that your enthusiasm doesn't spoil the dancing for others. Sometimes your eagerness to help others leads you to yank, shove or yell at someone - **DON'T**. The best way to help is to dance your part of the action absolutely correctly with NO unusual styling.

TIMING

One aspect of square dancing is not under your control. Callers call it "Timing." The best timing happens when you know what the calls mean and the caller delivers the call JUST before you need to hear it. When the call comes too late, you have to stop for a beat or two between each action. That gets tiring. When the calls come too soon, you have a tendency to rush to keep up. The dancing then becomes scrambling. Sometimes, when the dance pattern is unusual, you need a little more lead time to figure out what you're supposed to do.

All square dance music is based on 8-beat phrases. Your action fits the music best when the caller lets you start each action on the first beat of one of those phrases. Because our actions are not all 8-steps long, you can't get the first beat every time. That would interfere with good timing. But there are a couple of calls where you SHOULD always have the first beat. These are Grand Square and an Alamo Balance.

ACCEPTED STYLES

There are a few "accepted standards" of styling in square dancing. Sometimes these are so often ignored that they may not seem so "accepted" but it's good to know what they are anyway. Most important is that grabbing and tight hand grips are never right.

In a Promenade, the men should have palms up and the women palms down. In arm turns, the forearm hold does not mean "grab the elbow." The palm should be flat against the other person's forearm with the elbows bent to encourage counter dancing.

In Ocean Waves, here in New England, we use a forearm hold. The CALLERLAB recommended style for Waves is hands up at (her) shoulder height, palm to palm. In Canada everyone holds hands-up in Waves (including Swing Thru and Spin The Top.)

The recommended style for Stars is the "Palm Star" with all elbows bent to touch hands with the fingers pointing up. The exception is a Thar when everyone holds the wrist of the person in front of them (called the "Pack Saddle" hold.)

CONSIDERATION FOR OTHERS

There are a few calls in square dancing that have become sloppy in execution. Most often the action of the men causes the women to do something uncomfortable. They've done this so much that they often don't even notice.

From the stage, every time I call Star Thru, I see most of the women duck to avoid getting a man's elbow in the face. Guys, keep the elbow high - and, if she's too tall, don't insist on keeping the hands joined.

Another of those troublesome calls is Ferris Wheel. The men usually head directly at each other dragging the women behind them. When Don Beck created this call he described it by saying the In-facing couples move straight ahead until they have formed a Two-Faced line in the center. Then they do a Wheel and Deal.

A similar problem occurs in Recycle which was intended to be a Hinge, Fold and Follow action. Often, these days, it seems to be "women reach across and get dragged by the men around the corner." Small wonder that so many women find this an uncomfortable call.

ACCURACY

My final point is to encourage accuracy in your dancing. This is particularly important in the Basic actions like Runs, Trades and Circulates. A large share of dancing errors occur with these fundamental actions - even among dancers in the Advanced programs.

In every line, touch hands (and that includes Ocean Waves.)

On the call Run, only the runner changes facing direction. The "runnee" just moves sideways into the vacated spot.

In Trades, both people turn around - and change places.

In any Circulate, the people facing in walk straight ahead with no turn. Those facing out will always make a turn to face in.

Three-quarter turns are tough. Practice being very precise. Try turning half and a quarter more. Another technique is to count walls - as long as the hall isn't circular. Three good sized steps will usually work, too. Find something that works for you and then try to be accurate every time.

One-quarter turns are tough too. Many people turn too far on Hinges. Try taking just one small step. It's better to turn too little than too much for one-quarter turns.

DANCE WITH PRIDE.

Square dancing is a wonderful recreation. At it's best it provides both physical and mental exercise and all in the company of some of the nicest people you will ever meet. Please do your part to make it the best it can be.

JIM MAYO
PO BOX 367, HAMPSTEAD, NH 03841
(603) 329-5492

This is a copy of a section of the minutes of a meeting of the Southern California Callers Assoc. held in February of 1961. At the meeting Bob Van Antwerp presented the Training Session on the subject of Dancing Style and how callers should teach it to new dancers. The minutes are from the files of the Square Dance Foundation of New England in Manchester, NH.

S.D.C.A 2/61

31

TRAINING SESSION

Don't Forget Callers Our Style Is Always Showing

By: Bob Van Antwerp

My lecture will "be styling in the Square Dance Movement, and maybe for some of you that are teaching classes, I'll give you a few little pointers, which I have been using and have found very successful for me and maybe helpful to you.

I thought I might title this lecture "Don't Forget Callers Our Style Is Always Showing". It is from this stand point, I honestly feel, that the style we are actually presenting and the styling in our classes is not enough. I feel like the Callers, all this group here and everywhere. If each of us will stick together and go all the way with it, by making these people who are learning to dance, do it with style, we are going to be far more successful having better dancers. Right now, styling is at a low ebb. I feel it very much. Also, thinking back of our travels around the country, I ask myself, Where are some of the areas that we actually see, that are putting Style in their square dancing? Here in our area we are somewhat low in our styling. Our smoothness of dance is not there. I think it is going to be up to us to band together and improve the styling. We can do it and we can make the people dance smoothly, if the callers themselves will learn to dance smoothly. And if our Callers, and I have been one of them, many times, actually feel that you are rushing these things so far and so fast, and so furious, that we are forgetting, What is the beat of the music? How do we dance to the beat of the music? Do we dance to the off beat? Do we dance too fast? Are we making it look easy? And have you thought, how many times your dancers that you are teaching look at you on the floor when you are demonstrating? I know that every time that I have a class that graduates, I know that they are watching me dance. It makes me try to do every dance movement as perfectly as I can. I don't think that you have to be a stuffed shirt, but I think if you will dance smoothly and put every effort into this, that your dancers will be the same way. Smooth.

I have a few things here that I might make some suggestions on, In a Beginning class, my first night, I always start the dancers in a circle, which. I believe most of us do, but, I will put on maybe six, seven or eight different beats of music and have the people take their positions in a promenade position. Then I'll have them do nothing but maintain a simple beat to the beat of the music in a smooth, shuffling step, also I'll change the music back and forth from one beat to another and have them in turn find the beat. I also ask my dancers never to lift their feet from the floor, reminding them to shuffle along on the balls of their feet, keeping their feet on the floor. In this way they will establish a shuffling movement to their dancing. I try to remind the people something to think about. Such as the gents hand position in the promenade. The gents palms up, the ladies palm down. The gents palm is acting as a landing field for the ladies hand. Tell the

ladies that the gents are giving them a landing field so the ladies can put their hands somewhere. And usually if you will say landing field, landing field several times, and let the ladies hands lite, they usually comprehend.

Now your hand positions while circling. This may seem very little to you at the present time, but as you go around dancing, and see them using this palm upward affair, approximately at the height of the ladies shoulder, it gives the ladies a real good landing field and support for their hands and it looks good.

One thing that I have been very critical of with my dancers and I know that you have the same problem as callers and teachers and that is the roll off from the left allemande. I have noticed that many times in classes and clubs, the dancers have a tendency, I don't think they are being taught this, to twirl or do a vicious swing going into the left allemande. As they twirl or swing the lady into the left allemande, I know the ladies will "bear me out in this, the lady has lost her sense of direction, and she doesn't know how hard the gent is going to twirl or swing her, so she is completely off "balance. The gent that is going to meet this girl does not know whether to grab her here or there or just wait till she stops. Therefore, an easy, simple roll off from a swing is so much easier for the lady and I think it is easier for the gent too. At this point in the lecture Bob got a square on the floor for some simple demonstrations. His first demonstration was having the gents swing their partners twice, then twirling them to their corners for a left allemande. As the dancers did this, most of the ladies were out of position to allemande left. Then he had the gents swing their partners twice around and let the ladies roll off their right arm easily to a left allemande. This was so much smoother and the ladies were in a position to do the left allemande. He mentioned that in his teaching that he demonstrated the right and the wrong way to do figures and he is of the opinion this is a great help. Now he had the gents swing their partners twice around and twirl them into a four ladies chain. When the dancers did this, the ladies were somewhat out of position to start a four ladies chain. Then he had the gents swing their partners twice and let the girls roll off their right arm and stop momentarily "before doing the grand chain. So much smoother and graceful.

Vicious swinging. . Vicious swinging is something we all have problems with. Ticious swinging seems to "be creeping in more and more. I don't know whether the man feels more manly or what when he viciously swings the ladies. I tell my classes and dancers that a vicious swinger doesn't know how to dance. If you can swing smoothly and dance smoothly, people won't know how long or how short a time you have "been dancing. All they will know is that you are a good dancer. I sometimes tell the ladies that if a certain gent is a vicious swinger and you know it, the next time that he is ready to swing you take your feet off the floor and chances are he will calm down on his swings. There is a chance that the vicious swing may hurt a ladies arm twirling her out of the swing. This is not good. Another thing about the vicious swinger is that his partner never knows where she is going or where she is going to stop.

At this time Bob demonstrated the allemande "A". First he did the allemande left, then right and left, holding onto this girls hand as he did the half sashay. Then doing the same thing again but when he met the lady with a left hand and before doing the half sashay he dropped the lady's hand and did the half sashay, this seemed to make this part of the figure flow a lot more evenly.

His dancers were still on the floor and as he reminded them and the rest of us of several don'ts he uses, he demonstrated the don'ts with the square on the floor.

1. Don't jerk or kick in a left allemande
2. Don't box the gnat or box the flea in a right and left grand
3. Jerking arms in the alamo style.
(he had the gents put their hands shoulder high to the ladies with their palms facing out. The ladies put their palms against the gents palms and balanced in this position. As they swung by the right or left the hand position remained the same. Holding hands at waist height can dislocate shoulders very easily, he said.)
4. Twirling into a left allemande or chain the ladies
5. Twirling when doing the right and left grand
6. Back Lash (He suggested we callers either all teach it or drop it, and the membership present seemed to agree with him when he made the remark that he was against the back lash).
7. Constant twirling in the promenade.

Bob now demonstrated how the ladies on the end of the line of four got to that position when two couples were circling four and one of the gents broke to a line of four. First he had the lady back up to a line of four, which seemed very awkward, then he had the lady turn under the gents arm and she moved to the end of the line in a flowing movement.

Another reminder on all eight chain thru, that at the end of the chain across the floor there is always a courtesy turn before starting to chain back. Know what I mean?

Here is something that we use a lot in class work that I think may benefit you a lot. How many of you have been in squares where the call is to pick up your corner and promenade? We have trouble with this, and this is the way we get out of trouble. Assuming that the gent has just turned his partner with a left hand swing and is going to his corner to take her in a promenade. If the gents, after he turns his partner with a left, will put his back to the center of the set, his corner is on his right, •*f he is facing out. All he has to do is to give his right hand to the corner and twirl her under to a promenade position. Easy, isn't it? Bob still had his square on the floor demonstrating. Bob pointed out that when the gent went to his corner without going to the center first; facing out, and he twirled the girl to a promenade position, neither the gent or the girl was in position to promenade.

Next came the proper hand hold for the forearm swing. Bob stressed the point for the gents to keep their thumbs out of the ladies inside part of their arms. He said that the proper position for the thumb was alongside the side of the hand and the thumb pointing toward the index finger. At this time Bob thanked his square of dancers and they went back to their chairs.

I would like to remind you that we have three "C's". Which most of us know are in our Callers Guide or Code. Courtesy, Consideration and Comfort. These are good steps; but there is something else I would like to remind each of you callers. That is the "Correct Instruction we give our dancers and the way of styling is another way of adding a part to the three "C's". Something else that is not completely apart from styling is to count the steps for each figure when

instructing beginner dancers. For example, right and left thru needs eight counts of music to do it right, not five or six etc.

At this point Bob had everybody get their partner on the floor and in circles of four around the floor he demonstrated the required steps needed to execute figures, such as pass thru, right and left thru, etc.

Note- This write-up of Bob Yan Antwerp's lecture is an interpretation of a taped recording made by Gunner Cosgrove and could not take the place of his actual lecture.