

**C**ommunity  
**D**ance  
**P**rogram



**Journal**

A publication of

**The CDP Committee  
of  
CALLERLAB**

The International Association  
of  
Square Dance Callers

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**Beginner Party Leader's  
Workshop At Las Vegas  
A Success**

The Community Dance Program Committee sponsored an eight hour seminar for leaders of beginner parties ahead of the recent Las Vegas CALLERLAB Convention. We started the seminar on Saturday afternoon and continued Sunday morning. Over 20 leaders and spouses/partners attended. Staff members included Bob Brundage, Calvin Campbell, Gerry Hardy, Les Henkel, Bob Riggs, and Tom Sellner,

All staff members contributed their time free of charge. Any profit will be

donated to the CALLERLAB Foundation. \$150 was donated during the convention to take advantage of a matching funds offer made during the convention. Any other funds left will be donated once all the hotel and miscellaneous expenses have been paid.

A similar seminar will be held on the Saturday and Sunday prior to the 2001 CALLERLAB Convention in St Louis. Discussion topics will be determined by the knowledge level of the enrolled participants as was done this year. However, all leaders are encouraged to recruit people who have little or no experience in leading beginner parties.

**CDP & Traditional/Contra  
Committee Host Sunday  
Dance.**

The Sunday afternoon introductory dance for this year's CALLERLAB Convention was hosted by both the CDP and the Contra/Traditional Committee. Yona Chock and Bob Riggs acted as MCs. Over 100 callers and spouses enjoyed two hours of dancing from 3-5 PM. The session was audio taped

The usual Tuesday evening Contra/Traditional Dance was canceled in order to provide a free evening to explore Las Vegas.

**CDP Committee Meeting**

The CDP Committee meeting was held on Monday afternoon April 17th. 10-12 members were in attendance. The seminar was discussed and members present voted to ask for permission to hold a similar seminar ahead of the St. Louis convention. The Executive Committee was contacted and permission was granted.

The committee discussed the desirability of video taping a selection of dances suitable for beginner parties. The video tapes would then be made available to education and recreation departments. Stew Schacklette volunteered that he knew of a facility in Kentucky that could probably be used for the taping. The matter was referred to the CDP Committee Chair and Vice Chair for development of a plan to be presented to the EC.

**CDP Journal Changes**

Starting with this issue of the CDP Journal, the format will be expanding in several new directions. Two years ago the CDP Committee was assigned the responsibility for the management and training of the leaders of beginner dances. Part of that responsibility will include the publication of dances suitable for beginner parties in the CDP Journal. If anyone has dances that would fit this category, please send them to the editor of the CDP Journal.

The Executive Committee of CALLERLAB has requested that the CDP Journal be the publication point for Traditional and Contra Dances that formerly were published as a separate newsletter. Submissions for this portion of the CDP Journal should be sent to Yona Chock, Contra/Traditional Committee chairperson.

**Remembering  
Don Armstrong**

**by Cal Campbell**

Don Armstrong died on February 27th of pancreatic cancer. He was in his eighties when he died and was still active in leading dances and giving dance seminars.

I first met Don 38 years ago. I was a young caller just graduated from college and Judy and I had been invited to the Lloyd Shaw Fellowship. Don was there presenting very interesting dances called contra dances.

The first thing we noticed about him was the concise way he presented each dance. We learned the routines almost without thinking about them. The second thing we noticed was the choice of music. Each piece of music seemed to fit the dance movements exactly.

Don took Judy and me under his wing and made sure we were introduced to all the famous people there. He made us feel welcome and appreciated in spite of the fact that we felt clumsy and uncomfortable in the presence of so much knowledge and experience in the field of dancing.

Over the next many years Don did the same for many other young leaders who came to the Lloyd Shaw Fellowship. He taught us how to teach. He showed us, by example, how to lead people in the art of dancing. He shared his knowledge freely and completely.

Don's career in dancing was somewhat different than many of us in MWSDing experienced. He started out as a square dance caller and a musician playing drums in his own square dance band. He could call excellent patten. He recorded many records for the Lloyd Shaw Foundation. Don was one of the founding members of CALLER-LAB and remained in the organization throughout his life.

Don had a deep love for contra dancing and international folk dancing. He traveled all over the world to lead dances and participate on the staffs of dance weeks and weekends. Many places he would be leading whole floors of dancers that did not understand one word of English.

Don was the first president of the Lloyd Shaw Foundation and spent many years on the governing board of the LSF. He headed the Recording Division of the LSF and was largely responsible for the excellent collection of recorded music that the LSF has today.

Don was a skilled writer. He authored many contra dances, several books, and numerous articles in magazines. His book named Contra Dancing is still the best reference on the subject that is available today.

There were many facets to Don's life beside dancing. He owned and

operated a radio station in Florida. He was a test pilot for many years. He wrote a book named, "I Flew Them First," which is well worth reading. He was one of the best fly fishermen I ever met.

He will be missed.

### **Square Dancing K-3**

Occasionally elementary schools will request local callers and/or square dance clubs to present a program for the school children. Often these schools ask the caller to have the children dance for part of the program. As a caller, what should you do?

First you need to understand that calling for adults and leading dances for children require two completely different approaches. Particularly if the age grouping of the children are below the fourth grade.

To put it bluntly, you should not even consider trying to put these children into squares of eight or pair them up as boy/girl partners. The best you can hope for is to get them into circles of varying numbers with someone, anyone, as a partner. It works best if you can have an adult or older child in each circle.

Your biggest problem will most likely be control. Most children of this age will listen well, but they are more used to hearing their teacher than listening to you. They do respond very well to demonstrations and playing roles.

Now, what do you do to make it seem like square dancing? You can use square dance hoedown music. You can give the instructions with the typical patten cadence. Other than for those two touch points you should probably deviate greatly from what are now recognized as Modern Western Square Dance practices.

What basics should you use? Since you are looking for maximum control,

things that have everyone moving together help. Circle left and circle right are great. Forward and back work moderately well. Promenade single file walking behind each other in a circle will often work. Don't be worried if some circles go the wrong way. Just have everyone turn around and go the other way.

Most of the children will choose someone of the same sex as a partner. This means you need to find a different way to give instructions to individuals in a pair. One of my favorite tricks is have each pair choose someone to be a rabbit and someone to be a squirrel. Once they've chosen their role, we start out playing role games by having all the rabbits or all of the squirrels walk around (Promenade) inside their circle. The rabbits make bunny ears with their hands. The squirrels hold their hands in front of them like they are sitting up holding a nut.

This kills time and gets everyone used to their role. The next step will be to have rabbits or the squirrels circle or star or go forward and back Don't worry about which direction they go. Just get everyone back to their partner for a bow. Just using these simple ideas, you will find that you have occupied most of a record in calling something that, to them, feels like square dancing. The most important thing is they've had fun.

If you happen to end up with more time, you next might want to do something like thread the needle. In this dance you don't even need to have everyone paired with a partner. One pair breaks the circle so there is a pointer on one end. Have a lead child, on one end, point with his/her finger. On the other end there is the eye of the needle which is made by an arch between the last two people in the chain. The needle goes through the eye and pulls everyone through. Then a new person becomes the point of the needle.