



## **NEW CALLERS**

### **By Daryl Clendenin**

In order to increase our number of dancers we need to increase the number of callers that we have teaching people to dance. We need lots of enthusiastic new “caller/dance teachers” on the microphone willing to give their time and energy to replenish our dancer population.

If your area is like most, it used to host at least half-again as many clubs as it does now. And probably, each of those clubs had its own caller/dance teacher. With the actual populations of towns and cities increasing around the country, why is it that our dancer population continues to drop? I believe it’s due to a shortage of these caller/dance teachers.

Why do we have this shortage? We don’t have any actual statistics to prove it, but for those of us who were there, you’ll remember the drop began in the early nineties.

The decline is due to a variety of reasons, but the biggest hit can probably be traced back to at least one major change for callers in our activity. That change was BMI/ASCAP licenses (1991). Everything seemed to be going along very nicely. Then our average caller was hit with the added expense of a license. It wasn’t a matter of a couple of dollars a dance; it was a lump sum that many weren’t willing to add to what it was already costing them to be a caller. Many of our callers decided to quit rather than buy the license. Unfortunately, these callers (in too many cases) were the ones teaching new dancers in their areas and keeping the clubs alive and active. Even more unfortunately, they quit without securing or training their replacements. The teachers left, the clubs died, and the activity continues to suffer. Add to this the number of callers who retire, move out of an area, or pass on, and the situation gets worse. Clubs without callers don’t usually last very long.

Within every area we need competent teachers of callers (Caller Coaches). We need callers that are willing to give of themselves and their hard-earned knowledge to get more folks started in calling. It’s not necessary to be an “Accredited” Caller Coach to help mentor a new caller. **YOU CAN DO IT!**

Don’t fall prey to the excuses that offer no solution. If you have a club, **YOU CAN DO IT!** Look for and find within your groups, those individuals that might be able to fill the need and lead them into calling and teaching. Without replenishing our caller/teacher base, we have no hope of ever restoring growth within the activity. **Do it now!**