

The Call Sheet

Professional Journal of the Gay Callers Association

March 2009

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*Have you ever watched me on stage while I am calling?
Square dancing has brought some significant changes to me
personally. I was not a "touchy" person before I started square
dancing, and now I can hardly keep my hands off people!*

-- Bill Eyler, from his 1990 interview in "Ten Years IAGSDC: A
Collection of Pages From Our Memory Book" (page 148)

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Acknowledgments



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For more information about the All Join Hands Foundation, or to learn how you can make a donation and/or add a standard codicil to your will, please visit their website at <http://www.alljoinhands.org>



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Editorial: The Internet Killed Dancing

Allan Hurst – newsletter@gaycallers.org

I'm amused to find myself writing this particular editorial, because I'm just about the most internet-connected person I know.

The internet has brought us the power of organized knowledge; nearly anything you desire to know can now be found online.

There is a cost. The nature of LGBT society is rapidly changing because of the internet, and people are staying home in droves.

This has affected nearly every LGBT group I know of here in the San Francisco Bay Area

LGBT groups from bowling leagues to choruses to bridge clubs are reporting problems with recruiting and retaining members.

In some ways, because we're dependent upon groups of 8 (plus a caller), our dance clubs have been hit harder by the "internet revolution" than other LGBT organizations.

There have always been multiple aspects to gay square dancing: great exercise, the opportunity for social contact, the joy of dropping into rapport with seven other people and – let's be blunt here – the cruising opportunities.

I see nothing wrong with flirting and cruising at square dance events, myself. It beats trying to do the same in a noisy, crowded, smoky bar full of obnoxious drunk people.

But LGBT square dance clubs aren't competing against bars any more, *they're competing against the internet.*

What to do? Use the internet to make it easier for your club's members to participate!

Create and/or refresh your club's website. It's not hard. You can build a free website on Google without using any technical skill. Check

out the [temporary] website for Temple Squares, which was built in 25 minutes.

On your website, *make it easy* to do *all* of these things *online*:

- Apply for or renew membership.
- Enroll in classes.
- Register for your fly-in.
- Accept credit cards and debit payments (look at PayPal, Google Checkout, etc.).
- Find your dance location(s).
- Find email, phone, and snail mail contact information for your club's officers.
- View your dance calendar.
- Download frequently used club forms (e.g., dance setup checklists, sign-in sheets, etc.).
- View PDF versions of current and past club newsletters.
- View photos of happy, smiling dancers!



If you're feeling overwhelmed by now, keep in mind that some of these capabilities are already in place on the IAGSDC website, and are available for member clubs' use.

In addition to the above, although it sounds terribly "old-school", setting up a phone tree to call people (on their cell phones) can also be a highly effective way to encourage club participation *in conjunction* with the online capabilities listed here.



In This Issue

Due to the timing of DC Diamond Circulate, this is our pre-Convention issue, meaning you may find a few more GCA and IAGSDC related items than usual .

- I was (pleasantly) surprised at both quantity and quality of items received this month for the **GCA Gossip File**, after sending out an email “request” two or three times.
- I was blown away by **John Oldfield's** last **Prez Sez** column. Instead of a typical “goodbye” note, he worked up a *huge* article detailing, in their own words, the **Mentoring** experiences of several GCA professionals, including (sorted by last name) **Sandie Bryant, Barry Clasper, Bill Eyler, Betsy Gotta, Kris Jensen, Ett McAtee, and Anne Uebelacker.**

I've broken out this material by caller, each “-article” covering a different aspect of Mentoring. This may well be the most valuable Call Sheet issue we've yet published.

- **Rich Reel** had so much news for the Gossip File that I decided it would be more appropriate to republish what I felt were the GCA-relevant portions as **A Letter From Rich Reel.**
- **Ett McAtee** loves profiling people, and I admit I was a bit dubious when she asked to profile me. However, Ett is mildly (!) persistent, and I eventually acquiesced. **Profile: Allan Hurst** is the result.

- Finally, to honor DC Diamond Circulate's “spy” theme, **Nick Martellacci** talks about **Leading A Double Life.**

Because the mentoring articles took up more space than anticipated, I've moved several promised articles to the next issue.



2009 GCA Caller School

As of press time, student spots were still available in in our Caller School being held April 2-6, 2009 at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel in Washington, DC!

This year, our caller coaches are Anne Uebelacker and Todd Felleggy. If registrations warrant, a third coach may be added.

Due to the generosity of All Join Hands, tuition for GCA Caller School is just \$75!

Details on 2009 GCA Caller School can be found in the brochure appended to this issue of The Call Sheet.



The Gossip File

Barry Clasper and **Bill Eyler** will both receive a 25-year calling certificate at the CALLERLAB Convention this year, just before DC Diamond Circulate. (Barry and **Pam Clasper** will also both receive ten-year medallions at DCDC.)



Rich Reel continues to hold Newer Caller Workshops in the Bay Area, designed to give dancers their very first taste of calling. Many of these students continue on to GCA Caller School. Good job, Rich!



Bill Eyler and **Danny Lee** can tell you that the term “simple remodel” is a self-canceling phrase. They’ve just ~~survived~~ completed a *five month* redo of their now-even-lovelier home in Albuquerque, NM. This is just Phase II, but Bill predicts that he and Danny will be ready for house guests again sometime in early 2017. Bill was also recently elected President of the Central NM District Callers Association!



The **DC Diamond Circulate 2009 IAGSDC Convention Committee** has just thrown down a good-natured gauntlet to all future conventions with the announcement that for the first time ever, **all of the staff callers for DCDC 2009 are GCA members!**

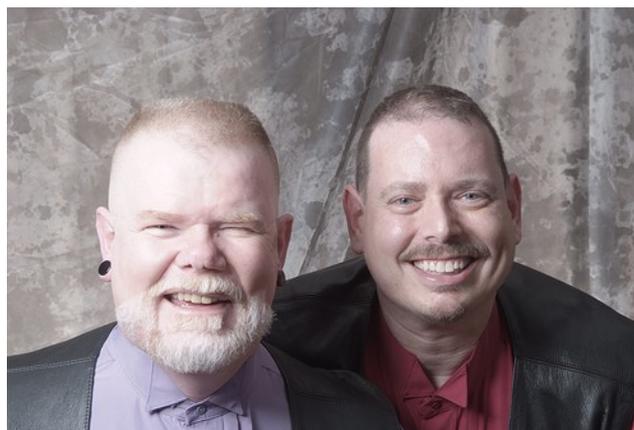


Abe Feldman filled in as class caller for the DC Lambda Squares mainstream class on February 9th, on one day’s notice, and performed superbly. He did it all, reviewing calls from the previous two weeks for the students, including a new class member, teaching new calls, and even performing

singing calls. Abe attended his first GCA Caller School in 2007, and this was his first full night of calling!



Allan Hurst and **Randy Hensley** recently visited Vancouver, BC to celebrate the fifth anniversary of their wedding at the 2003 Squares Across The Border Fly-In.



Brian Jarvis changed jobs in January, to a position as the only East Coast employee of a West Coast firm (Rearden Commerce).

He’s already made one trip out to the San Francisco Bay Area to visit his new employer, and pronounces the dim sum restaurants and chocolate shops to be of an acceptable quality.



Temple Squares in Salt Lake City finished reviewing their IAGSDC bylaws, which will be submitted just prior to Convention in April. If all goes well, we should be seeing a Temple Squares contingent at DC Diamond Circulate in Washington, DC!

continued on next page

“The Gossip File”, continued

Howard Richman writes: “My next show is a musical parody of *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*. In addition to handling writing, directing, choreography, scenery and lighting, I play Nearly Headless Nick[ie], a pre-op transexual missing one particular part.” More details on this “never-for-profit” experimental theatre company and their shows can be found at:

<http://www.cateringcowboy.com/HC1.html>



Chris Phelan recently called a unique demo tip for **Delmarvalous Squares**, during a raucous evening at Bingo-A-Go-Go in Rehoboth Beach, DE, in front of an audience of about 300 bingo players and half a dozen big drag queens (including Miss Gay Delaware). The seven able dancers (and one extremely generous neophyte who had learned his first square dance calls only two hours earlier!) showed off the fun of square dancing, earning more than a couple of inquiries about taking the next class!



Rich Reel reports that the San Francisco Bay Area’s newest club, the **Redwood Rainbows**, has reported having 60 new students! The club, called by the able Steve Minkin, is advertised as “Lesbian, Gay & Straight”.

Rich feels that this is a harbinger of the gay and straight square dance communities banding together, and writes: “I think the theme in general for this past year is that gay square dancing attendance is level or up only because straight square dancers have discovered us. I believe if we relied only on gay and lesbian dancers, all area clubs would be down. But we have straight dancers, they love us and they are keeping

the square dance spirit very much alive. (We asked for acceptance – well, we’ve got it!) I expect more and more straight dancers to attend our Conventions as well.”

[Editor’s Note: Rich actually had quite a bit more than that to report, which you’ll find in the article, “A Letter From Rich Reel.”]



Ett McAtee lost 60 pounds this year for, as she puts it, “all the right reasons.” You go, girl!



Jill Sybalsky is now President of the Santa Clara Valley Callers Association for 2009.

Jill also reports that she’s still calling despite her tracheotomy, and believes that she may be the only trach’d square dance caller.

[Editor’s Note: I’m working with Jill on an article for a future Call Sheet issue regarding her experiences with calling and tracheotomy.]



Anne Uebelacker receives a previously unidentified photo from JP Slater at the **Squares Across the Border 2008** fly-in. There’s a strong possibility that a larger version of the photo may show up in a future Call Sheet.



Prez Sez: Paying It Forward

John Oldfield – xxx@xxxxxxxx.xxx

Editor's Note: This is John's last column as GCA President.

When John told me he was at a loss for what to write in his last "Prez Sez", I suggested he tackle something about which he's passionate.

John chose to discuss mentoring newer callers. However, instead of writing a single short article, he delivered to me a massive document containing the experiences of half a dozen well known professional callers!

I've taken the liberty of splitting up John's mega-article into several smaller articles, each bringing forward the experiences of a different caller, all of whom fortuitously discussed different aspects of the same subject. The article you're about to read is both the introduction and summary to all of the other "Mentoring" articles in this issue.

Having worked the past two years with John and watched first-hand his passion for excellence in caller education, I think this column is the perfect capstone to his GCA Presidential term. Please join me in thanking him for a wild but incredibly fun ride during his term! – Allan



Most callers I know have been assisted in some way to develop their skills. It is often the current club caller or sometimes another caller who's calling you have enjoyed. Someone who is willing to work with you. This is sometimes, but not always a formal arrangement and a mentor is not always one person. I have had, and hopefully will continue to have, wonderful people to turn to with questions and to learn style, presentation and all of the things that go into putting on a good show.

At the other end of the topic is the new caller. I remember starting out. I was nervous, I wasn't very good. I remember being helped along by the club caller, initially and then others along the way. (I also remember the patience of my club members who let me up in front of them and tried not to show the pain I was causing!)

I have asked several GCA callers to submit a few recollections of being mentored and on their mentoring.

I was mentored by Lin Jarvis when I was starting out. He gave me the opportunity to do a singing call once in a while, read my choreography, and offered insight into what it meant to be a caller, the responsibilities and to suggest good business practices (like: "Don't call for free, they think you're not any good.").

After Lin passed away I was already the 'Club Caller' for Chi Town. Sandra Bryant stepped up and helped me to mature. Most times she simply made herself available to my questions: "Sandie, I have triple boxes with three people in the outer boxes and two in the center box. What do I do?" Sometimes she called my bluff and 'encouraged' me to grow up. You think her *calling* is tough?

I have definitely taken an interest in every caller in the club. When Lin passed away, I was the

Continued on next page.

“Prez Sez: Paying It Forward”, continued.

only current club caller and, as such, took on the entire teaching program for the following year. I vowed that the club would never have to depend on a single caller again. Sandie was the first to step up. She has been followed by Michael Maltenfort, Larry Tradup and Arlene Kaspik.

Sometimes we may think that by encouraging new callers we're creating our own competition. We are. We are creating the competition that will force us to be as good as we can possibly be. What about our secret bag of tricks? I say share them. You don't have to publish them on your website, but if someone wants to know how you did something, teach them.

A while ago I wrote an article about the singing call and was talking about a specific pattern I use when the floor gets behind. It's a simple pattern that has a lot of disposable parts of varying lengths that can be omitted to get the floor back on track.

The kernel of this idea was from back in my very early days, when I was memorizing entire singing calls directly from the record. The floor was getting a little behind and Lin quietly stepped up next to me and whispered, “Leave out the dosado.” A small tip, but one that eventually has helped me to develop a more robust way to get a floor back in time.

So don't hesitate to help and don't shrink from the competition; instead become one of the 'legendary callers'...and watch out as these newcomers challenge you to be better!

Go read the other callers' stories, and remember this:

Clearly there is a common thread here. When you love something, strive to do it as well as you are able, and share the experience with others. Teach them as much as you can, and be prepared yourself to learn new tricks to stay ahead! New callers need your time and experience. They need your patience. They need your commitment to Square Dancing as an example for their future (and yours too!).



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Mentoring: Stages of Development

Sandie Bryant – xxxxxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxx.xxx

I started dancing at 8 in a youth group taught by Swersie Norris. Many years later (the group had broken up because of educational pursuits) I returned to the activity and climbed the dance level ladder very quickly.

Within a short period of time, I decided I wanted to learn to call, so Swersie and I started out on a journey to teach me to call.

I was in the process of learning C3 (there was no C3A and C3B at that time), and being a fairly decent dancer I knew my definitions well (the first thing she insisted). She told me I not only needed to know definitions but where you have to be to call something and what the ending result was. For me, all of that was easy.

The hard part came after I picked up the mic. Swersie got a group of dancers together in the basement who were weak at Plus. They needed help and I needed people to call to, so it was a match made in hell.

I say that because I didn't know at the time that I had three problems to overcome.

Problem #1: Standard Position.

I didn't know what "standard position" meant, so I couldn't understand why I'd get dancers in a column and call *Coordinate* and they would do it and 3 calls later I would get the same people back in a column and call the same call and they would break down. So I had to go back and learn the standard position for each call. *[Editor's Note: CALLERLAB now publishes a highly-recommended book of Standard Applications for Mainstream and Plus.]*

Because our group had an excess of women, I frequently called to squares containing same-sex couples. I didn't know it at the time, but this made the learning process more difficult than it had to be. While I could move the dancers around, I had no idea what "standard" applications or positions meant.

Problem #2: Keeping Track.

Swersie didn't believe in "pennies" so I had to remember who was the man and who they were dancing with and who was whose corner.

I never had problems with timing. I could call and keep dancers moving but Swersie *always* knew when I DIDN'T HAVE A CLUE to who was dancing with whom because I always started calling a lot of circulates. Whenever I tried that, Swersie said, "She's lost again!"

Problem #3: Getting Out

Then it was time to learn "get outs" By now I was dancing C3, so I could see *C3 get outs* but I



Continued on next page.

"Stages of Development", continued.

couldn't see the *easy* stuff for anything. The harder I tried the higher the level of get out I whispered to her. She would get so frustrated with me.

The Hardest Thing

But the hardest thing I ever had to do was teach beginners. Swersie made me teach a class with her before she would let me go out and call. Each week, she would hand me the mic and tell me to teach something. I *never* knew ahead of time what it was going to be.

The hardest call I ever had to teach was *Courtesy Turn* I began to teach *Right and Left Thru* and *she took the mic away from me* and told the dancers to excuse us for a minute. Then she turned to me and said "That is NOT what I said." She handed the mic back and said in a Swersie voice, "*Courtesy Turn*". So there I am, standing in front of 6 squares of people trying to figure out which hand the "boy" puts out and which hand he puts around the "girl's" waist and which way they turn.

Because I danced both positions and there was a call on the C3 list called *Left and Right Thru* which had the other people doing the other thing and the turn going the other way and all of these things felt comfortable to me, I had a very hard time.

The first dance I did in public was a snap. As a matter of fact, I was bored stiff. They were a standard group with matching clothes. *Everything* had to be standard position and all I had to remember were their outfits, e.g., "the green people are the yellow people's corner"

Every caller goes through stages. I think that mentoring depends on *when* you get to a potential caller.

When I first spent time with John [Oldfield] he was already calling, and didn't need me to train him; he just needed help. With a person like John, I prefer an open door policy. I think when we started he was at a stage where - if you didn't know what you needed, you at least knew what you were lacking and what you wanted.

However, Michael [Maltenfort], Larry [Tradup] and even Arlene [Kaspik] needed more training. They were new and needed *everything*. They were at the "Fear Stage": scared to pick up the mic, scared to make a mistake, scared they'll forget who was who, scared the material wouldn't work...

I think a most important time is the "Find Yourself" stage. We've all been mentored by someone and we each have a little of that someone in our style. However, you *can't* be the person who taught you or the person you idolize. You have to find "YOU". This means you have to take all the training, the reading, the practice, the knowledge and mold it into *a style of your own*. There are no two callers exactly alike. We have similarities but also a multitude of differences. Ask yourself what it is you like about several callers and you'll come up with several different things.

Continued on next page.

“Stages of Development”, continued.

Then there was Allan [Hurst]. He was at the "Reinvent the Wheel" stage. That's when you write too hard to prove that you know what you are doing, but the dancers can't dance the material so they think *you* don't know what you are doing.

And of course, even after you conquer all these stages and more, there is still a ton of things that come into play: technique, timing, delivery, and music to name a few.

I don't think a caller *ever* stops learning. If you ever get to a point where you think you know it all - you need to hang up your microphone and get a new hobby/profession.

Things Swersie told me that I will never forget:

- Never think you know it all, because you never will. *Every* dance you call or attend, there is something to learn.
- Look for new ways to teach something. Things that work for one group don't necessarily work for others.
- Learn from other callers but be yourself. You will see things other callers do - some good, some bad – and *know the difference*. Incorporate the good in your calling and remember not to repeat the bad.
- Never bring your problems to the dance. These people are paying you to make them have a good time! Make it so.
- Smile. It is contagious.
- And the hardest.....Never leave a dance in a way that these people will not ask you back.

I can honestly say that I have been asked to return to every engagement I have ever done. *That* is how I know that I have been successful for the past 33 years.

With all of that said, I wanted to *strangle* Swersie. She made me mad but *she made me a caller*. And every time I call a dance, I know that she is looking down on me from heaven and smiling.



Mentoring: Roles

Barry Clasper – xxxxxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxx.xxx



It seems to me that in anybody's development as a caller you will find people playing three primary roles: teacher, mentor, and role model.

Teachers typically work with us because we pay them to, usually in the context of a caller's school. They work in a structured environment to transfer technical knowledge, critique performance, and recommend things to practice. I believe the most valuable thing teachers do is force us to try things we are not comfortable with and help us make friends with them. The relationship is intense, short-term, and relatively impersonal.

Mentors typically work with us because they believe we have potential. They donate their time and attention over a long term. They usually are not as directly involved in the learning experience as a teacher might be - rather they provide guidance, pointers to helpful material, suggestions for areas to concentrate on, and suitable opportunities to practice calling to actual dancers. The relationship is personal, long-term, and collaborative.

Role models do not work directly with us at all. They are people who do things we would like to emulate (which is not the same thing as "imitate"). There does not necessarily need to be any kind of personal relationship, but typically a role model is more effective if you know them well enough to ask questions and pick their brain.

Of course, there are a lot of gray areas around these characterizations. Many of the individuals who influence us may fall in somewhere between these pigeonholes. I know I can point to individuals who have played (still do, actually) all three of these roles for me.

When I started calling, I was very fortunate to have a variety of people take an interest in me. One great advantage I had when I started was that I had been a challenge dancer for a number of years. Because the challenge community is relatively small, challenge dancers tend to know the callers on a more personal basis. This meant that I could count quite a few nationally known challenge callers among the people willing to talk to me about calling issues. So, I had some very high-quality role models.

The person who was my primary mentor was Anne Uebelacker, who lived near Toronto at the time and called for two clubs that we danced at. She gave me the opportunity to call a guest tip every week for her C2 club. She would dance with Pam for my tip and then afterwards she would take me out in the hall for "the talk".

I'd just like to say to all of you who have benefited from Anne's counsel at GCA schools that you can thank me for breaking her in! Anne was also my first formal teacher, since the first school I went to was one she and Joe ran at the "treehouse" in Peterborough.

Continued on next page.

“Roles”, continued.

Another person who figured prominently in my development was a local caller named Leo Ducharme, who I'm startled to realize has been dead for almost 20 years now. Leo gave me a lot of encouragement and my first opportunities to call entire dances. One of my most vivid memories is the first tip I ever intentionally sight-called (other than basement workshop stuff), which was at Leo's C1 club.

We tend to think of the mentor/protege relationship as one associated with the start of a career, but mentors can appear to assist with virtually any stage of development. There is a saying that when the apprentice is ready, the master will appear. That has certainly been true for me. For example, as I work towards becoming a caller coach, a number of individuals have materialized (Anne U again, and Mike Jacobs chief among them).

An effective mentor/protege relationship is very personal and can only grow out of friendship. You can't just send an email to somebody you admire and ask them to be your mentor. So it is important to get to know those people whose input you feel you would find valuable. Talk to them at caller's school, buy them a drink at convention, have a coffee after the dance. Not everyone is receptive to the notion of being a mentor, so it's not a good idea to make a pest of yourself if your target seems unreceptive, but you will be surprised at how many will be happy to talk to you.



Mentoring: Sharing the Interest

Bill Eyer – xxxxxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxx.xxx

Although Don Durham (Wilde Bunch club founder) encouraged me in 1984 to teach a Mainstream class, it was local callers Paul Infanti and Jack Murray who really started me on the path by being mentors. Paul led a 6-week local caller school in 1985 I attended, then sponsored me coming into the local callers' association and then CALLERLAB.

Jack always had me call all or part of a tip at the Duke City Singles every Friday I was there. Since there was no GCA in those days, I was really only working with non-gay callers early on to hone my craft.

Kris Jensen showed the first real interest from the Wilde Bunch in calling about 1990; until then I was the only caller for all the programs of the Wilde Bunch and it was starting to wear me down.

I was overjoyed to work with Kris for nearly three years--her own enthusiasm for learning both kept me on my toes and kept me interested in what I was doing. We had the opportunity nearly every week to spend our one-hour drive times to Santa Fe for the High Desert Stars doing calling games, listening to tapes, talking about calling.

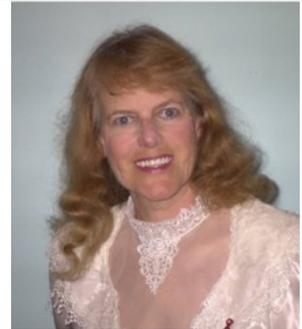
In 1992, I had the opportunity to run a three day caller school in Denver, with nine very inspired and inspiring dancers from the Rocky Mountain Rainbeaus. I've mentored a couple of other callers locally, including Tim McNamara, who later went on to coordinate the GCA school for several years.

I'm always encouraging people to stick their toes in the deep pool of knowledge about the arts and crafts of being a square dance caller. It's very rewarding to see "my babies" all growed up!



Mentoring: Family Ties

Betsy Gotta – xxxxxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxx.xxx

***I understand you're not the first caller in your family?***

My dad started calling in the late 1950's. His name was Art Seele. At that time there were no programs and square dancing was changing from "traditional" pattern dances to the more free form choreography that we use today.

He called for a club on the Rutgers University campus, the Rutgers Promenaders. During his career, he called for Rutgers, our teen club, other clubs, and square dance party nights (Beginner dances). He called until he died in 1985.

When did you go to your first callers' school?

I was 11 when I went to the callers' school which was a part of a dance week that my parents and I attended for many years. Every caller who attended the school had to call a dance at the Saturday night party. I called a traditional dance named "Chase the Rabbit". Even though I was successful, I left the dance and sat outside and cried for about half an hour. I decided at that time that I was too shy to continue calling.

Oh, no! Obviously you changed your mind.

At the National Square Dance Convention in 1962, there was a girl calling in the Youth hall who had rather a smug attitude about being a caller. I said to my partner (a cute boy that I wanted to impress), "I could do that."

When we went home, I told my dad that I wanted to try calling again. At the time, he was calling for a teen club, the Church Mice, and let me call there once a night. I did only singing calls for 2 or 3 years.

Later, when I graduated college, my dad gave me the first classes for the Rutgers Promenaders club. (Prior to that year, the club taught new dancers at dance nights just what they needed to dance. Choreography was much simpler.) The teaching experience helped my patter choreography immensely.

Did you have any challenges learning to call?

Part of what I had to work out on my own was how to break into . Back in the 1960's, callers used memory or modules to call patter. I had to work on developing my patterns. I did not really memorize well (too boring), so it took me a while to start calling patter.

Another thing I had to work out by myself was how to feel confident enough to call patter, or even a new singing call in public. I wanted to be perfect, and that made it hard to show

Continued on next page.

"Family Ties", continued.

something new. As sight calling developed, the teaching-callers used formulas keyed to male callers. I worked out how to manage dancers in my own way, so I do not always pick the number 1 man as my "primary person".

Did you encounter any difficulties in learning to call because of your gender?

I do not recall facing any challenges in getting mentored because I was female. I did have some challenges because I was young and people thought that I was not serious about calling.

Did you go to any other calling schools?

Early in my calling I attended a school run by Dick Jones and his wife Ardie, who was a vocal coach.

In 1980, I attended school with Lee Kopman and Bill Peters. All of the coaches helped me by pushing me beyond my comfort zone.

In 1983, I attended a school for those callers who wanted to learn about caller coaching. The entire staff was very encouraging. The staff I remember was John Kaltenthaler, Jim Mayo, Bill Peters, and Herb Egender...all of whom were founding members of CALLERLAB.

Have you mentored other callers?

I have personally mentored several callers, starting with my friend Dan Koft, who now has been calling for over 25 years. I am now a CALLERLAB Accredited Caller Coach, which involves written and oral tests. I have taught a callers' school with Tom Miller and a guest caller each year for the last 3 years and keep contact with the callers who have attended the school.



Mentoring: Passing the Baton

Kris Jensen – xxxxxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxx.xxx



Bill Eyer was the club caller for the Wilde Bunch and encouraged anyone in the club who expressed any interest in calling.

After my first fly-in (Albuquerque 1990), I told Bill that I would like to start in a year or two. He encouraged me to start right away. There was one other person who was interested in calling, and Bill did a few caller training sessions and provided time for both of us to call...first singing calls, then teaching calls.

Once I'd acquired experience from more formal training, Bill recommended me for various calling opportunities. My first regular club calling gig (at a senior center), I found through a friend of Bill's. Bill and I spent hours driving back and forth to Santa Fe, talking about calling and playing a lot of caller games. For example:

Bill: "Heads *Square Thru 4*"

Me: "8 chain thru formation, 0 (or normal) arrangement. *Touch 1/4*"

Bill : "Parallel ocean waves, boys looking in, girls looking out. *Centers trade*"

Me: "Parallel waves, girls together, boys together. *Split circulate*"

etc.

The object was for both of us to keep track of formation and arrangement (usually not where specific dancers are) for as long as possible.

This was a big help in learning what calls do to formation and arrangement and in learning to visualize calls. We'd also discuss danceability (flow, etc.) as we did the calls. We focused on Mainstream calls, but of course, we could have used any program.

If you're thinking about trying this with a friend, please note: When Bill and I did this, whoever was driving had to be a little careful to focus on the road and not on trying to "see" the call!

I also consider Anne Uebelacker a mentor, as do, I think, many GCA callers. She's been a coach at most GCA caller schools, so has been able to provide guidance to many of us once a year. Her ability to quickly assess what we need to work on is unmatched.

The Wilde Bunch currently has four members who are in various stages of learning to call. Both Bill and I are encouraging them and giving them time to call on club nights.

However, I think I need to go back to Anne for mentoring on how to mentor; I'm knowledgeable about the "science" side of calling, but I still feel uncomfortable critiquing the "artistic" side.



Mentoring: Influences

Ett McAtee – xxxxxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxx.xxx



When I think about mentoring, many thoughts and perspectives cross my mind. In the world of square dance calling I think mentoring means two things: being a great coach for a new caller, and providing professional examples of how to conduct one's self when calling.

I started calling in 1989, at the New York GCA Callers School. It was the first school held, and Joe and Anne Uebelacker and Harlan Kerr were the coaches. They were also my mentors, and taught me the very basics of how to get music on the turntable, how to resolve squares, and how to survive singing calls.

Being great mentors meant they helped me learn to do a job effectively and progress in my calling career. This role soon was passed to Doug Barnett, my beginner teacher at Chesapeake Squares. Doug gave his time and energy in not only teaching our group how to dance, but also teaching me how to call. I remember a specific time when I went to his house for a lesson on conducting a first nighter square dance. He provided materials, examples, and thoughts on how best to conduct the dance.

As I progressed in my calling, I was next influenced by Pete Diven, who provided many fine tips on the art of teaching others to dance. I conducted several classes while under Pete's wing, and treasure his input to this day.

As I progressed into calling the challenge levels, Mike Jacobs was my primary mentor. Being local to me in Maryland, I was able to soak up his skill in sight calling, providing variety in both vocabulary and concepts at the levels, and gain diplomatic skill in dealing with dancers who learn in all kinds of different ways. I came to realize that not everyone learns material in the same way, or the same way as I do, and Mike's mentoring provided many of those insights.

My experience in the GCA has always been influenced by Anne Uebelacker (again), John Oldfield, Kris Jensen, Bill Eyler, Howard Richman, Nick Martellacci, and the late Warren Jaquith. All of these folks provided many insights, and were and still are mentors in their own right. Every time I hear them call, I learn new things that I can incorporate into my own calling experience.

All in all, a good mentor might use a variety of approaches, including coaching, training, discussion, counseling, etc. All of these folks mentioned above provide numerous examples of good calling skills that I soak up to enhance my own calling experiences.



Mentoring: From The Other Side Of The Microphone

Anne Uebelacker – xxxxxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxx.xxx



I was fortunate enough to have a very good challenge dancer take an interest in my becoming a caller. My own local caller (male) didn't want to have anything to do with me and told me that *women should not be callers because it's a career for men only*.

Dave Johnstone was the mentor who got me started with my new hobby/career and taught me how to write choreo. Ross Howell was the first caller who helped me a great deal and thanks to him, I started sounding like a caller. The mixture of Dave's choreo skills and Ross's calling skills gave me the tools to become what I am today.

I have always felt that I needed to give back the knowledge and the experiences that I have encountered over the years with the new callers. Since I had been fortunate enough to have had so many good people share with me, I began working with callers and running caller schools at my home in Ennismore, Ontario.

After moving to British Columbia, I started working with a number of new "soon to be" callers within Squares Across The Border and I am still doing it today. Grant Ito shares the calling with me every week and it's so great to see him grow and develop into such a polished young caller. JP Slater and Bruce Macdonald are also working with me and improving every day thanks to all the hard work that they both put into it. We have a couple of callers – Len Christensen and Will Martin - who aren't currently actively calling , but wow, do they have incredible voices. It was fun to watch them develop both their calling voices and stage presence.

At the yearly caller school that is part of the IAGSDC Convention, I've had the good fortune to be on staff a number of times. I can't even begin to tell you how rewarding it is to share and give back to all the new people that think that calling might be for them. It's like a drug-free high for me. I remain amazed each year as I watch how students progress from Day One of the school until Day Three when they're like totally different people than the ones who came to the school with such trepidation.

It's my hope that I can share what knowledge I have with as many people as possible so that the next generation of callers will be ready to take over the helm for those of us who have been around for quite a number of years. Yes, we are getting older.....sigh!

My reward is going to the IAGSDC conventions and numerous other conventions and listening to all the new hopefuls calling in front of all their peers, knowing that just maybe I had a small part in helping them on the way to becoming whatever their dreams have in store for them.



A Letter From Rich Reel

Rich Reel – xxxxxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxx.xxx



Well the biggest news for me is my regular job. With the down economy and other changes (like our company being bought out), I've had a growing sense of insecurity, especially with 3 rounds of layoffs since October. What I've decided to do - and I recommend it to you - is invest in "skills". For me that is learning a modern microprocessor and the latest programming tools, but extends to other areas like learning 3D mechanical CAD software (my new year's resolution for 2009). I mention this because I see so many people glum about the economy sitting at home depressed rather than going out and actively investing in something that WILL pay off - your own skills. If you have skills – modern marketable skills - employers *are* looking for you.

I'm also working on my square dance calling skills. Not that I ever expect it to pay the bills, it is beginning to bring in sharply higher income this year. (Straight square dancing pays pretty well, at least around here. They appreciate their callers like I've never experienced before in my life.)

First Hoedown with Top Billing. I recently called my first hoedown - a straight newer dancer hoedown - with Jim Osborne.

My first-ever top-billed hoedown / Saturday dance (featuring "caller Rich Reel") will be in June at Diablo Dancers. That's after 10 years of calling and 5 years of 'regular' club calling. I have done tips, and even tips at hoedowns, but top billing for a major weekend dance, that's new for me this year!

Presenting at CALLERLAB. I'm going to CALLERLAB the Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday conflicting with GCA caller school just prior to Convention in Washington DC. New for me this year: presenting a session. After 10 years of being virtually completely ignored by the "in crowd" at CALLERLAB, I was invited to do a session "Steal-A-Peek" with Wade Driver and Charlie Robertson. Pretty cool.

[Editor's Note: I believe part of the reason for Rich's acceptance is the "changing of the guard" at CALLERLAB, resulting in much higher visibility for GCA callers and their friends...which wouldn't have happened without GCA members working consistently within CALLERLAB for ten years! Good job, Rich!]

Music Production. I've been doing more and more with music lately. Over the past 2 years I've assembled a very modern music production studio. I've done several projects with Bob Elling on his Riverboat label with some of my editing work already released as vinyl via the music services.

I've hired 3 different studios to record music for me and am working on a fourth. It's possible you could begin seeing new square dance music from me over the next couple years or so.

Music is one of the things about calling square dancing that excites me. One of the ways I

Continued on next page.

“Letter From Rich Reel”, continued.

keep up to date with all the new technologies in music is Sonic State, at:

<http://www.sonicstate.com>

For some cool new stuff, click on "NAMM videos" under "Video". Given the NAMM show was just last month, you'll be pretty up to date. (Warning: MAJOR time investment required!)

[Editor's Note: "NAMM" originally stood for "National Association of Music Merchants", and represents the international music industry. Check out <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NAMM> for more details.]

New Digital Editing Capabilities. Two biggies added this year include the ability to tempo correct audio recordings that vary in tempo throughout to a strict uniform tempo with amazing realism. (The music retains all feeling of being "live".) This makes otherwise unusable music fully danceable as well as allowing one to play along with MIDI to strict (quantized) tempo and have every beat match up.

The second is the ability to remove (or at least vastly reduce) prominent lead vocals and lead instruments from mono (or stereo) audio recordings with a laborious manual method using Adobe Audition, but shows promise of being automatable (sometime in the near future hopefully). I'm not the only one working on this - check out Melodyne at:

<http://www.celemony.com>

Getting Hard-to-find Records. My "Records Wanted" page, at:

http://www.all8.com/sd/calling/rec_want.htm

...has been amazingly successful. Various callers and dealers, etc. seem to come across this page and email me saying that they have one or more of these records and ask if I want them.

Sometimes I update this page and get email the very same week about records someone has. These are EXTREMELY RARE and way-old out-of-print records, yet by being patient, letting the world know what I want, and offering \$20 each (!) I CAN get the records I want. (I bet you can too!)

Useful Tool Gets Noticed. A tool I wrote, called the "BPM tapper":

<http://www.all8.com/tools/bpm.htm>

...continues to be very popular and drives a lot of traffic to my site (<http://www.all8.com>) from all over the world. Every so often I'll get a email in broken English showing appreciation. I also get suggestions which has resulted in some other 'tapper' utilities (follow links on above page).



Ett's Profiles: Allan Hurst

Ett McAtee – xxxxxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxx.xxx

In the continuing series of GCA luminaries, I thought it might be fun to get to know Allan Hurst, the current editor of The Call Sheet. Allan has a varied (some might say strange) background.

It all began in the Windy City of Chicago, where Allan was born in 1960. He grew up in the Knickerbocker Hotel, where his father was General Manager. Exposure to the hotel business gave Allan his impeccable senses of fairness and customer service, which have carried him far.

He believes that the notion of “gracious hosting” highly influenced him in developing his warm and encouraging on-mic persona. “*Never berate the dancers if they mess up; it’s the caller’s job to entertain them, not make them feel bad. Make light of the situation, and get them dancing again as quickly as possible.*”

Allan lives in Sunnyvale, California, in the heart of Silicon Valley. He shares his life with his husband Randy Hensley and three tortoises (“Beta”, a California Desert Tortoise, and “Anna” and “Mo”, a pair of Three-Toed American Box Turtles). He recruited Randy into dancing with the El Camino Reelers after they met, although they weren’t dating at the time.



The two officially married on November 29, 2003, in Vancouver, BC, as part of the Squares Across the Border annual fly-in. Every year when they visit Vancouver, BC, Allan still tears up when Revenue Canada processes them through on a single form, *just like any other married couple.*

Aside from square dancing, both Allan and Randy are members (this year, officers) of a non-profit leather club (Alameda County Leather Corps) which raises funds for local charities that can't obtain mainstream funding, such as Pets Are

Wonderful Support (PAWS), Lighthouse Community Center, and the Oakland Children's Hospital Infectious Disease Unit.

Allan didn't always have an easy time in life. Coming out as a gay teenager in the late 1970s caused him much stress. In 1980, he realized he could be his own person in San Francisco. Shortly thereafter, an involved series of odd events led to his inadvertent outing, causing his parents to give him a modest amount of money, pay for a moving company, and kick him out of the house for both his and their psychological comfort. (They reconciled three years later.)

Although Allan spent many years working with computers as a hobby, his professional life in the computer industry started when he moved to the San Francisco Bay Area. There, he founded and ran two of the oldest GLBT computer bulletin board systems (BBS), “CBBS/Lambda” and “HTG/Outreach.”

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“Allan Hurst”, continued.

An early online GLBT activist, he participated in CompuServe's Channel 33, ran a gay profiles group on The Source, and started and/or promoted a number of GLBT message conferences on FidoNet, including one for persons of transgender, who sadly had been kicked off of many gay and straight bulletin board systems.

Allan was politically active for many years with San Jose's High Tech Gays (“HTG”), a group dedicated to protecting the right of GLBT people to obtain federal security clearances without regard to their sexual orientation. HTG also successfully added sexual orientation to the list of non-discrimination criteria for many Silicon Valley companies. These policies later became law in both Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties.

Encouraged by other online users to put his talents to use in a high-technology career, Allan worked a full-time job days and went to school at night, eventually earning a Certificate of Business Data Processing from UC Berkeley Extension, then a much-coveted-at-the-time Certified Data Processor rating, and finally a Bachelor of Science in Information Technology from the University of San Francisco.

To this day he thoroughly enjoys his work as a computer network engineer. Much of Allan's technology career has centered around Novell software, although he now also works with Linux and Microsoft technologies, and is considered something of a DNS expert.

Allan is an owner/partner in a computer network consulting/sales firm called KIS (“Keep IT Simple”), based in Fremont, California. Allan troubleshoots problems with complex computer networks, and designs, upgrades, and migrates enterprise networks.

Recreationally, Allan loves reading. You won't be surprised to learn that science fiction, fantasy, and mystery stories dominate his reading time. He's not much of a TV watcher per se, with the exception of anything he can rent on DVD from Netflix. (He's currently going through *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*, and also enjoys *Doctor Who*, *Torchwood*, the *Sarah Jane Adventures*, and *House of Elliott*.) Allan loves to travel, and goes many places both for work and square dancing.

Square dancing, you say? YES! [*Editor's Note: Well, it had to come into the story at some point.*]

Allan started dancing with the El Camino Reelers in 1995, graduating and attending his first IAGSDC Convention in San Francisco in 1996. Ten years later, he was thrilled to receive his 10 Year Medallion at the 2006 Convention in Santa Clara, which was hosted by...the El Camino Reelers! Allan is a familiar face at many fly-ins across North America, and at one point earned the nickname of “Diva of the West Coast Fly-In Circuit”.

Allan is a member of several IAGSDC clubs, including the El Camino Reelers, Foggy City Dancers, Midnight Squares, Chi-Town Squares, and Vancouver, BC's Squares Across the Border. He joined each club for a specific reason. (Ask him why some time.)

Allan was intensely curious about how square dancing worked. He got his calling feet wet in 1997

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“Allan Hurst”, continued.

at the GCA Caller School in Las Vegas. (The first of many GCA schools he attended.) Allan now calls club nights, guest spots at fly-ins and conventions, Saturday night dances, and intro nights.

His current work as *Call Sheet* editor traces its origins back many years, to a period of time when he wrote a number of articles for dancers in the now-defunct *Square UP!* Magazine.

Allan later wrote up a one-page sheet with tips for IASGDC Convention newbies. As time passed, people from all over the IASDGC borrowed copies of the handout, and sent back new things for Allan to include. That one-pager grew into the 40+ page annually revised publication we now know as *The Guide to IAGSDC Convention!*

Both the articles from Square Up! and the *Guide* are available now at <http://www.danceinfo.org>

A few years ago, with much pleading and cajoling from both the then-editor, Kris Jensen and Bill Eyler, Allan agreed to put together the *Call Sheet*. Initially frustrated by what he perceived to be a negative public image of GCA callers, Allan wanted to raise professional standards in the GCA by morphing the *Call Sheet* into a professional journal format, electronically published and distributed each quarter as a PDF file.

He continues to edit the *Call Sheet* in a manner which he hopes will convey and reinforce a strong sense of community, peer education, and positive public exposure for GCA members. *The Call Sheet* today has become an essential part of the GCA's total image overhaul. It's not an exaggeration to say that the *Call Sheet* holds its own against any other high quality square dance publication, and even enjoys subscriptions from non-GCA callers and dancers!

Allan's biggest challenge in editing the *Call Sheet*? Coaxing articles out of callers and onto the printed page. As I can attest, Allan is pretty shameless about soliciting material, and will accept anything from a ready-to-publish paper to a series of emails which he'll edit into an article.

Recently, Allan turned what was a several-times-a-year chore (visiting Salt Lake City for business) into a pleasure as he assisted Ross Lopton and Justin Crawshaw in founding Utah's only GLBT square dance club, Temple Squares.

But doing all of these things *still* isn't enough for Allan. He's also the co-administrator (with Ed Ziegler) of Midnight Squares, and has become “embroiled” (his term) in no less than *three* major IAGSDC projects:

His current IAGSDC project is to digitize Luis Torres' book, *10 Years IAGSDC: A Collection of Pages from our Memory Book*.

Upon completion of the “10 Years Goes Digital Project”, Allan is launching an even bigger effort.

The “10/25 Project” will fill in the gaps of our oral history, picking up where Torres left off (at 10 years of IAGSDC history) and moving forward to the present day (25+ years).

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“Allan Hurst”, continued.

Once both of those projects are complete, Allan will start the “IAGSDC Archival Project,” where he'll work with Karl Jaeckel, the IAGSDC's Archivist, to organize and catalog all of the ephemeral materials in ~~Karl's basement~~ the unofficial IAGSDC archives. These materials will be digitized (or photographed) and posted online, with the physical items removed to a suitable facility to be conserved for future GBLT historians.

As I can attest from reading his Live Journal at the time, Allan kept up this list of projects and worked through a year of chemotherapy for Hepatitis C. The treatment started the week after Denver 2007 Convention, and finished the week before Cleveland 2008 Convention. He says, “for 48 weeks, I didn't leave the house between Friday evening and Monday morning, and was in a mental fog much of the time. It was miserable, but luckily it was still doable.”

Turning lemons into lemonade, during that enforced down-time he continued turning out issues of The Call Sheet. “Putting my life on hold literally for a year was frustrating as hell,” he says, “and I was determined not to let that time go entirely to waste. I think the Call Sheets created during that period are among my best work, possibly because I focused very tightly on the publication to escape some of unpleasanter aspects of chemotherapy.”

Unfortunately, the treatment was unsuccessful, but Allan isn't daunted. He plans to try again in a couple of years, when several new drugs targeting Hep C will hit the market. He's published an online journal of his chemo experiences, at <http://hepatitis-c-log.livejournal.com>, and says that he continues to receive wonderful notes from people who have just found the journal and are starting their own journey.

So, kudos to Allan, for all the work he has done to bring us one of the best publications around. We owe him a big debt of gratitude. If you see him at convention, or a local fly-in, give him a big yellow rock hug and a word of thanks for his professional and caring work on the GCA Call Sheet!



♪ ♪ ♪

Leading A Double Life

Nick Martellacci – xxxxxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxx.xxx

Most of my formal caller training took place at straight caller schools and was aimed at my learning to sight call. I learned my lessons well, becoming a fluent sight caller. A few years ago, I made the decision to switch to reading everything I call from Mainstream through C2. I'll spare you the grip-ping human drama behind this decision and get on to the heart of this art-icle - a discussion contrasting these two methods of calling.



Sight Calling versus Sight Resolution

When new callers hear "sight calling" what they're *really* worried about is resolving at sight. "OK. I've danced these folks around enough. How do I get them back to their corner?" “

Thanks to Ed Foote's sight calling video I can tell you that sight resolution is a simple formula that can be mastered in a few weeks of practice. Many callers get over this resolution hump by memorizing get out modules (groups of calls that take the dancers from a known starting point to a desired resolution point) . Tony Oxendine says he has memorized a few *hundred* get outs for Mainstream and Plus.

But resolving is only one small part of the larger whole of sight calling. The bigger issue is what to *do* with the dancers from the time they leave home up to the moment you decide to dance them into that allemande left, right and left grand or back home position.

Creative Choreography

Sight calling requires the mastery of the calls in the given program, formation management, timing, body flow, and showmanship. *Excellent* sight calling requires not only mastery, but also creativity in the use of the calls and formations available in any program. Note that “creative” doesn't necessarily mean choreography has to be “hard”. It just has to be *different*.

Here's an example: Say I have normal facing lines. Rather than work with the lines as lines, let's break them up using easy calls and move the dancers into another familiar formation. I'll call Centers *Box the Gnat* / Same 4 *Pass the Ocean* while the Ends *Star Thru*. This gives us a good old *normal* quarter tag position, from which all dancers should be able to handle a *Ping Pong Circulate*, *Chain Reaction*, or whatever is valid at that program level.

So what happened in these three calls?

- First, the Centers *Box the Gnat* broke the four couple facing lines into centers and ends working separately.
- Next, that Centers *Box the Gnat* also put the sashayed center couple into a "normal" position (standard application) from which I can safely direct them to *Pass the Ocean*.

Continued on next page.

“Leading A Double Life”, continued.

- Finally, while the centers *Pass the Ocean*, the ends get playing again with a *Star Thru*. *Star Thru*'s requirement of using hands gives a higher probability of success than *Slide Thru*, and has the added benefit of being a pattern I can call at a Basic student dance.

Breaking up the line into centers and ends created *tension*. The tension was relieved by the fact that (a) the other two calls were called from "normal" positions, and (b) the resulting formation was one with which dancers are familiar.

Last but not least, the sequence did not keep any group of dancers inactive for more than 2-3 calls, which is one of my pet peeves as a dancer. I detest standing around watching *other* people have all the fun.

Reading

Acquiring the discipline of reading gives me the freedom of doing all my sweating before I step up to the microphone. I can walk into a dance already knowing that I've got material with good flow and good variety in the levels of complexity. At a festival, I can go from the C1 hall to the Mainstream hall without any great mental gymnastics. All I've got to do is concentrate on clean delivery of the material in front of me, timing, and showmanship.

No Free Lunch

This doesn't mean I'm free to read *crappy* choreography. When I write choreo, I *still* must consider body flow and formation management. I can't just jot down whatever pops into my head, expecting the dancers to “get through it”. *I must use the same good judgment when writing as I need if sight calling to set up the dancers for success*. Often, I'll write a card with an interesting but unusual idea. To prepare the dancers for success, I'll then go back and write at least one easy lead-in card that will give them an idea of what's coming at them in the more difficult figure.

Reading written material still requires that I know what's happening to the dancers on each card. In order to call at the non-staff dances at the National Advanced and Challenge Convention, callers must be able to call through C3. The advent of choreography programs for the computer opened these hallowed doors to many unprepared people. I've spoken to dancers who swear that some of the people calling at that dance wrote their material on a computer by pressing the "pick a level call" and "resolve this figure" buttons repeatedly. Yes, the calls they chose were legal from the starting position, but the dancers knew that the caller had no idea about how the call was actually danced. Often successful career management involves the ability to "just say no" to your own ego.

Teaching

My sighting ability is a priceless tool for teaching beginner classes and I'm grateful for having been taught the skill. But several years ago, I watched another caller teaching A2. He wrote

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“Leading A Double Life”, continued.

the most gorgeous choreography for his teaching sessions - good flow, snappy get outs, etc. Unfortunately for him, the dancers were too busy concentrating on the new calls to appreciate the effort he had put into his preparation. So now when I teach Advanced and Challenge, I tell the dancers up front that I'm not going to worry about resolving squares. I'm only interested in seeing that students get through the calls correctly. I don't want to waste their class time trying to get them to a proper allemande left. I do, however, write easy material for the dance sessions at the end of the night.

Switch Hitting

When I first started reading, Mike Jacobs warned me against the dangers of switching between reading and sight calling during a dance. He said it's OK to go from sight calling to reading, it can be lethal going from reading to sight calling during a dance. You use a completely different set of mental muscles for each method and the overall level of the dance can really suffer.

I've walked into a Plus dance where dancers tell me during the first tip that *Grand Swing Thru* is *not* a Plus call, thank you very much! Written material goes out the window at that point. My stomach is in knots, my brain is fried, and switching gears is just as painful as Mike Jacobs said it would be - but I've got another two hours and fifteen minutes to entertain these folks. If the dancers don't know what's on the list, they probably won't notice if my sighted choreo isn't the most creative in the world!

But what if I get this really great idea while I'm up at the mic? I jot it down and write some new cards when I get home!

Pride and Prejudice

Sight callers take pride in their ability and consider themselves to be the "real" callers. They look down on callers who read. After all, reading isn't *real* calling. I'd say it's a testosterone thing, but this prejudice is also shared by female callers.

After I switched from sight calling to reading, I made a point of telling my former coaches of my decision and the reasons behind it. I know that while outwardly they seem supportive of my choice, some of them have written me off as no longer being a "serious" professional. But as much as they may feel I've let them down, I'll match my performance any day against an unprepared sight caller.

I've been to many dances where "national traveling callers" were featured at a gay club. The "sighting pro" insists on sight calling even though they can't keep track of where the boys and girls are (especially when dancers change roles from tip to tip). Each tip ends up consisting of very long figures of boring material as the caller searches in vain for that elusive *Allemande Left*. Advanced and Challenge figures might have one level call followed by two minutes of sight resolution using mainstream and plus calls.

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“Leading A Double Life”, continued.

Bottom Line

I offer the following advice to dancers who are shocked to realize that A2 is not simply Plus with 70 more calls: "There is no shame in dancing Plus well. There is no glory in dancing Advanced poorly."

The same advice applies to choosing between reading and sight calling. Neither method is better than the other. Neither method is necessarily easier to learn or perform than the other. Both have their positive and negative aspects. But we're here to entertain the dancers. Whichever path you choose, *strive to be the best you can for the dancers' enjoyment.*

Happy Dancing!



Coming up...

Ett McAtee has promised us a profile of Howard Richman. **Jill Sybalsky** has an inspiring story of calling with a tracheotomy. **Michael Maltenfort** delves into the mysteries of looping music. **Bill Eyler** shares some “caller games” from CALLERLAB 2007.

Beyond that, you'll just have to wait and see ... or write something yourself!



Colophon

Primary body text for the *Call Sheet* is set in 12-point Arial.

A sarcastic but reasonably complete history of Arial may be found at <http://www.ms-studio.com/articles.html>

A less comprehensive but more neutral history of Arial may be found at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arial>

Document composition, layout and export to PDF was performed using OpenOffice.org version 3.0.0 running on Microsoft Windows XP Professional. The result was merged with the appendices into a single PDF file using Acro Software's CutePDF Pro.

OpenOffice was chosen due to its interoperability with Microsoft Office files, ability to run on a variety of operating systems, low cost (free), and ability to easily export documents to PDF files that can be read on nearly any computing platform using Adobe Acrobat Reader.

Call Sheet PDF files are written to a 300dpi resolution. Every effort is made to write Call Sheet PDF files for accessibility via “reverse colors” in Acrobat Reader. If a higher resolution is required for viewing or printing, please contact newsletter@gaycallers.org

Some screen and photo captures and/or minor photo editing (resizing, brightness, contrast only) were performed using SnagIt 9.

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