



# The Call Sheet

September 2004

## Prez Sez

### Welcome Aboard!

I wanted to share with all of you the insights I offered our newest members on the final day of caller school. I had been asked to briefly describe what the GCA is and what membership would mean for the new graduates. Well, as briefly as is humanly possible for me!

First and foremost, the GCA is an association made up of very talented people. As I travel from fly-in to fly-in and convention to convention, I'm amazed by the amount of improvement and maturity I see in my fellow GCA callers from month to month and year to year (and then wonder how much, if at all, I've been able to improve myself.)

Being President of this organization is very humbling. The Latin phrase that comes to mind is the one Abbot Neitzel used to describe himself during my (short-lived) seminary training: *primus inter pares* - the first among equals. I'm first not because I'm the best; just because I was voted into the job. (Now if only the IAGSDC could figure out that I'M president and not Seth!!). I'm your equal because we're all in the same boat. Whatever pops into people's heads - good or bad - when they hear the phrase "GCA caller" is the same prejudice when I or any of us steps up to the microphone. Yes, we're prejudiced! We pre-judge our favorite callers when we expect them to wow us like they have in the past. And dancers pre-judge us based on how the GCA Callers they've danced to in the past have performed.

Our membership ranges from people who picked up the microphone for the first time on June 28, 2004 and extends to callers with decades of experience who have performed hundreds (thousands?) of dances and classes, as well as numerous fly-ins, festivals, and conventions. Most of us fall somewhere in between - bundles of talent requiring the seasoning that takes place behind the microphone in order to develop to our full potential.

Our goal as an organization is to promote gay-friendly square dancing by developing our individual skills and using them to help grow the IAGSDC member clubs. To that end we offer our "bundles of talent" education, opportunity, and, when all else fails, a shoulder to cry on.

**Education:** The most obvious educational resource is our annual caller school. The GCA strives to provide both variety and excellence (as caller and as coach) in our choice of staff from year to year. Next, we have our quarterly newsletter featuring articles on calling technique, the latest equipment, licensing/legal issues, etc. Last year we began soliciting articles from CALLERLAB-accredited coaches for the *Call Sheet*. Finally, we have the dozens of mentoring relationships that develop between members. These last can be the most important because they're on-going throughout

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## ✓ To Do

- Start practicing those holiday songs. The Christmas stuff is already showing up in the malls, which means Halloween is getting closer. So it's time to get that music ready for the holidays.
- Plan your new classes. If you're not teaching this year, be sure you come to your club's lessons to help angel. You can always learn by listening to other callers teach.
- If you're a new caller, get some dancers together so you can practice. If you have a new caller in your group, give him/her some mic time.
- The usual: write something for the Call Sheet.

## Inside...

Annual Meeting minutes. See page 2.

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And there's more, too!



the year and not limited to the three days prior to convention.

**Opportunity:** Thanks to the GCA's relationship with IAGSDC member clubs, we are offered chances to call at fly-ins and the annual convention. If you know in advance of an upcoming cross-country trip, it's usually possible to book a calling date with a gay club in your destination city. These guest spots and out of town bookings offer us exposure dancers outside the safety of our home clubs where we've nurtured and honed our skills.

**A Shoulder to Cry On:** My evil sister Michael Coan says that the problem with square dance callers (problems? we have problems?!) is that in no other performance arena does one spend so much time preparing for so little time in the spotlight. Building the necessary skills to call your first tip, or dance takes years. And what does that earn you? More work. Why? Because you can't call that same tip or dance to the same dancers over and over, year in and year out. Well, some callers do - but we just won't go there!

You have to spend years "paying your dues" and waiting for your chance to step into the spotlight. In a society that demands instant coffee, microwave-able snacks, and Bob Dole's "little blue friend" for instant action (in all senses of the word), the time spent waiting and paying dues is just plain NOT FUN. During these times you need the encouragement of someone who's been there before. Your partner and club member can offer support. But it's just not the same. Having a caller friend/mentor to turn to at these times can make the difference between toughing it out and giving up before you've had a chance to realize your full potential.

That's what the GCA can offer you. What can you offer us? Very simply, your best. That's all. Every time you step up to the microphone give your best. If you do, then everyone benefits - you, the dancers, and the GCA.

Welcome to the Gay Callers Association.

(Now get to work!!)

# GCA Annual Meeting

by Clara Welch

The GCA Membership meeting was called to order by Nick Martellacci, President, at 3:02 p.m. on July 3, 2004, during the IAGSDC convention in Phoenix, Arizona, at the Arizona Biltmore. There were 26 members in attendance.

Nick presented a certificate of appreciation to Gordon Macaw of All Join Hands for their generous donation of \$3642 to the GCA which allowed the GCA school to offer tuition of 50 % off, and resulted in the first ever sold out school. [Secretary's NOTE: Normal tuition is \$ 190 for first-time students and \$ 170 for returning students, the 2004 GCA school tuition was \$ 75. There were 36 total students in the school, with 14 new students.]

Minutes of the 2003 Minutes were distributed to members present. Andy Shore moved to accept minutes, Allan Hurst seconded, motion passed.

Alan Hirsch, Treasurer, reported a checking account balance of approx. \$ 11,000. \$ 675 in dues was taken in during the year.

The "Introduction to Calling" Workshop featured this year by the GCA had 30 - 40 people attend.

Nick Martellacci reported the GCA membership at 95 members, 14 new members as a result of the GCA caller school.

2004 GCA school was originally limited to 36 students because of written evaluations from coaches, but written evaluations were not prepared this year, so this limitation may be reconsidered for the 2005 GCA Caller's School.

This coming year's dues are \$ 5.00 (August 1, 2004 - July 31, 2005). This is in response to Howard Richman's suggestion in 2003 to pass on prosperity of club to members by setting dues at \$ 1.00 per person. Rather than set dues at \$ 1.00 the Executive board chose \$5 for the 2004 annual dues only.

During the past year, the GCA achieved CALLERLAB affiliate status.

Tim McNamara, Vice President, announced 95% of the students responses to the GCA caller school evaluations were positive. There was a concern expressed with such a large group individual attention was unavailable.

There was a waiting list of 22 for the school, in addition to the 36 students who were able to take the school. 9 of the people attending said they were likely to attend the 2005 school, 11 definitely plan to attend. This and the large waiting list indicate the Caller's school of 2005 will also be a large class.

Tim McNamara reported Bronc Wise has signed a contract as a coach for the 2005 Caller's school, and Mike Jacobs has verbally agreed to be a coach.

Nick Martellacci reported that starting in 2005, the GCA will break from the practice of hiring 3 coaches and dropping one, and instead initially hire 2 coaches, and adding a third if necessary. This action will prevent the embarrassment of having to un-hire an advertised coach, which can result in bad business and disappointed students who signed up for a particular (now unavailable) coach.

Andy Shore reported that the CALLERLAB convention was in Reno, there were 2 or 3 GCA first time attendees. There are no program list changes planned. The schedule for list changes has changed from a 2 year review to a 3 year review. Kris and Andy did a duet at the convention. Next year's convention is in Louisville, KY and the new Chairman of the Board is Tim Crawford.

Chip, IAGSDC Delegate (Alternate) reported that here are 4 new clubs, Gateway Squares in St. Louis, MO, SeeWay Rainbow Squares in Cornwall, Ontario, Spin Cycle Squares in Eugene, Oregon, and the Sun Coast Squares in St. Petersburg, Florida.

Nick thanked Howard Richman for scheduling all GCA caller slots this year.

Nick moved, Chi-Chi seconded, motion passed to purchase the audio presentations that were made by GCA callers at the

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# GCA Financial Reports: August 31, 2004

## Balance Sheet 8/31/2004

Accounts	2004-08-31 Balance
<b>Assets</b>	
Cash and Bank Accounts	
GCA Checking	7,599.52
Total Cash and Bank Accounts	7,599.52
<hr/>	
Total Assets	7,599.52
<hr/>	
<b>Liabilities &amp; Equity</b>	
Liabilities	
Other Liabilities	
Caller School Fees	0.00
Total Other Liabilities	0.00
Total Liabilities	0.00
Equity	7,599.52
Total Liabilities & Equity	7,599.52

## Cash Flow 9/15/2004

Category	2004-06-01 2004-09-15
<b>Inflows</b>	
Caller School Income:	
Meals	1,440.00
SwapShoppe	124.00
Total Caller School Income	1,564.00
Contribution	
Interest Earned	2.15
Membership Dues	165.00
From Caller School Fees	75.00
Total Inflows	5,448.63
<b>Outflows</b>	
Ads	15.00
Bank Charge	-4.75
Caller School Expense:	
Lodging	2,455.16
Meals	1,753.51
Stipends	1,800.00
Supplies	726.91
Total Caller School Expense	6,735.58
Cash	0.00
Dues	25.00
Gifts Given	50.00
Late Fees	25.00
Postage and Delivery	77.03
Printing and Reproduction	40.00
Publications	50.00
Stipends	400.00
Taxes	10.11
Total Outflows	7,422.97
Overall Total	-1,974.34



# Cash Flow Comparison

GCA Comparison  
Cash Flows 8-5-03 to 7-31-05

Category	2003-08-05 2004-07-31	2004-08-01 2005-07-31	\$ Difference
<b>Inflows</b>			
Caller School Income:			
Meals	1,440.00	0.00	-1,440.00
Registration	2,425.40	0.00	-2,425.40
SwapShoppe	124.00	0.00	-124.00
<b>Total Caller School Income</b>	<b>3,989.40</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>-3,989.40</b>
Contribution	4,365.48	0.00	-4,365.48
Interest Earned	10.74	0.66	-10.08
Membership Dues	890.00	85.00	-805.00
From Caller School Fees	3,365.00	0.00	-3,365.00
From GCA Checking	665.00	0.00	-665.00
<b>Total Inflows</b>	<b>13,285.62</b>	<b>85.66</b>	<b>-13,199.96</b>
<b>Outflows</b>			
Ads	15.00	0.00	-15.00
Bank Charge	1.25	0.00	-1.25
Caller School Expense:			
Lodging	2,455.16	0.00	-2,455.16
Meals	1,753.51	0.00	-1,753.51
Stipends	1,800.00	0.00	-1,800.00
Supplies	1,495.92	0.00	-1,495.92
<b>Total Caller School Expense</b>	<b>7,504.59</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>-7,504.59</b>
Cash	0.00	0.00	0.00
Charitable Donation	50.00	0.00	-50.00
Dues	70.00	25.00	-45.00
Gifts Given	125.00	0.00	-125.00
Late Fees	0.00	25.00	25.00
Postage and Delivery	234.93	0.00	-234.93
Printing and Reproduction	200.10	0.00	-200.10
Publications	100.00	50.00	-50.00
Stipends	400.00	0.00	-400.00
Supplies	15.69	0.00	-15.69
Taxes	10.11	0.00	-10.11
Outflows - Other	0.00	0.00	0.00
To Caller School Fees	665.00	0.00	-665.00
To GCA Checking	3,365.00	0.00	-3,365.00
Bal Fwd-Caller School Fees	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Total Outflows</b>	<b>12,756.67</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>-12,656.67</b>
<b>Overall Total</b>	<b>528.95</b>	<b>-14.34</b>	<b>-543.29</b>

## Meeting, continued from p. 2

CALLERLAB convention for the GCA lending library.

Bill Eyer moved and Michael Maltenfort seconded that a GCA lifetime membership be available for \$100. Discussion revealed many unresolved questions about how this could be implemented. Chi Chi moved the motion be tabled, Andy Chong seconded, motion carried to table the original motion.

The following officers were nominated and elected unanimously for their respective offices. There were no other nominations.

Tim McNamara as Vice President

Alan Hirsch as Treasurer

The meeting was adjourned at 4:14 p.m.

## GCA Officers

- President: Nick Martellacci  
(President@GayCallers.org)
- Vice President: Tim McNamara  
(vice.president@GayCallers.org)
- Secretary: Clara Welch  
(Secretary@GayCallers.org)
- Treasurer: Alan Hirsch  
(Treasurer@GayCallers.org)



# The Dutch Uncle Speaks...

by Nick Martellacci

You know those people who hate to say I told you so? Well, I'm not one of them!!

Remember that article I wrote back in March? The one about NOT running over your allotted time at fly-ins and conventions? Well, some of you out there weren't listening. I was in more than one dance hall in Phoenix when GCA callers went beyond the agreed-upon 10 minutes - sometimes by accident, other times quite blatantly. "I can't end on that one!" was how one person put it before tacking on another 2-3 minute figure. "Oh yes you can!!" was my unvoiced reply. One of the people at the convention who knew that I am President of the GCA sought me out to voice his displeasure.

Case of nerves? You're a professional - get over it. The previous caller left late? Couldn't get eight people together squared up in time? Unfortunate for you, but in both cases - too bad.

The one situation where I'd grudgingly make an exception would be the Mainstream hall. Callers were tucked away into an alcove and the only way you could see the staff caller's approach is if (s)he came and stood right in front of you. But even then, your responsibility as a professional is to start and end on time. In the words of my Jewish mother-in-law "You have a watch? So use it, bubbe!"

If GCA callers want to be treated as professionals, we have to act like professionals - ALL THE TIME. Your bad behavior reflects back on the whole group. Remember - our appearance at fly-ins and conventions is a privilege granted by the planners. They DON'T have to schedule us.

I know how frustrating it is when a tip ends badly or when you don't get your full time or you can't get a square together. The frustration is doubled because to be on time for your 10 minute guest tip you had to leave your friends and the dancing early, go back to your room, dress and pick up your equipment and choreo and be in the hall 10-15 minutes before you're scheduled to go on. I've been doing this for over thirteen years now. Trust

me - I know. But your frustration does not give you the right to act unprofessionally.

What can you do from preventing occasional frustrating experiences from ruining the fun

## 2004 GCA School

By Kris Jensen

This year, I attended the GCA caller school as a registered participant; I found the staff irresistible (as did a lot of other people, apparently; the school was totally sold out with a large waiting list). As usual, the three days passed in a blur, but here are a few quick impressions.

Each staff caller brought something unique to the mix.

Anne Uebelacker has the unique distinction of having been on staff for most of the GCA caller schools. For the beginners, she provides great support and patience, and for the intermediate and advanced groups, she

of calling these guest spots altogether? The answer is simple - take a break. Make a conscious choice to NOT call at a particular fly-in or convention. Just dance. Reconnect with the activity that got you into calling in the first place. And when one of your fan club walks up and says how sorry they are that you're not on the schedule... smile and hand that person your business card!!

draws on her knowledge of our history and strengths and weaknesses. Many of us in the advanced group have been calling for 10-14 years, and Anne has been there to watch us mature as callers. Before the school started, she asked other callers about us and was prepared to give us feedback from dancers and callers around the country.

Vic Ceder hasn't done a callers school before; in fact, he's never attended one. I think he did a great job sharing information and critiquing. I would have liked more time on Advanced and Challenge choreography; I was hoping to get some insight in how he thinks when he's creating his unique choreo. It didn't

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Kris Jensen and Diana Wedel prep during caller school. Actually, we were preparing our version of "Leather is a Dyke's Best Friend" for the women's tip.





2004 GCA Caller School students line up at the GCA School dance, July 1, 2004. Thanks to Pam Clasper for the picture.

## School, *continued from p. 5*

seem to happen; the need for mic time for 12 callers limits how much time can be spent in presentations. Vic also did a special session on digital music.

Once again, Sandie Bryant helped some of us work on sight-calling Right and Left Grand getouts. I think I was a little more ready this time; in Chicago, I had a hard time seeing them, but it's getting easier.

All three instructors heard all the students call; this takes a lot of time, but the instructor feedback is useful for all of us.

Tim McNamara did an outstanding job running the school. I felt well cared for: he organized food in the evenings (a major feature, given that the hotel food was very expensive and the hotel wasn't walking distance from any less expensive alternatives) and he made sure everything ran smoothly.

## Next year

Next year's GCA school will feature Mike Jacobs and Bronc Wise. I don't know what to expect from Bronc Wise. I will say that the first time I heard him call at convention, I spent the rest of the convention following him around from hall to hall.

From Mike Jacobs, expect stringent and detailed feedback. Mike is good at pinpointing the things we need to work on,

which is just what those of us who have been calling for a while (and maybe getting a little complacent) need. Mike believes that one goes to caller school to improve; if you just want positive feedback, why bother? And, no matter how good you are, there's always room for improvement. Mike also has an incredible breadth and depth of knowledge about calling, both technique and choreography.

## Suggestions for future schools

It seems kind of archaic to have students bring their own recording devices. Why not set up a recording facility (computer) in each room? We should be able to set up something

with three channels: music, microphone, and a more room level microphone to pick up student comments and questions. With a little mixing, the levels could be equalized. With a little digital editing, each student could get MP3 files that would be much better quality than they could make themselves with a tape recorder.

Video: We had video recording in Albuquerque back in 1992. Seems like we should be able to do much more these days, with digital video cameras being as ubiquitous as they are. Any tech-savvy GCA members want to research using digital recording (both audio and video) to enhance the caller school experience?

## Calling Opportunity: St. Petersburg, FL

From John O'Grady

A group of men in St. Petersburg has started a new square dancing group, Suncoast Squares. We have 8 members and a mailing list of over 100 people who are interested in learning to square dance. We will be dancing at the Suncoast Resort Hotel on 34th Street in St. Petersburg. We have already joined the International Association of Gay Square Dance Clubs and plan to attract people from the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender community and any straight folks who would like to dance with us.

We have experienced dancers, we have interested students, and we have a place to

dance. We need a caller. We have contacted several in the area, but have been unable to find anyone who can make a commitment to call for classes and club dances. If you know anyone who might be interested, please have them contact us at:

"Suncoast Squares" <suncoastsquares@yahoo.com>



# Denver National Square Dance Convention June 24-28

by Bill Eyler

After 21 years of dancing, I took the plunge and attended my first Nationals in Denver this past June. I went thinking that it was going to be an overwhelming mass of dancers, chaotic scheduling, low-skill calling, bad floors and an overhanging pall of homophobia.

That's not the way it was though.

First, it's called "Nationals," but there was a noticeable and significant presence of dancers from many countries. I'm sure there is a reason after 53 years this largest of square dance events is still considered American.

Second, this couldn't be further from the way an IAGSDC convention works. 100% of the event is volunteer. No one (and this is documented) that calls, cues, teaches, organizes or in any way works within the event is paid for services. Callers have to register and pay for the event exactly as a regular dancer would. There are no banquets arranged, very little in the way of freebies from the convention, lots of exhibitions of specialized square dance and other dance forms. There is a "Youth Hall" where no dancers over the age of 18 are allowed, except for the caller and chaperones. There are halls for country/western lessons, contra dancing, round dancing. There is very little in the way of any dancing over C1. But for \$45 you got unlimited time to dance and a lot of networking opportunities.

The Nationals are generally the last week before our July 4 weekend. Theoretically, there were 8500 or so registered. This in itself would be very hard to prove. Maybe because of how spread out in the stockyard convention center and auxiliary buildings we were, but I never got a sense there were more than a couple of thousand dancers roaming around or dancing at any point in time. There were never any vast numbers in the halls, and some of the halls suffered the mealtime lack of dancers just like our sessions do. I suspect a huge percentage of the dancers just go by, pick up a registration badge, then go touring or shopping, maybe

stopping by once or twice during the four days of the convention.

Proximity was the main reason Danny and I were able to go. Being hosted by old friends Bill and Ralph of the Rocky Mountain Rainbeaus, and the easy seven hour drive to Denver from Albuquerque made it tempting from the first. Being invited by Bear Miller to lead a one hour "Hexagon" dancing session sealed it for me. The Rainbeaus, probably because of their love and support of Bear, had a good presence at the Nationals, both as volunteers and dancers.

Compare what Howard Richman does for the GCA and convention team by scheduling 20 or so callers in the allowed slots. Multiply this by easily 20 fold effort and that's what Bear and his team had to do to organize 100% of the dance time to set up an MC for every hour, and five or six callers for that hour. I've always been proud of Howard for taking on what could be a very frustrating task, but I'm floored by the effort that had to go in to time coordination at Nationals.

There is a central station where all callers had to sign in when they first arrived. The central caller station had a large locked, monitored storage area for our calling supplies, a coffee station, a volunteer massage therapist (Justin from Rocky Mountain Rainbeaus), a staff to answer questions and give out packets of caller info, a rest and relaxation area. This was set up to handle the details of over 250 callers that were scheduled time, and the area was always very busy when I stopped by.

The aspect that amazes me is that 98% of the callers that were allotted time actually did show up. We had to register and pay six months before the event to be eligible to call at Nationals. Bear emailed me four months before the event with my schedule of 9 tips or emcee slots. I wouldn't have DREAMED of not showing up to any of the time slots, but apparently a very few of the callers, for one reason or another are no-shows, and it's not taken lightly. The callers are asked to sign in maybe 45 minutes before their time, so the emcee can see whether he or she has to do an emergency hunt for a substitute caller for

their 9 minute slot. In the one time I had to do this as emcee, we easily found another caller on the spur of the moment. Emcees were also responsible for trying to keep the callers on their 9 minutes, watch for over-driven sound and voice/music balance, and watch for other problem situations.

Oh, the program! Since this was our first, and there are just so many details we didn't know about beforehand, we didn't know you had to BUY a program to know what was going on! Yikes, not included in registration cost! I don't even know how much they cost! So we wandered around the convention for four days, depending on the many posted signs to know where events were located. We couldn't follow any callers or schedule our time for special events, other than what we knew by peeking at the list by callers stations in the halls, looking at a couple of lists of events posted here and there, which we stumbled on. All I can say is BUY A PROGRAM!

The skills levels of the callers I danced to varied from just okay to top-of-the-line. I know that MANY callers disdain this event since it either cuts into their bookings or egos get in the way, and they don't just want to be tossed to the wolves for time scheduling and all. The only stars appeared to be the hour sessions allotted to record label staff callers, and there were more than a few of those around, usually in teams of three or four calling. These were always well attended, but the dancers tended to wander away after the star session, so it was humbling for the next solo caller in the next few tips after them. The crowds dwindled quickly. We had to do counts of number of squares in each halls twice during our hours as emcees; I'd be interested to see what tracking there is on this.

Wandering was much more pronounced here than at IAGSDC conventions. The halls in Denver were all open, with only some curtain walls set up. Denver made an enormous effort to separate halls by scattering them all over the convention center and splitting up the (vast) vendor areas between halls. It was easy to just wander by different halls to see what was up. I saw Andy Shore, Kris Jensen and Betsy Gotta a LOT in my wanderings, where they were dancing or getting ready for their next calling assignments.

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## Convention, continued from p. 7

Danny concentrated on Plus and Advanced dancing most of the time, I did some C1 dancing on top of that. Danny had no lack of partners asking for him to dance, since he had a "solo" ribbon, as well as his "caller's partner" ribbon. My observation is that straight dancing has followed the same course of level hopping that we've done, but much slower over the years. The advanced halls were usually much busier than the other halls, depending on the time. Plus was generally well attended. Mainstream was spotty, depending on if there were star callers or not. The C1 was "iffy" at best in overall dancer ability.

Logistically, it was near impossible to keep sound bleed through from a couple of the halls, most noticeably between the round dance and Plus with rounds hall. Once some sound engineer with a decibel counter came over to me to let me know that he measured the round dance cuer in my hall at 96 Dbs, and the bleed over into the regular round dance hall next door was severe. Oops! Anyway, The floors were all concrete. Everywhere. Amazingly I didn't have shin splints after this, but it wasn't totally awful to dance on with care. There were probably hundreds of pounds of shoe leather and rubber left behind after were were all gone!

The only "interest" session I went to was a 45 minute panel on multi-cycle lessons. Kris and I were about to embark on a Fast Track effort in Albuquerque (three Saturdays from zero to Mainstream) and we wanted to hear what else was going around in the country. My impression, both locally and from what I heard nationally is that virtually no club is able to bring in new dancers. The stopgap push now is to have multiple sets of lessons over the year, rather than the old-time tradition of one class a year starting in September. There isn't a lot of momentum, though, and there is definitely a feeling of desperation in trying to attract dancers.

Danny was able to get over to the exhibition hall, where there were hundreds of dancers either watching live band calling to the Ghost Riders or to the many stylized exhibitions, which featured a lot of what we used to call 'flying square' dancing. He was very impressed that this was such a big part of the activities, and also gave it a bit of a competitive edge that we don't have in our normal social dance environment.

Couples tend to dance together, and they only time they don't is during singing calls. There were a few same-sex couples squared up, but generally these were women, which isn't so much a social no-no. There was a "pack" of teenagers that were superlatively good exhibition dancers roaming from hall to hall to dance. The energy and skill they had was a pleasure to see, and they all seemed to be totally bi-dancual.

## Call Analysis

By Alan Hirsch

I have been preparing to call at the Plus level. It seemed to me that beyond the Call Analysis sheet questions that concern flow, hand availability, definition, starting and ending formations, I needed to know how the call affects sequence, relationship, and how the dancers are moved.

I set up my checkers in the proper starting formation using normal arrangements and following the standard applications guidelines at first. I used couples together so I could trace how individuals moved through the call and where they ended. One can diagram the movement using arrows and/or descriptive information.

For instance, let's look at Spin Chain Thru. I set it up in a 0 arrangement with the girls in the middle as shown below in Figure 1. Then, move the checkers through the call and you end up with the formation and arrangement shown in Figure 2. From this, you can see the arrangement is changed to a 1/2 with the boys in the center, each boy

So, overall, I was quite pleased with my first experience at Nationals, either as a dancer or a caller. It's a remarkable feat of coordination, and get me a lot of network possibilities I wouldn't normally have. I got to hear callers I've known for years through Callerlab outside of the clinical setting of panels.

Definitely, I hope to go to another Nationals.

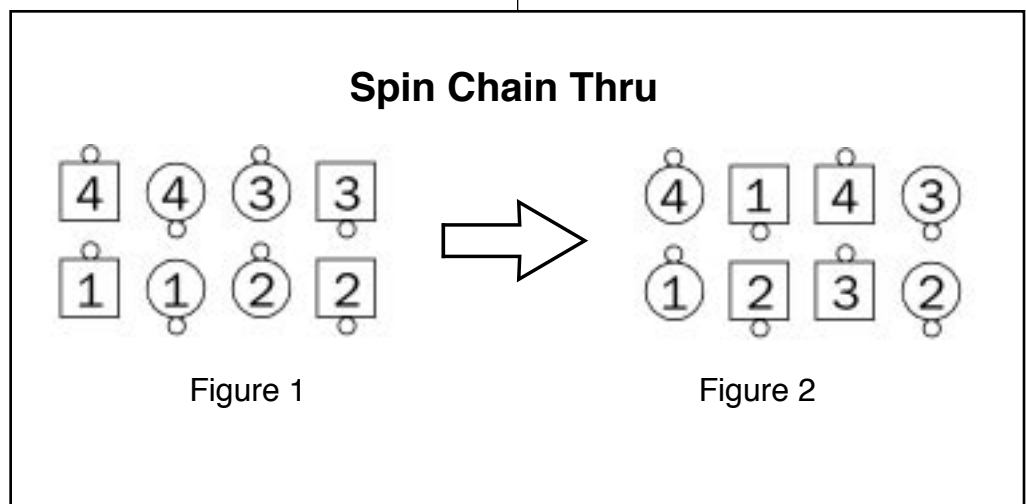
is with his corner lady. So this is equivalent in some ways to all ladies chain 3/4 as far as partner relationship is concerned. The sequence is preserved.

For beginning arrangements of 1/2, the effect is to pair the man with his right-hand lady.

I also noticed that this Spin Chain Thru is equivalent to the Ends circulating one position and then trading with the adjacent Centers.

Similarly, if you do this for Grand Swing Thru, you can see that the second from the end dancer moves to the closest end and the other dancers move two positions toward the other end of the tidal wave.

Treat each call as a tool for moving people through the set. Then you can plan your sequences considering flow and hand availability so that dancers are working with different people during the sequence. Move the dancers around and then use some the Plus calls to move them to positions where you can easily resolve the square.



# Programming

By Mike Jacobs

After you have learned how to resolve, how to do a singing call, all of the techniques that we employ to entertain, all callers must employ a strategy in order to utilize the skills we have learned. This is called programming. Whether one is calling a tip, a dance, or a weekend, there needs to be a consistent philosophical approach to how one applies the science of calling to any given dance situation. Just remember, the maxim coined by a famous Prussian military strategist is appropriate here. "No battle plan survives contact with the enemy." One must be flexible to meet the ever changing demands of every square dance environment.

The overall philosophy to employ in programming is to avoid the flat line. Most of you have seen medical dramas where the critical patient on a heart monitor loses his battle and the monitor shows a flat line. If we track the schedule of a dance or a weekend (or even a tip!) as a heart monitor, the desired effect would be some kind of fluctuation other than a flat line. There is no one right approach. One might want constant build towards an awe inspiring finish. Or a caller could use a series of peaks and valleys complimenting each other. I know that one caller calls his best material (patter or singer) in the middle of the dance since the biggest population of the dance will be there at that time (between late-comers and early-leavers) and they will be the most receptive (between refocusing on the dancing and too fatigued to appreciate). I approach it like cooking a meal. Most recipes call for intense heat at the beginning, followed by a reduction in heat, with adjustments for adding other ingredients or spices. In particular, the common phrase of adding flavoring "to taste" is important here. All of these things are issues of caller judgment and your experience as a good dancer will help you make decisions that will lend the right flair to the "taste" of your dance.

Music and material selection are your two major tools in implementing your strategy. My first tip of the evening utilizes attention getting, up tempo music to get the dancer's mind off the road and into the dance. My material tends to be a light rendering of all the calls on the particular program, in effect,

a vocabulary test. The second tip tends to bring things back from a boil, many times utilizing music in a minor key. Music played in a minor key tends to have a depressing effect upon those hearing it. I start to get more positional with my choreography, testing the waters of what positions they do recognize. As the evening plays on, I vary the music and material to provide that "non-flat" approach that I think is most desired. I usually end with a showy piece, a memorable, "whistle-able" tune for the dancers to leave with. Even if you are calling just a tip, these philosophies could be applied.

However, realize your dance does not exist in a vacuum. The environmental factors that exist for your dance need to be accounted for. It is summer and the air has broken down; then your tips need to be shorter. The floor is dirty and sticky or you are dancing on carpeting; then you must adjust your timing. It is 9 AM; then you can't deliver the showstopper that is appropriate in a crowded hall at 8 PM. Yes, they paid the same money and you owe them a quality performance, but you need to gauge the difference between the intimacy of a piano bar versus the crowd control of a concert.

Finally, in multi caller situations, we must address the issue of counter programming. Doing the same thing artistically as the caller before you only reinforces the presentation of the caller before and does nothing to differentiate yourself from their performance. Obviously, if the caller who calls in front of you gives an up tempo performance than the easier route is to compensate by using a slower number. But don't fall into the trap of always heading the opposite direction. The idea is to differentiate your performance from their performance. The choices aren't always sweet or sour, it could be salty. My reaction to the previous caller might be to do the singer first (perhaps a one with a minor key) and then do a memorable musical patter. It simply serves to distinguish my tip.

Programming is how we apply our knowledge. Callers wear three hats in the square dancing "game". We are the coach, the umpire, and the opposing team. Our game strategy is to walk a fine line between all three. Good programming makes for good decisions.

# Volunteer Delegate to IAGSDC Needed

By Chip Prince

Hello, fellow GCAers! Want to be the first to hear the hot news from the IAGSDC, like who gets awarded upcoming conventions, or what new clubs have joined? Want to earn the unending respect and gratitude of your fellow callers? I'm not exaggerating... much!

Each year at IAGSDC convention two delegates from the GCA attend the big dreaded four-hour IAGSDC Delegates' Meeting. While there we catch up on all the latest Association news and take notes to report back to the GCA at our own meeting. Our delegates serve for two conventions; after each convention the "alternate" delegate becomes the "regular" and a new alternate is chosen.

At the Phoenix convention, Brian Keating and I (Chip Prince) were the delegates; Brian's "term" then expired, and we needed to pick a new delegate. Eric Calimag stepped forward after the GCA meeting to fill his spot, but as you know by now, Eric passed away later this summer, so we still have a delegate spot to fill.

If you step forward, you will be volunteering to attend the Delegates' Meetings in both San Jose and Anaheim, and to report what you hear there to the GCA meetings held later during the same conventions. It's pretty painless, and pretty darn interesting (and they usually serve coffee; they're not stupid)! If you are interested, please write to Nick Martellacci and Chip Prince (nmcaller@aol.com and bearfuz@aol.com) to let us know. Thanks!





# 2004 Golden Boot

# Ett McAtee



## The Speech:

by Rick Hawes

Well, folks, I should start off by saying... the Golden Boot is not an award of or by the IAGSDC or the convention committee. The Boot is a recognition of extraordinary dedication and service to the gay square dance world.

The criteria for and the selection of a recipient are solely the responsibility (and pleasure) of the current holder of the Golden Boot. The recipient receives a Golden Boot dangle and a personal token of appreciation. In addition, this year, thanks to Betsy and Roy Gotta, there is a handsome plaque listing all of the former recipients with space left to enshrine the names of future recipients.

I would like to take a moment here to again thank Andy Shore for awarding the Golden Boot to me last year. I was truly shocked to be selected, but I feel very honored to have received it from someone for whom I can honestly say I have a boundless respect. Thank you, Andy.

The person I have selected to receive the Golden Boot is well known to all of you.

- As a dancer from Basic thru "C"-umpteen
- As a club organizer and founder
- As an organizer and chair of fly-ins and convention
- As an instructor and caller across North America and in Europe

<sup>a</sup> A person of awe-inspiring enthusiasm for all things "square dansual"...

- Hard as nails, soft as butter
- The possessor of a flinty glare that can measure, freeze, slice and dice at 20 paces...
- A person who, when referred to as the "east coast Rick Hawes" took it as a compliment
- A person sweet as sin, my twin...

*Ett McAtee*



## The GCA

by Kris Jensen

It's safe to say that Ett was instrumental in making the GCA what it is today.

Ett was president of the GCA back in the early 1990's. She organized several caller schools, back in the days when we didn't always have good communication with the convention committees, and she had to scramble to find space outside of the convention hotel (remember 1994 in D.C.?).

Ett has been and continues to be a frequent contributor to the Call Sheet. I am grateful.

## Gay Square Dancing

I could probably spend the rest of this issue listing Ett's contributions to gay square dancing, both as a caller and as a club and event organizer. However, what I admire is that even though she's an internationally-known C3 and C4 caller, she is also willing to use her skills to call for non-dancers, sharing her enthusiasm for square dancing.

I also admire her dancing. Many callers back off on dancing, but Ett remains as enthusiastic as she was when I first met her in 1990.

*Continued on p. 11*



## Memories

My first memory of Ett is at the 1990 Albuquerque flyin. It was my first flyin; Bill Eyler had rushed us newbies through Mainstream so we could participate. I spotted Ett across the room; she was hard to miss in full crinolines. I was intrigued by this whole new world of gay square dancing, and by this lesbian decked out in petticoats.

I don't remember our conversation (other than that Ett was friendly and approachable, of course), but I guess I was enthusiastic; I later found out that Ett told Bill Eyler that he had a potential caller in his group of newbies.

I asked a few people who were around in Ett's early days to share their memories of Ett. Both Harlan and Anne share the same memory from Ett's first GCA caller school:

### Harlan Kerr

I taught--with Anne and Joe Uebelacker, the first GCA calling school in New York and Ett was in the class. The most memorable thing was for her first time on the mike she was so nervous she could not get the needle on the record--she was shaking that badly. Took a lot of encouragement but she blossomed as the two days of class continued.

### Anne Uebelacker

I have SO many great stories about Ett that I could share with people but I have one that is a true favorite of mine.

In 1989, three days prior to the New York IAGSDC convention, I had the pleasure of being one of the caller coaches for the GCA school. There was a particularly large number of people that year, one of which, was Ett M. She soon became the sweetheart of the school with her ever present innocence and a giggle that would set the entire class into a wave of laughter.

Ett had written a few sheets of patter and had attempted to learn a singing call before the school started. Of course, her patter was impeccable and her singing call was.....

hmm.....memorable. On the final day of the school, every caller was asked to call for the entire group. When it came time for Ett to pick up the mic, she took a deep breath, put her record on the turntable and introduced herself to the masses. She then attempted to put the needle on the record. After a number of tries, her hands were shaking so badly that she finally had to "literally" throw the needle at the record and hope that it landed somewhere on it.

Ett called a wonderful tip and seemed quite pleased with her efforts. All was going well until she tried to get the needle off the record. She was now shaking so badly from the adrenalin rush after calling that she couldn't seem to grab the needle so she looked across the room at me and said "Help,pleeeze take the d%#m thing off the record for me. The entire room erupted with laughter.

It's hard to believe that so many years can slip by us unnoticed but I remember fondly, the first meeting of Ett and how much of an impression she made on me and so many others in 1989.

### Bill Eyler

My memories of Ett are of her enthusiasm in the dance and her intelligence and humor in dealing with situations...I have three distinct memories of Ett...

- Early on, she was very vocal about the language of square dance. She was very clear that we were teaching people a new language; this one just happened to have body movement included with the learning process. That guided my thinking too, back in the late 1980s and early 1990s on how to approach the teaching process.

- Ett had just started teaching classes herself in Baltimore, this one a Plus class...her first. I remember one time when she called me soliciting my advice on how to teach a certain call. She was ALL frustrated and totally bewildered! Ett said that no matter what she did when she said "Tag the Line" no one ever moved until she said "All the way through" as part of the call. We talked about this a lot, and how helper phrases actually become part of the call in the dancer's mind. We react to what we hear.

- In 1990, I had the pleasure of calling in Rehoboth Beach for their flyin, and Ett was my driving host for the event. Late in the dances, I did that silly call "Guillotine" and then worked with the dancers reactions to what was really a "Heads Rollaway." Ett was on the floor, but didn't react, since she was a side. After the flyin, she was driving me back to Baltimore and we were chattering away. Suddenly, she started laughing uproariously, and with tears in her eyes, she pulled over to the side of the road until she could compose herself...it was just then a whole day LATER that she GOT what the call "Guillotine" was about!



©Pam Clasper

Chi Chi Hoffner and Ett at Remake the Heatwave. Ett was on staff this year.



# Remembering Eric Calimag

By Rick Simkin, with extensive input from Matt Santori and Michael Maltenfort

Eric Calimag, of Chi-Town Squares, passed away on Sunday, July 25, while returning from Detroit's fly-in.

As many people know, Eric had been ill for some time. He was traveling with other Chi-Town members, suffered arrhythmia and collapsed at a rest stop, and was taken to the hospital. Complications from his chronic illnesses made it impossible to save him after that. The family held a wake on July 30 and funeral on July 31, and marveled at the number of people who came to pay their respects, both from the gay square dancing world and from the Chicago Gay Men's Chorus.

Eric began calling at the GCA caller school in Phoenix in June 2004, and had been dancing since 2000---leaving Chicago frequently for one fly-in or another. He was known for being outgoing, generous, upbeat and energetic. He was the recent recipient of the Yellow Rock award for outstanding contributions to Chi-Town Squares, served tirelessly as newsletter editor, and had just been elected to the Chi-Town Board of Directors in May.

Like Eric, I was in the beginner class at GCA school in Phoenix this year. The following stories from caller school may help you remember (or get to know) Eric.

Like most of us in the beginning class at GCA school, Eric was reluctant to take up the microphone and try to call. He explained that he was actually shy, and didn't like being the center of attention. This revelation surprised me.

Perhaps the next day, we went through an exercise where two students at a time would go to the front of the room; one would start calling until the teacher said "switch", then the other one would call. When Eric went up with another student for this exercise, Eric said, "You know what I said about being shy, not wanting to be the center of attention? I lied! Give me that!", grabbed the microphone and gave us all a huge grin.

Eric was skilled at hearing a call and performing the action. Like most dancers, he did that much better than hearing a description and coming up with the name of the call, or looking at a square and naming a call that was legal from that position.

At one point Anne said, "Call whatever you want, just keep the square moving." Yeah, that's easy for a professional to say! Eric blanked out, couldn't remember the name of a single call. We witnessed something like this:

Eric: uh, uh...

Anne: (Heads Square Thru 4)

Eric: oh yeah, Heads Square Thru 4  
pause, pause

Eric: uh, uh, Oh shit!

The class laughed with him; we knew how he felt.

Anne: (Right and Left Thru)

Eric: Right and Left Thru  
pause

## Who's News?

by Kris Jensen

The July/August 2004 edition of CALLERLAB's newsletter *Directions* will contain Nick Martellacci's December *Call Sheet* "Prez Sez" article ("Go Bowling"). So if you can't wait for December, here's your chance for a preview.

This will mark the second time one of Nick's articles has appeared in this newsletter. Several other of his writings have appeared in *American Square Dance*.

Do you have a PDA? Do you use Avant Go to get web content onto your PDA? If so, check out **Ken Sale's** Avant Go channel:

[http://home.comcast.net/~k.sale/Call\\_of\\_the\\_Day.html](http://home.comcast.net/~k.sale/Call_of_the_Day.html)

Eric: Oh shit!

Eric: Pass Thru  
pause, pause

Eric: Fuck!

At this point Anne decided it was time for a little talk about turning off the microphone when you just HAVE to say something that you really shouldn't broadcast. She was gentle and funny, but also made her point.

One exercise had us sharing the microphone for a singing call. It's good to rehearse a singing call many times before you perform it, and we all had to do this cold. Eric did better than most, keeping in rhythm and in tune.

It was gratifying to see that all of us beginners improved over the 3-day length of GCA school, and that includes Eric. He came to use the microphone more effectively, he started remembering the names of calls in time to use them, successfully resolved squares to get people home, and started having fun with the idea of being a caller.

Eric's contributions to Chi-Town are only overshadowed by his contributions to the lives of his friends and family. We'll all miss him, the contributions he made, and the ones he didn't make because he left us so early.

This cool resource puts daily call definitions and modules onto your PDA. Ken's looking for more modules; give him a hand.

Do you use Vic Ceder's CSDS program? Kris Jensen has put up a CSDS online forum where you can ask and answer questions to get the most of this complicated, powerful program.

<http://www.squarez.com/csdsbb/>

Andy Shore has relocated to Florida---just in time for hurricane season. At Chi-Town's Crossfire flyin, I heard a rumor that he and Ken caught a plane out to Central America to avoid the wrath of Frances. Anyone have any news?

Got any news? Let me know!

