

# The Call Sheet

Professional Journal of the Gay Callers Association

September, 2006

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*"The Dosido can take up your Whole Damn Life."*  
-- Mike DeSisto

**The Call Sheet** is the official publication of the Gay Callers Association.

**Editor:** Allan Hurst

**Editorial Review Board:** Bill Eyer, Brian Jarvis, Catherine Nesbitt

The **Gay Callers Association** is open to anyone who calls and/or teaches for GLBT square dance clubs.

No assumptions should be made about the sexual orientation of any contributor to this publication.

The GCA is an affiliate member of the International Association of Gay Square Dance Clubs®: A Gay and Lesbian Organization ("IAGSDC").

The GCA is an associate member of CALLERLAB.

Further information about the GCA can be found at our web site: [www.gaycallers.org](http://www.gaycallers.org)

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Signed articles are the opinion of the authors and in no way reflect any official position of the GCA.

## Editorial: So Much To Say...

Allan Hurst

Welcome to the new GCA Call Sheet!

I'm your new ~~sucker~~ Newsletter Editor, Allan Hurst. I've been calling since 1993, when I attended my first GCA Caller School at the Las Vegas IAGSDC® Convention. ~~And I've kept on calling ever since, despite the court injunctions.~~

People have been asking me to consider taking on this job for a couple of years now.

To everyone's shock - including mine - and against my better judgment ("*You have plenty of free time!*") insisted the evil little demon standing on my shoulder), I finally said "yes."

For me, taking over a publication like this from someone as talented as Kris Jensen is pretty scary to contemplate. Whyzat?

Well, for one thing, I've lost track of how much time I've spent reading past issues and ~~obsessing~~ worrying about maintaining the high standard of quality that Kris set.

Kris did an awesome job on the Call Sheet for many years. Please join me in both thanking and saluting her for the long hours of hard work she put in for the GCA!

*Relax, my friends told me, don't worry. Just be yourself. Create something you'd be interested in reading. Make it meet your vision.*

Well, *my* vision of The Call Sheet is as a publication that advances the levels of skill and professionalism exhibited by GCA members worldwide.

You're holding the result in your hands (or, more likely, viewing it on your computer).

*[Continued on next page]*

*“Editorial: So Much To Say”, continued.*

If you love it, thank Kris, Bill, Nick and all my friends who encouraged me to take this on.

If you hate it, it's all their fault. Blame them. Every one of them. (I'm joking, of course.)

Let's talk about what you'll find inside ...

At this year's caller school, *Chi Chi Hoffner-Stolarick* fascinated the class during introductions when he mentioned in passing that he started his own square dance club, the Iron City Squares. How and why did he start his own club? That story is now here.

Shortly after Convention, *Andy Shore* posted an entry to his blog about calling his first “ABC” dance. This is a somewhat different recruiting technique than many of us are used to, and I think you'll be intrigued.

*Bill Eyer* checks in with a report on what it was like to call at the Montreal OutGames.

Many of our more experienced members have forgotten what it's like to be a newer caller. *Arlene Kaspik* reminds us by talking about her first GCA Caller School.

Where do new callers come from *before* they attend GCA Caller School? *John Oldfield & Jim Malloy* have one answer.

I firmly believe that a professional journal should contain some sort of professional development article in each issue.

I'm therefore especially pleased to wind up the issue with a *Mike DeSisto* lecture on “Showmanship”. Mike's rarely recorded, so this is a real (and uncensored) treat!

It's easier to think about editing a newsletter than it is to actually edit it. There is so much wonderful material that I couldn't include, or

had to cut down. *All* of it seemed immensely valuable. *All* of it seemed important.

It was somewhere around page 17 when I realized I'd turned *The Call Sheet* from a newsletter into a journal. (“Whoops...”)

Since I'm told that most of the *Call Sheet* distribution is electronic, I apologize in advance if I break the GCA's bank account on printing costs for the few paper copies we send out.

This is *your* publication – tell me what works, what doesn't, and don't be afraid to submit articles *or even “just” ideas*.

In fact, here's an even better deal: *You bring me even “just” the ideas ... and I'll help you make 'em into articles*.



## **“Da Prez Sez”: Life in the Fish Bowl.**

*Nick Martellaci* - [nmcaller@aol.com](mailto:nmcaller@aol.com)

My first article of the new season is traditionally addressed to recent Caller School graduates and new members. This year will be no exception.

As usual, I'll start with a story.

In my early days as a caller, I attended Lee Kopman's "January Jubilee" in Philadelphia.

At the Friday night opening, onto the dance floor walked Betsy Gotta - one of the very generous and skilled coaches I studied with in my early days.

Full of the wisdom and bravado of youth, I walked up to Betsy and said something like "It must be difficult to be here and be *Betsy Gotta*." **[Editor's Note: What did Betsy say?]**

*[continued on next page]*

*"Life In The Fish Bowl", continued.*

What I *meant* was:

*"Everybody* knows who you are. You're Betsy Gotta; you're on the CALLERLAB Board of Governors, you call regularly up and down the East Coast plus at every Annual Square Dance Convention, you're an accredited Caller Coach. When you walk in the room, you can't let your hair down and play. You've *got* to behave. You're *Betsy Gotta!*"

How right I was.

I was safe in those days. NOBODY knew me or knew that I was learning how to call. I could show up at a dance, play around, and let my hair down (stop laughing or else!)

Fifteen years later, I'm in the same boat as Betsy was back then.

Guess what? Now you are, too.

*Welcome to the fish bowl!*

You've attended caller school, and now proudly wear your GCA badge. Even if you don't do anything but wear the badge, you're announcing to the world that You're A Caller.

This means that your dancing life, as you formerly knew it, is suddenly over. (*Hah?*)

What you wear and how you act suddenly become very important. You're in the spotlight every time you walk into the room - whether you're calling or dancing.

As a caller ... your clothes and behavior can impact whether or not people hire you.

This year, I showed up to dance at a fly-in where I had previously been on the calling

staff. One afternoon, while waiting for the last dance to start, I chatted with the girlfriend of the fly-in chair. She told me two very interesting things:

- She was impressed that she saw me dancing in the Mainstream hall at this year's fly-in. (She knows that I dance and call C2.)
- She was *not* impressed by the person who had shared the stage with me the previous year. That person had spent all his break time far away with his cell phone plastered to his ear. He didn't spend any of his free time interacting with the dancers. (I did.)

The Bottom Line: *people notice what you do when you're on stage and off... and they remember it when making hiring decisions.*

I can recall two instances where Times Squares hired straight callers because they were friendly and helpful to club members on the dance floor ... not when *calling*, but when *dancing*. Both of these callers are now regulars on the IAGSDC convention circuit.

Here endeth the first lesson.

The second part of this message is my congratulations to those who attended Caller School, those who called at the Graduation Dance, and those who called at the GCA tips during convention.

Our (now former) Vice President, Tim McNamara instituted a tradition of having me serve as MC for the Graduation Dance.

This year's dance had a good representation of students from the Beginner and Intermediate sections.

*[continued on next page]*

*“Life In The Fish Bowl”, continued.*

Unfortunately, only two or three of the Advanced students participated. I’m guessing that’s because all the other Advanced students were [*\*cough\* \*cough\**] busy helping lay the dance floors. (Yes! That *must* be it!)

I’m also happy to announce that several of the people attending school for the first time knocked the ball out of the park during the Graduation Dance. (I won’t name names... you know who you are.) Bravo! (And so much for the “Beginner” label!)

Equally gratifying was the marked improvement of the more experienced people who came back for a “tune up”.

Once again, I must thank the [All Join Hands Foundation](#) for their co-sponsorship of our school. Because of their very tangible commitment to our success, we’re now able to reach a much larger audience than before they came on board.

AJH funds also allow us to offer more scholarship money out of our own treasury. We came very close to filling all 36 available seats in 2006.

Thanks to AJH, we’re a long way from the days when we had to cancel coaches’ contracts because the high tuition made it too expensive for many students to attend.

*(NOTE: Our Treasurer suggests that you show your personal thanks to AJH by writing a check.)*

My opening message of the GCA season is another one of those instances when I fear that some people roll their eyes as they read.

So be it!

Until someone comes up with a better way of

phrasing things, here goes: The GCA is a group of very talented people, from wildly diverse backgrounds and with diverse levels of experience. It’s humbling being President of such a group.

As I begin my final year as GCA President, I will repeat what I’ve said from the beginning:

*If there’s anything I or the Board or the GCA can do to help convert your calling potential into reality, please let us know!*

Here’s to a successful year for all of us!



## GCA Announcements

*Looking for a few good men & women!*

Chi Chi Hoffner-Stolarick - [chichi3@adelphia.net](mailto:chichi3@adelphia.net)

Based on discussions at the 2006 Anaheim GCA meeting, I’m developing a list of callers who’d like to serve as coaches and teaching assistants for upcoming GCA Caller Schools.

If you’re interested, please send me a brief calling resume stating your qualifications and why you’re interested in serving as a caller coach or teaching assistant.

Email me at [chi.chi3@adelphia.net](mailto:chi.chi3@adelphia.net) or use my postal mail address:

Chi Chi Hoffner-Stolarick,  
178 Sunset Drive  
Pittsburgh, PA 15235.



## *Looking Ahead*

Nick Martellaci - [nmcaller@aol.com](mailto:nmcaller@aol.com)

In 2007, Alan Hirsch and I must step down from our positions as Treasurer and President, respectively.

According to our by-laws, we cannot run for a third term.

Anyone wishing more information regarding what's involved in taking on either of these positions can contact either one of us:

Alan Hirsch ... [treasurer@gaycallers.org](mailto:treasurer@gaycallers.org)

Nick Martellaci ... [nmcaller@aol.com](mailto:nmcaller@aol.com)



## *Treasurer's 2006 Report*

Alan Hirsch - [arhirsch@ris.net](mailto:arhirsch@ris.net)

Due to formatting limitations, the Treasurer's Report is presented on the following two pages:

**Fiscal Year Comparison Report**  
 08/09/2004 through 07/31/2006

Category	08/09/2004- 08/12/2005	08/13/2005- 07/31/2006	\$ Difference
<b>Inflows</b>			
Caller School Income:			
Meals	54.00	0.00	-54.00
Registration	1,875.00	1,875.00	0.00
SwapShoppe	107.00	89.00	-18.00
Total Caller School Income	2,036.00	1,964.00	-72.00
Contribution	2,139.32	3,935.55	1,796.23
Interest Earned	9.38	7.92	-1.46
Membership Dues	1,100.00	810.00	-290.00
From Caller School Fees	4,500.00	1,575.00	-2,925.00
From GCA Checking	0.00	450.00	450.00
<b>Total Inflows</b>	<b>9,784.70</b>	<b>8,742.47</b>	<b>-1,042.23</b>
<b>Outflows</b>			
Ads	15.00	0.00	-15.00
Bank Charge	1.25	0.00	-1.25
Caller School Expense:			
Audio-Visual	187.50	0.00	-187.50
Lodging	1,182.00	2,785.30	1,603.30
Meals	832.12	252.69	-579.43
Stinends	1 200 00	1 800 00	600 00

**Fiscal Year Balance Sheet Comparison**  
As of 07/31/2006

<b>Accounts</b>	<b>08/13/2005 Balance</b>	<b>07/31/2006 Balance</b>
<b>Assets</b>		
Cash and Bank Accounts		
GCA Checking	8,437.57	8,376.61
Total Cash and Bank Accounts	8,437.57	8,376.61
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>8,437.57</b>	<b>8,376.61</b>
<b>Liabilities &amp; Equity</b>		
Liabilities		
Other Liabilities		
Caller School Fees	1,050.00	1,725.00
Total Other Liabilities	1,050.00	1,725.00
Total Liabilities	1,050.00	1,725.00

## Confessions of a (Calling School) Virgin

Arlene M. Kaspik - [amkaspik@sbcglobal.net](mailto:amkaspik@sbcglobal.net)

Attending my first GCA caller school reminded me of my early days of serving as a cantor/leader of song at a suburban parish. Stage fright figured strongly into each experience.

The biggest difference was that, as a beginner cantor I had a whole week to lick my wounds and gird up for another stab at things. In caller school, you had a couple of hours to make the same adjustment.

I have to confess that I felt a little smug walking in to class. I had three or four singing calls ready to work on. They weren't memorized, but I had a good running start on each of them. I also had at least 15 or 20 plus sequences written. My feeling of security went down the tubes in the first hour of class when we were told that we would be limited to Mainstream calls.

**Day One** began with introductions. We were each asked to tell a little bit about ourselves and summarize our calling experience.

The first person to introduce himself said this was his second year in the beginner's class.

Several others had been teaching for a couple of years already.

And there I stood with approximately eight minutes of calling experience.

My next surprise was an incredible attack of stage fright. The first time I was asked to call something I chose a singing call I was working on, I became lost in the sequence more than once and felt duly humbled.

After caller school, Kate (my partner)

laughed when she read my critique sheet because Anne Uebelacker wrote "BREATHE!" in letters about 2 inches high.

On **Day Two** we were asked to randomly move people around and resolve the set on command.

I did OK (for a REAL beginner) until the very last call when, faced with two choices, I inevitably chose the wrong one. More than once.

At last, by accident, I successfully resolved the square. When Todd Fellegly suggested that I do it again to build my confidence I asked if a root canal was an available option.

**Day Three** with Mike DeSisto provided the perfect conclusion for this stressed-out caller wannabe.

Mike started the day by saying something like: "I'm supposed to talk to you about ethics and the business side of calling. You're still learning to resolve squares so I don't think you need to worry about the business side just yet. As for ethics...don't do anything stupid."

We spent the rest of the day working on the material we would use for the caller school's dance. Mike gave us pointers on stage presence, mic technique, timing, vocal technique and other practical info. This was the point in class where things finally started to come together for me.

Calling at the GCA caller school's dance was one of my high points at this year's IAGSDC Convention.

Beginners were encouraged to split a tip and I jumped at the chance to team up with Ross (Cow Pattie) Lopton.

*[Continued on next page]*

*“Calling School Virgin”, continued.*

We had become fast friends in class and I felt extremely confident and comfortable working with him.

On Friday morning we met for an early breakfast and a final rehearsal. We danced one another's routines and provided each other with last minute encouragement and advice.

After dancing a couple of tips, I went up to my hotel room to freshen up and change clothes.

Nick Martellaci served as emcee for the event. When we were introduced Ross and I went on stage together. After setting Ross' music I left the stage. Ross led the floor through several sequences and even stirred the bucket for my singing call.

When I took the stage I was astounded at how calm I felt. It certainly helped to see so many members of Chi-Town Squares out on the floor smiling back at me.

I started up my music and, kept my composure during a glitch, and the next thing I knew the room was filled with thunderous applause led by the many members of Chi-Town Squares. I tried to remember to smile and nod and quickly clear the stage for the next caller.

There were several things about this experience that took me by surprise.

For one thing, I was delighted with the support provided by GCA, the instructors and our teaching assistant. I was also pleased with the camaraderie that quickly developed among class members. There wasn't a single prima donna in the group. People were willing to share what they knew with you. I was also pleased and surprised at the

social events that were incorporated into the schedule. Most of all, I was surprised at the feedback from dancers, callers and vendors attending Friday's dance.

Would I recommend GCA caller school to others? Yeah, you betcha! (Oops...that's the verbal fluff for a certain Plus call in Chi-Town!)

♪ ♪ ♪

## Call-O-Matic

Michael Maltenfort - [maltenfort@yahoo.com](mailto:maltenfort@yahoo.com)

I rarely perform singing calls. I don't call Mainstream or Plus often. As a dancer, I've always preferred hash to singers.

Whatever the reason, I don't have much practice with singers, and haven't taken the time to memorize singing call figures.

To help me get by, I use something I wrote during my first GCA Caller School, when our coaches told us that we should all know some basic singing call figures.

Looking through the figures, I noticed many figures were identical but for the get-in (“Square Thru 4, Do Sa Do” vs. “Heads Promenade 1/2, Pass the Ocean, Extend”).

Being a mathematics and logic professor, I spliced the various calls together into a flowchart, which has proven indispensable over the years. Whenever I need an easy singing call figure with good flow, I whip out my diagrams and have at.

This year at caller school, when Allan Hurst saw one of my flowcharts, he immediately dubbed my diagram, “the Maltenfort Singing Call-O-Matic” and *insisted* that I submit it to the Call Sheet.

*[Continued on next page]*

*“Call-O-Matic”, continued.*

Fortunately for all parties concerned, the name shortened itself to “Call-O-Matic” in subsequent discussions.

Rather than giving him the original Call-O-Matic, which I had improved only slightly over the years, I decided this was a good time for a complete overhaul.

I found additional modules by analyzing singing call figures I downloaded from Andy Shore’s Web site:

<http://www.moveto.com/sd/singers002.pdf>

I used existing sequences because the trick, of course, is not just to find equivalent modules, but also ones which use the same number of beats, or nearly so.

The Call-O-Matics use easy, danceable figures. I avoided difficult or awkward setups, such as Right and Left Thru from parallel waves, or Do Sa Do to a Wave followed by Linear Cycle.

I also didn’t use “over-flow-y” choreography, such as following Swing Thru by either Centers Trade or Acey Deucey.

There are now three Singing Call-O-Matics.

This issue contains the first Call-O-Matic, and Allan promises to publish the other two in following issues.

While I’m not an expert on singing calls, I think my figures time out well. I tried using the CALLERLAB timing lists, but they’re not perfect. You should practice with the figures created by the Call-O-Matic so you can adjust your performance timing as needed.

Call-O-Matic #1 contains 19 distinct figures. In the next issue, I’ll give you a few

equivalents which wouldn't fit onto the page.

If my Call-O-Matics are interesting or useful to you—or if you write your own—please let me know: [maltenfort@yahoo.com](mailto:maltenfort@yahoo.com).

Enjoy using the Maltenfort Call-O-Matic – which appears on the page immediately following!

We'll make the Call-O-Matics available for download as PDFs in the near future. (Or so Allan claims.)

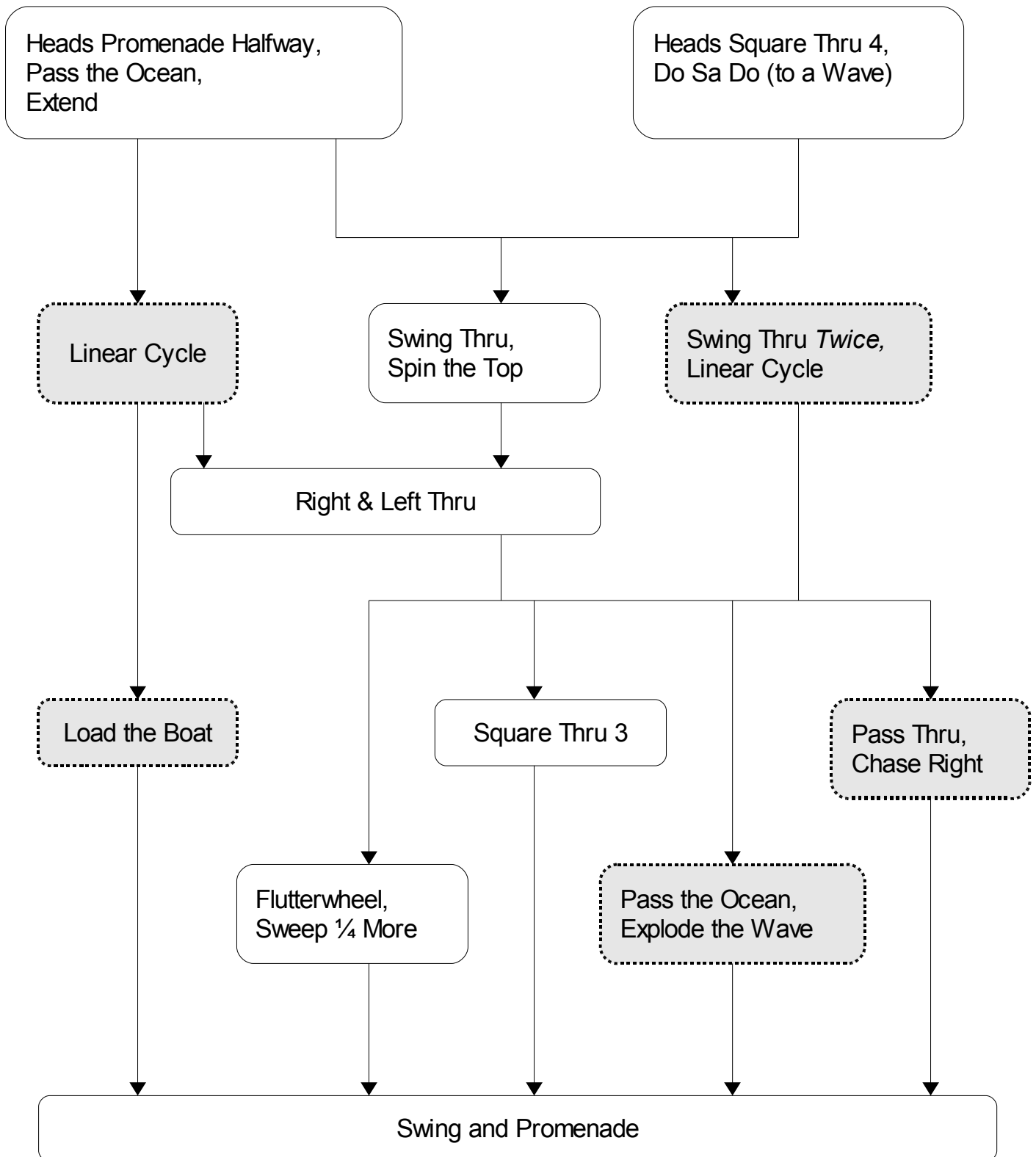


# Call-O-Matic 1

© Michael Maltenfort, August 2006 - maltenfort@yahoo.com  
Graphic cleanup by Allan Hurst - allanh@kiscc.com

Mainstream

Plus



## Starting Iron City Squares

Chi Chi Hoffner-Stolarick - [chichi3@adelphia.net](mailto:chichi3@adelphia.net)

I started dancing with the Chesapeake Squares in 1992. In 1995, a job transfer landed me in Pittsburgh. To my disappointment, "The Iron City" had no gay square dancing. Since I'd dabbled in calling for a couple of years, I decided that perhaps I could start a club.

The first thing that I did was to attend the GCA caller school in Chicago. Shortly after, I purchased my first Hilton turntable.

A local gay bar allowed me to use their dance floor. I advertised in our local gay paper ... and 12 brave souls showed up for my first class!

That first season held a steep learning curve for me. Every week, I had 12 live checkers as I tried to teach people who never had square danced before.

Nine months later, I graduated my very first class. It was a very moving experience for me to watch my dancers at their very first fly-in!

In 1996, Iron City Squares was admitted into the IAGSDC.

In 1999, after much heated discussion, we joined the local square dance federation after moving our dance location to a church. This was a big issue, as our local federation doesn't allow member clubs to meet in bars.

As we enter our 11th year, our club has changed. My calling has improved.

We dance Mainstream through Advanced. Our club members have been extremely active in the local and state square dancing federations.

We're experimenting with a new 6 week introduction to square dancing program. We held our first (and last) fly-in.

*[Editor's Note: Tell me if you want another article from Chi Chi on Iron City Squares' fly-in – what went right and what went wrong.]*

The most surprising thing for me is the composition of our membership. I've always joked that I have the straightest gay square dance club in the IAGSDC, but we have the statistics to back it up: about 75% of the Iron City Square members are straight!

One constant over the past 11 years has been our club members' dedication. Having a "live square" week after week for the past 11 years has been a life-saver for me in terms of professional development. Honing my calling skills has been easy when there's at least one square filled with eager dancers who are willing to try anything. Our dancers have always been supportive of my calling development.

Starting a new club is a lot of work for a caller. Not only did I have to worry about my role as a caller, but I had to wear many other hats, such as marketing, promotion, and fundraising.

Although we've remained a small club (around 15 members), we've also become a circle of close friends.

While square dancing is our focal point as an organization, it really is the close friendships which tie our group together.

The social component of square dancing has always been very important to me. I think this has made the hard work more than worth it!

♪ ♪ ♪

## Calling At The Montreal OutGames

Bill Eyer - [billeyler@aol.com](mailto:billeyler@aol.com)

*[Editor's Note: This report was excerpted with permission from Bill's weblog -- located at <http://billeyler.livejournal.com> -- plus a brief intro which Bill wrote just for the Call Sheet.]*

The Ottawa Date Squares arranged with the Montreal Outgames Cultural Committee ("MOCC") to host square dancing as an event during a portion of the larger games itself. This created very high expectations for square dance attendance, resulting in a slate of *seven* callers and *seven* halls in a major downtown hotel.

As time progressed, low preregistration made it obvious some paring down of the event was necessary. Four of the callers were sent letters two months out, saying their services would not be needed. The hotel was changed in the final two weeks.

The "surviving" three callers were Don Moger from Montreal, Anne Uebelacker from Burnaby BC ... and me, the lone U.S. caller.

We entered into this with very little information and no input into the MOCC's planning process.

All three of us felt disjointed on arrival. There wasn't an event contact other than "Chris the sound-guy", who didn't know *anything* about square dancing.

We found the MOCC had set up chairs on a platform for judging, and huge speakers for music ... but didn't set aside a place for callers to stand and call!

Happily, Chris was amenable to our suggestions, and let us hook up a Hilton MA150 so we could control the sound a bit. He popped in at the beginning and end of the dances to make sure everything was OK.

Thursday, I think it was, the air conditioning went out. That was awful, but we made it through the evening. I was sweating up on stage, and can imagine how unpleasant it must have been for the dancers. We finally convinced the management to fix the thermostat.

We all knew that with 65 dancers registered it would be thinning the energy to have two halls as scheduled, so we all called either in duet, trio, or solo for the whole 18 hours of the event, keeping breaks shorter, and trying to find something for everyone present.

We were thrilled to have visitors stop by. I don't know WHY they stopped by, but their energy was the highlight of the dancing when we got them up to do intro dancing!

I think I did two intros and Anne and Don each did one. A number of the experienced dancers chatted up the newbies, so maybe some positive reinforcement happened. I didn't get to talk to the dancers one-on-one, but I think there were a number of Australians and Germans, and maybe even some local Montreal folk.

It was difficult to do any Advanced or C1 dancing, since many dancers were off at other events. I think we only had one C1 tip, and that was Wednesday at some point. Most of the Advanced was "A1 Lite". We may have only called four Advanced tips during the entire event.

I lost it at one point during the last MS tip on Thursday night. Somehow, the music I selected for the final singer ("On the Road Again") started subtly speeding up while we were calling.

This happened while using *my* laptop and I didn't have a clue what to do to fix it, since

*[Continued on next page]*

*"Outgames", continued.*

we were in the middle of the song.

The music sped up by itself, going from about 128 bpm to 160 bpm by the end of the song. I was laughing so hard, I couldn't see the dancers through my tears. We made it to the end somehow. Anne and Don were laughing, too, and hopefully it wasn't TOO obvious to the dancers that something had gone technically wrong!

Except for the spectators that passed through the hall, I felt little "presence" of the Outgames at all, since events were scattered throughout the city, mostly away from us.

Even the "Cultural" events were scattered. The chorus festival, leather cotillion, and C/W dancing all were either over by the time we arrived or held in too-distant venues that we just couldn't get to easily.

There was one *major* challenge for us: one of the local straight dancers who came was totally blind.

Not only was it challenging for us to call choreography that wouldn't get him disoriented, but many of the dancers in his square didn't know what to *do* with a blind dancer to give him clues.

I couldn't tell what his female partner was saying, but every time he missed a call, she would simply stop, start frantically shaking her head NO, and looked like she was babbling to herself. That was pretty scary, since it was impossible for the square to carry on.

I could tell that the blind dancer *could* dance, and had an appreciation for the beat of the music. His female friend and he even danced a waltz during one of the breaks!

Blind dancers aside, breakdowns during the Mainstream and Plus were the rule, rather than the exception, no matter what any of the three of us did.

Anne had one instance where it took a couple of dancers over a *minute* to get into a position where they could do a "Ladies Trade." Eek!

I did enjoy as always working with the super-calm Anne, and Don and I got along well.

Both Anne & Don are full-time callers, with 30+ years of experience, so I felt a bit like a new kid, with just fly-in calling and one-night-a-week club calling experience.

We all were there for the 18 scheduled hours, instead of the 10 hours we were each booked for, since we made it up as we went along. None of us called every tip, so it worked out nicely, and we weren't as exhausted as we would have been at a convention.

♪♪♪

## Calling My First "ABC" Dance

Andy Shore - [andyshore@gmail.com](mailto:andyshore@gmail.com)

*[Editor's Note: The following was excerpted with permission from Andy Shore's weblog, at <http://otterpop58.livejournal.com> ]*

**Date:** August 5th, 2006

**Time:** 12:05 am

**Subject:** ABC - easy as 123

Tonight was my first of four Friday nights in August calling beginning square dancing at Manhattan South, the local gay C&W bar.

I really didn't know what to expect in terms of turn-out, and as 8pm approached (our adver

*[Continued on next page]*

*"ABC", continued.*

tised start time) there were only a few people in the place. We waited a few minutes and by 8:10 or so, there was a crowd.

We started in a big circle, completely filling the dance floor. After a few intro calls, I broke them into squares. We had six squares for the first two tips, and five for the final tip.

I taught most of the "A" dance calls from the [Square Dancing ABC program](#) (which I had not used before), with a couple of exceptions: I left out "arm turns" and Weave the Ring, and added Star Promenade, Back-track, and (all 8) Single File Promenade.

Between tips 2 and 3 we had a single Main-stream square "demo". I resisted the urge to do all 20 calls of my usual intro night.

The bar had done a good job promoting it with video ads and posters up in the bar (*my face on the men's room wall!*), and a print ad in one of the local publications.

I also got the (Fort Lauderdale) Movie Bears and a friend to mention it in recent emails, and I sent out about 60 emails to friends.

Southern Country (a local gay C&W dance group) also mentioned it in an email to their members, and their performance group, Sundance, came out tonight in support.

It helped that a small group of friends was at the bar to celebrate a birthday. Some others were there to view a 9:30 PM preview performance of an upcoming benefit show. This meant it was a good, busy night for the bar.

The owners were thrilled with the turnout. People seemed to have a really fun time.

I was a bit nervous starting out but eased

into my typical 1st-nighter banter and we all had a good time. I got to use my brand new wireless headset mic (a/k/a my "Madonna mic") for the first time (my old one gave up the ghost), and I liked the new mic set a lot.

It was interesting having to explain a few extra things to a mostly [non-square-]dance-oriented crowd.

I hope it will generate good buzz for the upcoming Friday nights.

It also looks like we'll get an article (with a profile of yours truly) in another one of the local gay rags in time for the next class (or at least the last two). A reporter interviewed me earlier this week, and she was there tonight to watch and take some pictures.

*[Editor's Note: a link to the resulting article can be found in the "Rumors & Newsbits" section of this issue.]*

*If you're interested in learning more about the ABC program, which was mentioned in the July/August 2006 CALLERLAB "Directions":*

<http://www.squaredanceabc.com/>



## Music Survey Results

Allan Hurst - [allanh@kiscc.com](mailto:allanh@kiscc.com)

The results of the first music survey were ... interesting.

I'd have liked to see more submissions. By publishing the results so far, I'm hoping to get a reaction (and votes) from more people.

### Most Popular Singing Call Titles:

- *Billy Does Your Bulldog Bite* (Royal 127)
- *Lion King*
- (No others received more than one vote.)

### Most Popular Patter Titles:

- *Just A Little Bit More* (TNT 298)
- (No others received more than one vote.)

### Singers Every Caller Should Know:

- *Mountain Music* (RR 196)
- *Oh, Lonesome Me* (Big Mac 111, Rhythm)
- *Tennessee River* (Royal 601)

Don't see your favorite song on the list? It's not too late to send in your vote!

Email your vote to [allanh@kiscc.com](mailto:allanh@kiscc.com), and I'll incorporate the results and update the survey for the next issue!



## Rumors & Newsbits

Anonymous

GCA Past President **Andy Shore** has made it into South Florida's "Express Gay News", with an article on his community gay square dance lessons at Manhattan South, a popular gay bar in Fort Lauderdale.

The article by Sheri Elfman is entitled "*Swing Your Partner*", with the summary "It would be a do-si-don't to miss Andy Shore's square dance lessons at [Manhattan South](#)" and appears in the August 12, 2006 issue of

## [Express Gay News.](#)

The article can be found by clicking [here](#), or by typing the following into your browser as a single line:

<http://www.expressgaynews.com/2006/8-12/locallife/feature/dosido.cfm>



Wondering what **Sean Crist** has been up to lately? Sean is working for the next 18 months in Northern Italy on a project that will utilize his knowledge of linguistics, Italian, German and Perl (a computer language). The full story of Sean's assignment can be found on his personal website, [here](#), or by typing the following into your browser:

<http://www.panix.com/~kurisuto/bozen>



## Staging an "Intro To Calling" Seminar

Jim Malloy - [komono@comcast.net](mailto:komono@comcast.net)

John Oldfield - [john@oldfield.com](mailto:john@oldfield.com)

*[Editor's Note: Many GCA members don't have clubs to call to. What happens when a club doesn't have a suitable local caller?]*

*This article briefly describes one response to this thorny situation, which was to locate new callers to develop by staging an "Intro To Calling" seminar, in this case conducted by John Oldfield.]*

### **Jim Malloy, Grand River Squares:**

In spite of the 90 degree weather, a good time was had by all at our first annual mini "Introduction to Calling" seminar, sponsored by our club, the Grand River Squares, at our fly-in over the summer of 2006.

*[Continued on next page]*

*“Staging an Intro to Calling”, continued.*

For over two years, our club has discussed the idea of holding such an event for people who wanted a chance to see what calling is all about, but couldn't attend the GCA Caller School held during the annual Convention.

At our last fly-In in April, we asked John Oldfield if he'd teach such a class. He was very supportive, and instantly made himself available. We decided that a one-day format would be appropriate.

The instructor set, we needed a place, date and time ... and of course, some students.

We planned the school to coincide with an annual dance that we hold at Camp-It, a gay campground just south of Saugatuck, Michigan, which had recently opened a roomy new building.

Camp-It agreed to host the Caller's School free of charge, along with our usual square dance afterwards. We planned the event for Saturday, July 29th, 2006.

We ended up with seven anxious students, representing three regional clubs: Grand River Squares, Cadillac Squares and Chi-Town Squares.

All were Advanced-level dancers, with widely varying degrees of calling experience.

Despite a lack of calling experience, our group brought much enthusiasm to the school.

John Oldfield did a great job. He gave a brief history of Western Square Dancing, as well as an account of the rise of gay square dancing and gay callers. *[Editor's note: I wouldn't object to "someone" creating a future article on this topic for the Call Sheet.]*

Then came the scary part – we actually had to use “the microphone”. After some nervous beginnings, we all started to feel more comfortable. John taught us a great deal in a short time, from the concept of zero calls to how to resolve a square.

We had a great group of volunteer dancers from many area clubs who allowed us to practice on them. They helped make the day a success, as well.

Everyone who participated came away feeling they had learned something and most hoped to be able to move forward and expand their calling skills.

We hope to make this an annual event and will try to open it up to a wider area to include more clubs and prospective callers.

#### **John Oldfield:**

I think it's important to encourage other clubs to pick up this idea and try it. I think such seminars will encourage people to attend GCA Caller School.

The GCA trains more callers per year than most of the straight clubs put together.

Many of the LGBT clubs are growing or maintaining membership, while many all of the other clubs are shrinking.

It's also my belief that we're the future of square dancing and we're the callers of the future.

I also had a revelation during this session. An attendee came up to me saying, "I'm so glad you held this event; I realize now that I DON'T want to do this."

*[Continued on next page]*

*“Staging an Intro to Calling”, continued.*

My revelation: *not everyone is cut out to be a caller.* An Intro to Calling seminar which includes mic time is a highly useful way to help such people realize this for themselves.

The other six -- which included at least three current teachers -- learned a great deal and are now motivated to attend GCA Caller School for some formal caller education.

Kudos to Harlan Kerr, Bill Eyler, Kris Jensen, and Darren Gallina for implementing the "Intro To Calling" sessions at the IAGSDC Convention, and for allowing me to "research" their material.

Thanks also to Elmer Sheffield and Paul Marcum (both legends in Square Dancing) who worked with Harlan to create a seminar for people interested in learning how to call.

This particular seminar worked well because we had three clubs to draw on for attendance. I've since made myself available to conduct this workshop for other clubs and regions.

I haven't been more excited about calling in a long time!



## Showmanship

*Mike DeSisto*

### Introduction

*Allan Hurst*

One of the serious challenges facing both the GCA and CALLERLAB communities is lack of a “community memory”.

As older callers retire or pass away, the knowledge they've worked so hard to perfect over a lifetime of calling ... is lost, sometimes forever. (Ask Kris about C1 singing calls

some time.)

This creates a lot of wasted time and effort as new generations of callers have to “reinvent the wheel”... not to mention less-happy dancers.

Several years ago, I had the pleasure of attending a caller school taught by Mike DeSisto and Anne Uebelacker.

The biggest problem we all had was that Mike was such a compelling speaker ... that *every single one of us forgot to take notes or turn on tape recorders.*

Everyone I've spoken with who attended that school has been kicking themselves all these years for not recording Our Mr. DeSisto.

Forewarned is forearmed. This year in GCA Caller School, when it was Mike's turn to lecture, I whipped out my laptop and started transcribing [almost] every word in real time.

It helped that I once spent several years working as a legal transcriptionist.

My hands may have been sore and stiff from typing when Mike was done, but I was grinning from ear to ear. *I'd finally managed to capture a piece of Mike's brain and put it on paper for others to share!*

Presenting Mike's lecture here ensures that one small piece of caller history and technique that *won't* be lost to the ages ... and it's a *GCA Call Sheet* exclusive!

Note: This is a very long article, and I gave serious thought to breaking it up into multiple

parts which would run as a serial through several issues.

*[Continued on next page]*

*“Introduction to ‘Showmanship’”, continued.*

However, I felt that the impact of the presentation's content would be diminished by breaking the article down into several pieces.

Presenting the lecture in a single long piece creates an information overload – which is *exactly* what it was like to hear Mike give this talk in person:

**Mike DeSisto on “Showmanship”**

*From a lecture delivered during the 2006 GCA Callers School in Anaheim, California.*

*Live transcription and editing by Allan Hurst.*

I can only tell you what comes to me naturally. I don't know of a magic sequence you can do, or a magic joke you can tell.

My experience has been that when I first get to a dance, I try and get here at least a half an hour early, get my stuff set up, and as people come in the door, I stand next to the door and greet them.

Most of 'em don't even know who I am. I smile and say stuff like, “Nice dress.” I walk over, get a coffee, talk with the kitchen crew ... just idle chat, which is getting me on a level with them [*establishing rapport*].

Listen, I'm *not* the “star”, I'm *the caller*, and just another person.

Without all these dancers, without the people in the kitchen, without the people taking money at the door ... *I'm nothing*.

So then when the dance starts, I'll do maybe a tip or two, then I'll start walking around [*and working the room, greeting each person*] until I've shook hands with every person in that place, [*saying*] “Is there anything I can do to make your evening better?”

Because my goal is to make every person in the hall that night smile and have a good time until the end of the evening. If you're calling in a hall, and you start off with 15 squares, and by the end of the evening, you're down to, like, 13 squares – meaning you lost two - at the end of the evening, you're doing pretty well.

You lose two squares out of 15, you've probably got people whose feet are tired, or who have to go home and pay a babysitter or something. That's fine.

But you lose 10 out of 15 squares, and boy, have *you* got a problem. *That's* not tired feet.

Another thing I do is during calling straight dances, during the round dances, I walk in the [*clockwise*] opposite direction of the [*counter-clockwise*] dancers, and start playin' around and messin' with them, to further establish rapport.

Dancers are basically [*attention whores*]; they *love* for people to pay attention to them.

Now me, I love messing with people's heads the same way each time I see 'em.

I had one dancer in Wenatchee [*in Washington State*]. I told people to stick out their left hand, and she just couldn't do it. So I drew a little “L” in ink in the middle of her left hand so she could tell which was her left. And her whole club started calling her “Lefty”. And the next time I called, like a few months or a couple years down the road, she wasn't there, and she came in late, and I said on-mic “Hey everybody, it's Lefty!” and the whole room turned and looked at her and cheered.

Your goal is to make the dancers forget about everything outside. You're there to get

*[Continued on next page]*

*“Showmanship - Introduction”, continued.*

them in the palm of your hand and make 'em have *fun*.

How *you* act affects the dancers. If you stand like a slug, they're gonna dance like slugs.

I have an extra-long mic cord, just so's I can walk down and mess with the squares in front. Messin' with the ladies dresses or the guys' retractable towel hooks, etcetera.

Little things, like playfully grabbing the edge of a woman's skirt, then letting go ... anything to connect with the dancers.

I *love* picking out a dancer who looks like she could easily be embarrassed [*and plucking her out*] from the middle of a grand square and singing to her, and then putting her back into the grand square.

I try to pick out people who can take it. I don't pick people who I think can't take it.

As soon as you walk into a hall, eyes are gonna be on you, because you're the main event.

Everything you do, they're gonna see ... including both good and bad things.

You want to show them the good things, and not do any bad things.

Just *one bad action* can make a bad name for yourself.

In Europe, I go over and I just call. I don't mess around, because that's not acceptable there. Those people are there to *dance*.

**[Editor's Note: I've omitted a long story about Mike not sleeping with a dancer when he was travelling, when he could have if he wanted to.**

**The point of the story was:]** Your reputation as a caller doesn't just extend to the dance hall. You need to behave appropriately around dancers.

Although you may not like it, you're a celebrity of sorts.

*[Question from the audience: “How do you get the dancers all excited like you do?”]*

It's hard for me to tell you how I jack people up. I don't know how I do what I do ... I think that God just touched me in the head and said “you're a square dance caller”. When I was 8, I told my mom I wanted to be a caller. And I practiced 8 hours a day, 7 days a week, Monday to Monday.

Part of being a good showman is knowing what the hell you're doing. Get up on the stage and get calling right away. Don't get set up in front of the dancers. Have your shit together before you get up on stage. Have your computer booted up, and your song cued up ready to go.

For a guest tip [*such as a GCA calling slot*], if you're working with cards, pick out 6 or 7 *good* (easy) cards that are easy, low-maintenance, good-dancing, with a high probability of success. Deliver the patter, then deliver a nice (*easy!*) singing call.

Patter calls are supposed to be a *little* punishing. Singing calls are for *rewarding* dancers, and are supposed to be *easy*.

A lot of times, you only get one shot; *don't* shoot yourself in the foot.

Go up there and be professional, and try and connect with the people you're calling to.

I just try and connect with people. Basically,

*[Continued on next page]*

*“Showmanship”, continued.*

you can make yourself look good or bad. It's not anybody else who makes you look good or bad; it's yourself. Get up there, lay your stuff down, push the button, and start calling.

I remember Seth [*Levine*]; I heard him calling [*early in his career*], and thought he was pretty good. I asked Seth once to join me, and he complained, “I'm not prepared.” I said “you're as prepared as I am; shut up and get up on the stage!”. This helped establish Seth's reputation. The little fart's calling more than I am these days!

When you DO get your chance ... take advantage of it! You can promote yourself by just being yourself. And be humble. Everybody wants to hear you sound good, but nobody wants to hear you talk about being good.

I listen to tapes of every caller I can, because they make me think of things to do on my own; I see things that he or she did, and I go *Whoa, I didn't know you could that from here!*

Plus, if I like something they do, I STEAL it. I don't write the whole sequence, but I'll steal that acey-duecey/spread/mix and roll gimmick and incorporate it into my stuff!

Morsovato was an Indian caller when I was like 12 years old. This guy would be shuffling along in his little moccasins on stage while calling, and I watched him, thinking, “Whoa”! *That's* star quality. *That's* showmanship.

When people are callin', they focus in on the floor, and nothing else matters. My energy, body and mind are just directed towards THIS, right HERE.

I don't even know what my body does most

times while I'm calling, because I'm just hooked into the calling. I don't know why the things that happen while I'm calling do, because ...they just happen. You get the crowd excited, and they start chewin' on each other.

At the end of my tip, I want the crowd to be so noisy that the cuer has a hard time. I love making cuers pissed off at me because the floor is still buzzing with what a great time they had. Then the cuer puts on a slow round dance just to spite me. [*Mike pauses here with a big, wide, slightly evil grin on this face.*]

I start off normally with a singing call, patter ... just to warm 'em up. In that first tip, give em a couple of circulates. If they get the right spot ... it's gonna be a good night. If there are problems with an all 8 circulate ... you're in for one hell of a night, and your work is cut out for you.

It's harder for you guys, because you walk in, and the first card you do, you blow up the floor. Second card, you blow up the floor. How do you know what the dancers are like? What happens if I have a huge stack of cards, and the dancers can't dance any of 'em?

If you can push checkers, I think you can sight call a little bit. Because you're sight calling while pushing your checkers.

I think (sighting) gets you closer to the dancers, because instead of reading what's here, you're making eye contact with the dancers while you're sighting. You have your finger down on the card and you're concentrating on your finger, it's kinda hard to get excited about what the floor is doing.

The rush I get from a floor having a success

*[Continued on next page]*

*“Showmanship”, continued.*

makes me want to get another success ... which builds up with the dancers.

When I say to a floor, “*Are! You! HOME?!*” and they all roar back “YES!”, it sends a chill down my spine.

If I can make just two people smile in a place where they came in grumpy, then I'm doing my job.

It's not about YOU [*callers*], it's about THEM out THERE [*dancers*].

Every caller has something unique that people remember them for. Kopman can't sing, but he writes seriously hard patter...he's written most of the calls we use today. His brain should be pickled and preserved, 'cause there's nobody else like him.

MY mind is just not there [*at an abstract level with Lee Kopman's*]. My mind is in the *yippee-ki-yo!* mode.

A lot of callers are good at their stuff [*day jobs involving math and science and management*] and are mathematicians; not me.

Try and find your niche and then hang on that niche and exploit it a little bit. Pick out a thing that people will remember you for.

Chi-Chi does “8 up to the middle and chi-chi”. What the hell's a “Chi-Chi”?!

I like just calling “square through four!” [*without specifying heads or sides*] and watching the dancers fight over who gets to square through.

I love doing “Move On” for gay groups, because they're agile enough to *respond*.

Pick out something that'll get you known.

Maybe it's a singing call you do, some ass-kicking song that only you do really well.

They like *him* [*jerks head over in Barry Clasper's direction*] because he *bounces*.

[*Barry starts laughing.*]

Pretty soon there's people on the sideline bouncing along with him. Ed Foote wears plaid pants and a striped shirt. Sandie, she's got that low voice...

As far as showmanship, everybody has a personality. Not everyone's personable, not everyone's good at joke-telling, not everybody has charisma. Charisma is something that's pretty much born into you. I think it's just a thing that you either have it, you have a little bit of it, you have a lot of it, but *you have what you have*.

[*Question from the audience: “Can you teach us how to be like that?”*]

I don't know if you can *teach* someone charisma.

Tony O[*xendine*] and Jerry Story and Johnny Preston ... these guys all have charisma oozing out of every pore. I love standing next to them, because they're so good, they make *me* look good.

When I'm calling with Chi-Chi or DC or [*some other newer caller*], I'm gonna do everything I can to make them look good ... 'cause I've already built my reputation, and I want them to have a little of that, too.

[*Here Mike told a story about an uncooperative calling partner who kept “forgetting” to reset the record for Mike, and who kept “innocently” asking people “Is everybody*

[*Continued on next page*]

*“Showmanship”, continued.*

*home?” after Mike had already gotten everyone home.]*

Now, that guy made *himself* look bad by trying to make *me* look bad.

When you've got two people up here [*on the stage*] who are working well with each other, the dancers go into a [*positive*] frenzy.

When you get two callers trying to one-up each other negatively, the dancers will hear it, and that's bad.

As long as the floor is smokin', you're both just trying to make it better and better and better, and that's good.

I went to do a fly-in, and one guy didn't show, so I was going to have to use another guy [*a newer caller*] to help me, and he refused, saying he'd rather do it himself!

So here's this new guy, and he had a chance to gain a huge amount of experience. He could have been a part of something a lot huger if he'd tried ... and he didn't. If you have a chance, take it, and go for it! Your confidence will build over time.

*Take advantage of the opportunities that are offered to you.* Right now, calling probably isn't the easiest thing in the world to you.

But if you dedicate yourself to it, and practice, then you'll get confidence, because it'll get easier.

Confidence is so important. If you get up there like a dog pooping razor blades, your audience is gonna pick up on that. If you don't trust the dancers, how are they gonna trust you? I expect dancers to know their moves, and I treat them like it, and they respond accordingly.

You gotta have patience. What's really easy for you guys [*Mike points at class*] is hard for him [*points at Barry*].

The jobs you guys do [*computer programmer, other highly technical careers, etc.*] we wouldn't be able to do.

You [*computer*] guys write stuff that's hard ... because every card has to be fantastic. So let me ask you ... how many of Anne's cards are *fantastic*?

[*Anne's cards are*] great, but they're not *fantastic*. You can describe her cards in three ways: WIN-WIN-WIN.

Every card is a win proposition for the dancers. That's why they flock to her. All her cards work, they're short, to the point, and the dancers win. Great success. *That's perfect* .

There are places where people want really hard stuff. In those circumstances, go in, give it to 'em – short - to the point - and get the hell out.

I can't personally work from cards; I've gotta be down on the floor. Everybody has to go with the strengths that they have. Zoom in on your strengths, and identify what you're bad at, and work on those areas. And people will start coming around, and asking you for dances, and guest tips, and you'll be successful.

You've gotta be focused on what you're doing. Sight calling isn't that hard; you just need to know the list, and what people's starting and ending positions are.

When you don't know what to do, do a Relay the Deucey, and try to catch out two people – any two people – and pair 'em up. The

[*Continued on next page*]

**“Showmanship”**, *continued.*

rest is mechanics.

Joking with people is also showmanship-  
“Who's your corner?” *[pause]* “Some time tonight would be nice, guy.”

All I'm lookin' at is the dance floor; tonight, this is MY room, and I'm gonna go out of my way, any way I can, to make sure that people have a good time.

With gay square dancing, it's mostly men, so squares get really big *[because men swing through with each other at the end of their long arms]*.

When squares get too big, tell 'em to scootch in. Hell, I don't even know what a “scootch” is. But *you're* the ones in control.

When I first start my dance, I try to shoot for at least the first 30 seconds, to get 'em right here *[points at the palm of his hand]*. And I keep 'em there with a death grip.

Sometimes I have to prove myself to a group, and that's where I do some nice, easy smooth choreography. And then for the first singing call, I open with “square through four” (no heads or sides) ... and they begin to figure out what I'm all about.

If you have a defeatist attitude, they're gonna punish your ass for *everything* you do. If you can gain their confidence and get 'em on your side right away, you're a winner.

I'm so nervous about Friday night *[trail in dance for the 2006 IAGSDC convention]* that I know I'm gonna have a stomachache Thursday night. I'm callin' with a live band that I've never heard before. But how many people get a chance like that, to call with a live band in front of a group of really hot dancers?

But every dance I do, I pray, *please let me say the right things, let me know the right things, let me do the right things to make everyone have a good time.*

I'm *always* scared to do dances, and that's a good thing.

If you're not nervous about doing a dance, then you're overconfident.

You'd think by now, I'd be pretty confident, and I am, but damned if I *still* get nervous before a big dance!

You've gotta be able to go up and know what you're doing. Don't be standing up there with your joe in your hand. *Know! Your! Trade!* Know what you're doing when you go up there.

*[Question from the audience: “What kind of music should we use?”]*

You gotta be careful with your choice of music. I've heard just some hellacious stuff – songs that were like agitating, I can't WAIT until this is over. People have some really strange stuff. If you're calling for straight groups, some of them that are like that 70-plus age group – you've gotta choose 'em (music) wisely and not blare 'em. If you're doing a GCA tip, take some music that's standard and easy to dance to. Once you piss someone off, you've gotta grovel to try and get 'em back. Don't weird 'em out the first time they ever hear ya.

***[Editor's Note: Next issue, we'll publish Mike & Barr's lecture transcript, in which they talk about how to select square dance music.]***

The only thing I can stress about choreography is: “flow, flow, flow, flow, *flow*”.

*Don't* make people push with the right foot all

*[Continued on next page]*

*“Showmanship”, continued.*

night; give 'em a chance to push with the left-foot once in a while.

Don't do things that are gonna hurt people; and I'm tellin' you, if you watch their faces, you'll know you've done something bad.

Remember, *dancers want to dance*.

Perfect example: one club asked me to teach their Plus group, and I'm doin' this Plus club's dance two times per month.

Now this club really wants tough, tough stuff. I'm not really that kinda caller, but I did what they asked, and I started with five squares, and eventually it dwindled down to two.

One of the dancers finally told me that the word is out that you're no different than \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_, because you're punishing people just like they do.

I said “But that's what you asked for! Tell me what you want. I can call one of my regular dances.”

And that's when I learned ... *dancers just want to dance*.

*[Mike pauses here for a long minute, thinking, then continues.]*

Square dancing is *not* for everybody. But there's a place for everybody who *wants* to be in square dancing.

If you want to dance Basic, or Contra, or Challenge, there's a place for you. Some people can call Challenge like a maniac, but they couldn't call a Mainstream dance to save their ass. Find your niche and *work it*.

Me, I haven't developed a following in Challenge because I haven't worked at it.

*The Dosido can take up your Whole Damn Life.* I was workin' 38 weekends a year doing square dance calling, and I didn't hardly see my wife except during the week when we went to bed.

Doing that many weekends and dates takes time and money. When you have to take off work – unless you have vacation pay – you're looking at losing three days of pay *[each weekend]*, plus all of the work you have to catch up on.

So this is a big commitment that you have to make. It's a *rewarding* commitment – when you walk into a hall and see a buncha people having a good time because of *you* – it's like coming down off of an acid trip. Working a weekend like that is a special thing for me.

But you've just *gotta* make that commitment.

If you're not gonna commit, *don't bother*.

You just need to maybe apply yourself a *little* more, and push just a *little* bit harder. It'll all come back tenfold if you *push* yourselves a little bit.

Be professional. Get up there and act like you've been up there 5000 times and this is old hat.

The first time I ever heard Chi-Chi call, I said “Who's Chi-Chi?” and I thought, *I'm gonna make kind of a special effort to get in to hear him*.

He was making the best of the opportunity that he had; he got up there and was doing a helluva job. He took advantage of the chance he had.

Like when you get a chance to call a guest

*[Continued on next page]*

*“Showmanship”, continued.*

tip at this festival [IAGSDC Convention] this weekend ... give it your best shot. Even for a lunchtime “slop tip” with only one square. Because that's 8 people who'll tell 8 more people, and I'll have *three* squares next time.

Never take it out on the dancers who *did* show up. Even if you have just that one square, you gotta treat 'em like there were 20 squares.

*[Barry interjects:]* This GCA slot thing is *perfect* for you guys. You know in advance what you're going to have to do, and where, and what the crowd will be like. That's an opportunity and an advantage over the straight *[callers]* who wander around never knowing whether they're going to be invited to do a tip or not. You need to do the work necessary to prepare yourself for your GCA tip.

*[Mike continues:]* Boot up your computer *before* you go, get everything ready, walk up onto the platform, plug in, and *start calling*.

You take a straight caller, they'll be hanging around the caller room for days waiting for someone to show up, just so they can do one singing call. But with you guys, you have a lot more things set up. You've got the opportunity, *you just have to go for it*.

*[DC asks: “When you look out at the floor, how do you decide who you're going to go mess with?”]*

*[Mike replies:]* Well, if they're women and they have nice hooters ... *[waits for laughter to die down]*.

No, seriously, I like picking women that look like they might be a little bashful, and I can pick on 'em but I won't hurt their feelings. Or women who are real outgoing and will be giggly. You've gotta be careful to not pick

out someone really sensitive.

Now men ... I like picking on guys who are big and gruff and don't smile enough. I *love* to walk up to the tall ones and look up real slowly and ask if they're having a good time. “Yeah. Why” And I say, real slow and scared like, “*Because you're a big guy and you're the type that I wanna make sure has a good time.*”

Get a feeling for how *[the dancers']* body English is and the look in their eyes. You can tell a lot in just 10 seconds with somebody how they are *[by watching their facial expression and body language]*.

*[Pam Clasper interjects:]* Barry would sometimes pick on me, or a close friend, when he was first getting started. So if you're uncertain about who to pick on, pick on a “plant”, and then pick on other people who you don't know.

*[Barry responds:]* The key is, Mike does what he does because that's an extension of his personality.

That's really what showmanship is; you're gonna take some part of you and project it to the dancers.

You may magnify it into some kind of grotesque parody of what you really do.

You'll figure out eventually who you should and shouldn't pick on.

I don't feel that I'm good at creating a rapport with the floor as it is. I just use my music and voice to get the floor feeling friendly.

*Not everyone is a showman.* You don't have to do things like other callers do. Do something that feels real to *you*, and project *your*

*[Continued on next page]*

*“Showmanship”, continued.*

personality over the mic. If you're artificial or forced, the dancers will pick up on that.

*[Mike resumes:]* Everybody has a different personality. I have a dumb personality. That's what I do. “Tag the line all the way through, boys, scratch the girls' backs. Girls u-turn back. Boys – *quit scratchin'!*”

I love calling people's attention to little details like people yawning in a back square.

I hate it when callers call everything in a monotone, without any humor.

*[Barry:]* You have to figure out what parts of yourself you want to project over the mic; hopefully, the *pleasant* parts.

*[Mike:]* People appreciate a good show. If you can, buddy up with somebody and practice something together, like a singing call. Shove each other into doing way better than you can do by yourself. Just don't compete with each other.

I hope that this little time here made some kinda sense.



## Next Issue ...

*Allan Hurst*

Just as this issue was going to press, *Andy Chong* sent in a terrific article about the recent Mainstream Program proposals and votes at this year's CALLERLAB conference!

Now I'm looking for someone to write a companion piece on how CALLERLAB program committees and voting works to run with it...

Many newer callers are curious how clubs get started. At Convention this year, *Ett*

*(“Just Ett, Hon!”)* ~~McAtee may have forgotten~~ but *\*I\** remember that she promised me the story of how the Ettseteras started. It's a great story, and I can't wait to publish it!

*John Oldfield* has not only been teaching Chi-Town Squares' students for many years, he's been busy writing for their club newsletter. John has graciously given us permission to reprint some of the best of his “Wrong Way Grand” columns in future issues, as examples of how to better teach our dancers.

*Bill Eyley* has promised a tutorial on Hexagon Squares.

Also coming up next issue: another installment of *Michael Maltenfort's* Call-O-Matic!

For professional development, we have a transcription of another terrific GCA Caller School lecture, this one by *Mike DeSisto & Barry Clasper* on “Music Selection”.

Plus whatever *you* happen to send in ... ☺



## Colophon

The Call Sheet is composed in 12 point Arial. I'd much rather have used Helvetica, but one works with the tools one has at hand...

Layout was performed using OpenOffice.org Writer version 2.0 on Microsoft Windows XP Professional.

OpenOffice was chosen due to its interoperability with Microsoft Office files, ability to be run on a variety of platforms, low cost (free), and ability to export information easily into PDF files that can be easily read using Adobe Acrobat.

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