

The Call Sheet

Professional Journal of the Gay Callers Association

September 2008

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“How hard could it possibly be to edit a professional journal for square dance callers, anyway?”

-- One of Allan Hurst's coworkers.

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

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Editorial Review Board: Bill Eyer, Brian Jarvis, Catherine Nesbitt, Lee Griffiths, Will Martin

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: <http://www.gaycallers.org>

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

Acknowledgments



Thank you, All Join Hands!

At each year's GCA Caller School, the caller coaches' and teaching assistants' expenses are paid through donations, tax-deductible to the amount allowable by law, to the **All Join Hands Foundation**.

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



Thanks to our retiring board members!

Vice-President.....Chi-Chi Hoffner
Secretary.....Michael Levy

The 2008-2009 GCA Board:

President.....John Oldfield
Vice-President.....Ken Ritucci
Secretary.....Arlene Kaspik
Treasurer.....Michael Maltenfort
IAGSDC Delegate.....Ron Legters
Alternate Delegate.....Brian Jarvis
Presidential Advisor.....Nick Martellacci

Editorial: Don't Know Much About...

Allan Hurst – newsletter@gaycallers.org

Welcome back from “Touch A Quarter Century” in Cleveland!

The first issue following our yearly IAGSDC convention always strikes me as important, as it ushers in new board members, a new membership year, and new classes for us to teach.

This year's convention was a bit stranger than usual for me. A small project I started a couple of years ago has mushroomed into a three-part undertaking of huge proportions: it's now called the **IAGSDC History Project**.

A couple of years ago, to prevent the knowledge from being lost, I started digitizing the book “Ten Years IAGSDC: A Collection Of Pages From Our Memory Book.”

The **Ten Years Goes Digital** project was derailed from July 2007 through June 2008 while I underwent 48 weeks of treatment for Hepatitis C. This involved staying home *all* weekend, *every* weekend. It was pretty icky, because of both the side effects and having to basically put my life on hold for a year.

I'm pleased to report that both the project and my life appear to be getting back on track, if a bit more slowly than I'd like.

The Ten Years project led quite naturally to: “well, what about the following 15 years?”

I figured that since Ten Years. would be done by the end of 2008, that I'd start working on a 25 year version, called the **10/25 Project**.

Unlike the Ten Years project, I can't sit home and work on this one quietly on evenings and weekends. I'll need to assemble an army of volunteers to interview IAGSDC dancers,

callers and vendors all over North America, Europe, and Japan.



Somehow and suddenly at this year's convention, the *unofficial* 10 and 25 year projects became *official* IAGSDC projects ... and the IAGSDC board surprised me by adding a *third* component, called the **IAGSDC Archival Project**.

This consists of taking a *huge* amount of archived materials currently stored in [Karl Jaekel's basement in] Denver and cataloging, photographing, and scanning it. *All* of it.

Once digitized, it'll all go onto the IASGDC website, probably in the form of a wiki. The final phase of the project is to find a permanent home for all of the originals, for both conservation and research purposes.

What does this have to do with the GCA Call Sheet? The GCA is an integral part of the IAGSDC's heritage and history.

This explains why you may see a few more caller and club profiles and historical articles than usual in upcoming Call Sheets for a while. Some articles will be extracts or summaries of research material gathered for one of the above mentioned projects.

So I'm looking for *your* stories, photos, and accounts of early GCA history, people, and events, to publish, both here in the Call Sheet *and* as part of the 25 Years Project.

Send in *your* story, your *club's* story, or even a story you have about someone else!

- **Allan**



In This Issue

This particular issue fought me tooth and nail at every step along the way to publication. I'd originally intended to create a themed issue, but a number of articles just didn't materialize in time to make our publishing deadline.

All of the "missing" articles were delayed due to perfectly reasonable circumstances. The only *unreasonable* part of the equation was *me*, since I saw the original theming for this issue fall apart. (Never mind what it was; it doesn't matter now. I've learned my lesson: gather themed material at least two issues in advance, if not three.)

So while this isn't the issue I'd planned, I still think we have a good selection of articles and photos regarding the GCA, IAGSDC, and the 2008 IAGSDC convention in Cleveland.

Since this issue follows the annual GCA meeting, it's "business first", starting with **Michael Maltenfort** and the ***GCA Treasurer's Report***.

Next up, **John Oldfield** talks about the people who make the GCA do what it does, in ***Prez Sez: Meeting the Challenge***

I'm especially pleased to report that the Call Sheet is generating some commentary, such as **Alan Hirsch's** viewpoint article, ***Comments on Styling***. (More, please!)

Courtesy of **Brian Jarvis**, we have some great photos of ***GCA Members at Touch A Quarter Century***.

In a previous Call Sheet, **Nick Martellaci** proposed a revised teaching order for teaching DBD Plus. In this issue, you'll find the long awaited writeup ***Update: Teaching DBD Plus***.

The newly-degreed **Ett McAtee** has become

the GCA's unofficial biographer, and she "does her thang" again in ***Meet Your New Vice-President: Ken Ritucci***.

Oh...back to **Nick Martellaci**. He never stops working on his own professional development. Here he is again, writing enthusiastically of a book on vocal technique that he feels may be useful to GCA members, in ***Buy This Book!***

Your Humble Editor wraps up this issue, writing about ***Getting Over My Fear of Calling Intro Tips*** by calling intro tips at the 2008 Utah Pride Festival in Salt Lake City, where recruiting started for Temple Squares, a new IAGSDC club. (You'll hear more about them in future issues.)

Enjoy!



Ett McAtee shows off her new Master's Degree.

Treasurer's Report

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Treasurer's Report for September, 2008 Call Sheet

The 2008 GCA caller school was a great success. The school sold out, with thirty-six students who learned a lot. This was our first year selling out the school since 2004! Everything was run very smoothly by Ken Ritucci, who has since been elected our Vice President for 2008-2010.

The school also went well financially. Our biggest costs, the caller coach fees and the lodging for our coaches and TAs, were reimbursed in full by the All Join Hands Foundation. Due to their generous support, once again we charged only \$75 for caller school. AJHF has supported the GCA caller school every year since 2004.

Relative to the 2007 school, we had both increased revenue and increased expenses. The increased revenue came from having eleven more students, and from vastly increased sales from the Swap Shoppe. Special thanks to Darren Gallina for donating so many new records this year! (Everyone should please think about contributing to next year's Swap Shoppe. Got records you don't use? Know any callers who are retiring?)

Our expenses increased for various reasons. Some costs, like hotel, were unable to be controlled. Another big jump in expenses was for supplies. This was partly because Ken provided more material than in previous years: each student received a professional spiral-bound handout with lots of good information and tips. Our costs for supplies also increased simply because we had more students this year.

The details of our caller school income and expenses are below. As you can see, there was a net profit of \$625.28. In gratitude for their generous help this year and in previous years, the GCA board has voted to donate this profit to the All Join Hands Foundation.

There were also seven "full scholarships" which the GCA board awarded to students at this year's school. The scholarships cost \$150 each. Since they were paid for from the GCA general funds, these costs do not appear below. Each scholarship paid for the student's \$75 registration fee and also a \$75 stipend, provided at the school, to help defray expenses.

Please consider enrolling now for the 2009 GCA school, which will be Monday, April 6 to Wednesday, April 8, in Washington, DC. We already have booked Todd Fellegly and Anne Uebelacker as caller coaches, and the first several students are already registered! It's not too early to register---Caller School is under seven months away.

Finally, for those who didn't renew your 2008-2009 GCA membership yet, please send me by snail mail \$15 and your renewal form. Even if nothing has changed, please fill out the form and mail it with your payment. Membership payments were due August 31, which is the end of our fiscal year.

Information on membership and 2009 GCA caller school are available on our Web site: <http://www.gaycallers.org>

Treasurer's Report GCA Caller Schools: 2007 and 2008

<u>Income</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>Increase</u>
Registrations @ \$75 (incl. scholar.)	\$1,875.00 (25)	\$2,700.00 (36)	\$ 825.00 (11)
Swap Shoppe	<u>\$ 35.00</u>	<u>\$ 377.00</u>	<u>\$ 342.00</u>
Total	\$1,910.00	\$3,077.00	\$1,167.00
 <u>Expenses</u>			
Caller Coach Fees (3 coaches)	\$2,100.00* (\$700 ea.)	\$2,250.00* (\$750 ea.)	\$ 150.00*
Lodging for coaches & TAs	\$2,894.22*	\$3,440.80*	\$ 546.58*
Lodging for VP, vocal coach	\$ 826.92	\$ 961.20	\$ 134.28
Meals, Gratuities, Tax	\$ 300.54	\$ 355.24	\$ 54.70
Supplies, Printing, Postage, etc.	\$ 593.05	\$1,135.28	\$ 542.23
Accidental Overpayment	<u>\$ 100.00</u>	<u>\$ 0.00</u>	<u>\$ (100.00)</u>
Total	\$6,814.73	\$8,142.52	\$1,327.79
Caller School Income	\$1,910.00	\$3,077.00	\$1,167.00
Caller School Expenses	- <u>\$6,814.73</u>	- <u>\$8,142.52</u>	- <u>\$1,327.79</u>
Caller School loss (before donation)	- \$4,904.73	- \$5,065.52	- \$ 160.79
AJHF donation received	+ <u>\$4,994.22*</u>	+ <u>\$5,690.80*</u>	+ <u>\$ 696.58*</u>
Caller School profit (after donation)	\$89.49	\$ 625.28**	\$ 535.79

* Expenses reimbursed from All Join Hands Foundation

** Profit donated back to All Join Hands Foundation



Prez Sez: Meeting the Challenge.

John Oldfield – john@oldfield.com

In Cleveland this past July, I had the opportunity to chair the GCA annual meeting. My focus was on attending to all of the old business, discussing anything new, getting a couple of people elected for vacant positions ... and being done with all of this in less than an hour.

Technically, since we started late, I didn't hit the last goal. But as the time from meeting open to meeting adjourned really was less than an hour I'm still claiming it. OK, maybe I only get half the points...*this* year.

It was a good meeting. You all finally let me sit where I could see – and it was an eye-opener! It seemed like there was a higher attendance than in the past.

We had a number of distinguished guests this year at the meeting, both in person and in spirit. All are deserving of recognition:

- **Four members of the *Chi Town Shakedown 2010* committee** attended, to become more familiar with us and create better ways for GCA and conventions to work together.
- The (*sold out!*) GCA school staff was also in attendance. Thanks to **Anne, Barry, Betsy, Ett, Kris and Sandie** for stellar performances at the school! Thanks and congratulations to **Ken Ritucci** for a great school and for stepping up as Vice President.
- Special thanks to **Brian Keating** who served as GCA/Convention Liaison for *TAQC*, and to all the liaisons for future conventions. The Liaison is invaluable for communication between the association and the convention committees. I can't tell you the number of times we said, "*Brian, we need ____*", and there was an email the next day telling us it was handled.
- Speaking of **TAQC**: What a nice, tightly-run ship! Thanks to **Michael Spayd and the entire convention committee** for giving GCA callers great opportunities and *ten additional hours* of exposure!
- **Howard Richman**. Howard coordinates GCA calling slots at each year's IAGSDC Convention. This is a difficult task and Howard has been handling it seamlessly for many years. Like Gordon (keep reading), he is another person who does what he does for the association, not for recognition.

...and then there was **Gordon Macaw**.

Gordon attended our meeting because I asked him to. Gordon sat in the last row at the very back of the hall because Gordon does what he does for the GCA, All Join Hands Foundation, and the IAGSDC, not for Gordon.

Gordon (as executive director, with a board of directors) administers All Join Hands, which makes a major contribution to the running of our GCA school. He seemed a little ill at ease

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[Prez Sez, continued]

with the recognition at the meeting but I firmly believe in acknowledging groups that support our efforts. AJH does that. Every year.

THANK YOU, AJH!

I've instructed Allan Hurst to include this in every issue of the Call Sheet, because it reminds us that AJH is standing behind us as we try to promote square dancing:

The Caller Coaches' and Teaching Assistants' expenses are paid by donations, tax-deductible to the extent allowable by law, to All Join Hands Foundation.

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

Please thank Gordon and the AJH board the next time you see them.

My focus for this year was not my own idea. I had made the point of acknowledging that over half of the Cleveland "Touch A Quarter Century" staff callers were GCA members. All of the Coaches and Teaching Assistants were also current members. Brian Jarvis suggested that he was going to try to get the entire DC Diamond Circulate staff to join the GCA. *You GO, Brian!*

I think this is a *great* idea. Why not encourage these callers to join the GCA and make their decades of experience and enthusiasm for Square Dancing our own?

So this year we are actually going to have a membership drive. A *two-part* membership drive.

Now, I expect that all of you current members will renew, but I know that each of us knows someone who was a member before that could benefit by becoming a member again.

- Part one of the drive is to reclaim lapsed members.
- Part two is to go after the staff of future conventions and make Brian's vision a reality.

Those of you who are conventions liaisons: Please forward your staff caller list as soon as it is finalized to Arlene Kaspik so we can get these people on board!

I will be offering thanks to Arlene (and Kate Reed!) many times in the coming years, both for Arlene's willingness to serve as Secretary of the Association, and for Kate's willingness to allow me to draw Arlene further into my world. Arlene already does my half hour class warm ups and has been willing to step in on many occasions.

So...my thanks also go out to:

- **Nick Martellacci**, presidential advisor,
- **Chi Chi Hoffner** (retiring vice president),
- **Ken Ritucci** (new vice president),

[continued next page]

[Prez Sez, continued]

- **Michael Maltenfort** (treasurer),
- **Michael Levy** (retiring as secretary),
- **Arlene Kaspik** (new secretary),
- **Ron Legters** (IAGSDC delegate),
- **Brian Jarvis** (alternate IAGSDC delegate), and
- **Allan Hurst** (editor of *The Call Sheet*– who not only does a great job, but also catches my occasional mistakes or omissions).

You people have made my world go round this year. Thanks for the help!

See you on the floor!

- **John**



Viewpoint: Comments on Styling

Alan Hirsch – ahirsch@acm.org

I wish to comment on a some points made in a couple of articles in the March 2008 *Call Sheet*.

Michael Maltenfort wrote about teaching *Follow Your Neighbor* [page 20-21] as "*Split Circulate 1/2*; then *3/4 Arm Turn* for the in-facers and *U-Turn Back* with the flow for the out-facers." I like this approach and I look forward to Michael's future articles on teaching other calls with simpler and easier to understand definitions.



Rich Reel wrote about teaching gay styling [March 2008 issue, page 26-27]. I have a problem with the flow of the "Highland Fling" styling for *dosados*, especially in the all-too-common singing call sequence: *Square Thru Four / Dosado To A Wave / Swing Thru*.

This sequence (and equivalent ending in *Dosado to a Wave / Swing Thru*) creates what I feel is overflow – one-and-a-half turns – for the boys. I personally get very dizzy doing that, so when I hear the call *Dosado*, I say "back-to-back, please" to the person I am facing, put my hands behind my back, and do a back-to-back *Dosado* ending either facing or in the wave.

I receive some glares on occasion, but for the most part, this technique allows me to dance the singing call without falling down in a daze. It's only the *Dosado to a Wave / Swing Thru* sequence that bothers me. I feel this particular combination is called too often. I'll very happily do "Highland Fling" style *Dosados* during a *Right And Left Grand* or *Weave The Ring*, for example.

My suggestion is that callers look at this flow, and follow *Dosado to a Wave* with something that involves a change in rotational direction. (For example, *Centers Trade*.)

Also, a note on timing of *Dosado* calls in general. The "back-to-back" version takes six beats, while the "Highland Fling" can be done in only four. Often, the caller shorts the timing, resulting in calling *Swing Thru* too early for those of us who do the back-to-back version of *Dosado to a Wave*. Adding to this problem, most dancers rush the beat anyway.



GCA Members at *Touch A Quarter Century*, the 2008 IAGSDC Convention.

Brian Jarvis – jarvis@office-assist.com



Anne finds a new calling...so to speak.



Gary Young



GCA Caller School Dance



*The Evil Twins turn into The Evil Triplets.
(Pam Clasper, Anne Uebelacker, Sandie Bryant)*



Dayle Hodge and Anne Uebelacker call the leather tip . (A rear view of this photo is rumored to exist.)

♪♪♪

Teaching DBD Plus: The Followup

Nick Martellaci – nmcaller@aol.com

Last fall, I shared with you my hopes and dreams for a Dancing By Definition (“DBD”) Plus Class at Times Squares. Now the class is over, and it's time to let you know how things went in the *real world*.



The Students

To begin, not every 2007 Mainstream graduate was allowed to take Plus. Only the better dancers were invited. This was our first attempt at ending social promotion in square dancing. Unfortunately, those better dancers hadn't attended club night over the summer so their Mainstream skills were not all I'd hoped they'd be.

Along with the 2007 Mainstream grads, we also had several long-time Plus dancers wanting to give DBD dancing a try. I found it very flattering to have these experienced dancers willing to learn something new.

As it turned out we did more All Position Dancing (“APD”) - than true DBD. *“The best laid plans...”*, and all that!

The Angels

Last but not least, after the first few classes several angels decided they wanted to dance all night and not get tapped out to let other angels dance. So that added even more names to the list of paying customers (as well as adding to the delight of the club Treasurer!)

The Class

For the first few weeks, I pretty much kept on track. Each week we did a different variation of *“...and Roll.”* We spent several minutes each week dancing easy Basic and Mainstream calls from 2-couple same-sex pairings. Whenever possible we learned 2 couple Plus calls from same-sex groupings to prevent dancers from getting sex-specific roles planted in their brains.

The Challenge

By the time we started in on the big calls, in particular *Relay the Deucey*, the weak dancing of the 2007 grads began to rear its ugly head. Because they were using so much energy remembering and trying to get the Mainstream calls right, they had less room in their brains to learn and recall the Plus material.

With the help of my class archangel, when I realized what was happening, I changed the class focus. Rather than beat these very motivated and enthusiastic dancers over their

[continued next page]

[DBD Plus, continued]

heads with material they just weren't getting, I decided to drop the DBD/APD aspect of the class, and instead focused on teaching the Plus list from standard positions.

While I wasn't thrilled with the change in plans, I realize now that this is the same type of adjustment we make every time we call a dance. We walk in with a plan in mind. Sometimes the dancers are able to perform every choreographic twist and turn we can think of. Sometimes they can't and we wind up calling a different dance than the one we'd initially planned...and that's OK.

Lesson learned: *Standard Plus over the course of one year; then DBD/APD Plus during a different class once students have mastered the basics.*

[Editor's Note: What about teaching DBD/APD Mainstream as a prerequisite to Plus? I know, I know ... now I say something.]

The Thrill of Victory

As I mentioned earlier, I was extremely flattered to have so many long-time Plus dancers pay to attend this class in order to sharpen their skills. I wore myself out patting myself on the back after getting the students to dance *Teacup Chain* after only seven minutes of teaching and walk-thru. I was equally proud of my Post-It solution for teaching *Relay the Deucey*.

[Editor's Note: Nick's discussion of the Post-It technique is queued up for the next issue of the Call Sheet.]

The Agony of ~~Defeat~~ Trying Something New

I was preparing to label this paragraph "The Agony of Defeat" ... but I don't believe it really was a defeat.

- The new dancers learned Plus.
- The experienced dancers got a taste of what DBD/APD dancing is like along with the joy of helping the newer dancers learn a program they love.
- I learned more about teaching than I'd thought I would.

The next time this class is offered, all parties involved (including me) will know *exactly* what's expected.

Do I believe that DBD/APD Plus should be added to a club's curriculum? *Yes*. I now believe that such a class should be a *requirement* for taking Advanced.

Would I be willing to teach DBD/APD Plus in the future? *Definitely!*

Did I make it through the year without spending time in a heavily padded cell? *Absolutely!*



Meet Your New Vice-President: Ken Ritucci

Ett McAtee – justetthon@comcast.net

Ken Ritucci, caller extraordinaire, was recently elected the Vice President of the Gay Caller's Association. Many of our GCA membership were first exposed to Ken at the GCA Callers' School at the 25th annual IAGSDC Convention, "Touch a Quarter Century," recently held in Cleveland, OH.

In a continuing column of GCA luminaries, I thought it would be nice to learn a bit about Ken.

**Background**

Ken hails from Waterbury, Connecticut. He grew up the "baby" of the family, always in the shadow of a big brother and sister. Currently residing in Massachusetts, Ken shares a wonderful life with his partner Carol. He is very proud of his two children, Michael and Michelle, from a previous marriage. Neither square dance, although they were exposed to the activity all their lives. Go figure.

Dancing/Calling

Ken began dancing in 1974, quickly building a love and passion for the activity. Starting out in Connecticut in his hometown, the activity called his name during his college years. He currently dances and calls through C2. His calling career started when he was 17 years old in 1975, and to date, clocks in at 33 years of calling. He's the first to say that he went into calling blindly as a teenager, and decided that since he was already dancing seven nights a week, he figured calling was the next logical step. He attributes Al Brundage and Earl Johnston for careful mentoring and taking him under their wings as he learned the art of being a caller.

Schooling

Not many callers can claim to also be English majors. Ken majored in secondary education, with an emphasis on English at Southern Connecticut State College. He did manage to teach English for a few years after graduation and finds his love of education has prevailed in his dancing and calling experience today. One of the first square dance classes he taught was as a senior in high school, in a class of nine girls and two boys. The Crosby Dancers were happy to have Ken as their first caller.

Career

Calling is not currently Ken's primary source of income. Working for VHA in New England, Ken coordinates hospital purchasing vendor contracts and, at the time of this writing, has been with the company for three years. He has served in the medical sales industry for more than twenty years. Because of his love of education and reading, Ken also holds a Master's degree in Theology, and post-Master's work in theology halfway to a Doctorate, but says time is short

[continued next page]

[Ken Ritucci, continued]

these days to complete that Doctorate degree. Kudos for keeping his mind active and interested in a topic he loves. Having taught at the high school level once before, he now would like to teach someday at the college level, but has no immediate plans to pursue that goal.

Running a Callers' School

Having experience in teaching callers how to call since 1983, Ken finds the coaching activity both rewarding and fascinating. Ken is a member of the GCA, and has been a CALLERLAB accredited caller coach since 1991. He ran his own callers' school every year (after inheriting it from Brundage and Johnston), and revamped it into a program shared with Randy Page. This school, the apple of his eye, ran in Sturbridge MA for a number of years before Ken gave his half of the school over to Mike Jacobs in 1997.

Resurfacing, Ken started his own school in 2004 and named it the Northeast Callers' School in Manchester NH.

The Northeast Callers School attracts between 20-26 students per year. Guest staff in recent years includes Anne Uebelacker, Andy Shore, Ed Foote, Lee Kopman, and John Marshall. 2009 will feature Randy Dougherty and Todd Fellegly. In 2010 Ken's school will feature Barry Clasper and Sandie Bryant.

Ken is presenting a new school next summer, the NorCal Callers School with John Sybalsky, to be held August 20-24, 2009 in San Jose, California. Ken welcomes everyone to attend his schools.

Coordinating the GCA Callers' School

Ken first appeared at a GCA callers' school in 1996, having been hired by Andy Shore for the San Francisco callers' school. He taught that year with Deborah Carroll Jones and Frank Les-crinier, and has a strong interest in being on staff for future GCA schools. He finds the [GCA] process not much different from his own school. People attend to learn how to call, and Ken uses his innate abilities to organize and present clear, meaningful material to students.

His job as Vice President of the GCA specifically is to coordinate the callers' schools. Cleveland was his first appearance and his term as VP goes for two years, so we look forward to seeing much more of Ken in the immediate future. His goals are to lay a solid foundation for the school, and formalize certain procedures so things run smoothly from year to year.

Ken would like you to know that he is very excited in his new role as GCA Vice President. Through his educational training and background, Ken wants to provide the best curriculum possible to provide different points of view and a variety of instructors to keep things fresh and exciting. Caller education is very important to Ken, and this is apparent in the way he conducts himself during callers' school.

continued next page]

[Ken Ritucci, continued]

He encourages all to write to him on email, or call – his door is always open to the GCA membership. Email: kenritucci@aol.com or phone 413-734-0591.



John Oldfield, Brian Keating, Ken Ritucci at the GCA Caller School Dance in Cleveland.



Buy This Book!

Nick Martellaci – nmcaller@aol.com

Earlier this year I began experiencing tiredness and slight straining in my singing voice. Because my last vocal coach retired and left town several years ago I went into a mild panic. Not wanting to spend the time or money required to find another qualified coach I did the next best thing. I went to Amazon.com and searched for books on vocal technique.



Now that I've read through two of the three books I purchased, I encourage you to pick up a copy of "Set Your Voice Free" by Roger Love.

Breathing technique is covered in detail as well as proper placement of the mouth, lips, and tongue. But two things set this book apart: (1) an intense discussion of the middle voice and (2) a practice CD which allows you to vocalize with Roger Love guiding and encouraging you.

Working with the CD exercises I was able to gain more control over my upper range - without straining!

The middle voice, called the *passagio* in classical vocal training, bridges the gap between your normal (aka chest) voice and your *false* (aka "head") voice. (Chest and head refer to the parts of the body that vibrate when notes of varying pitches are produced by the vocal cords.)

Without control of the middle voice the only way to get beyond the brick wall you hit at the top of your chest voice is to shout. (Not pretty. Shouting is a great way to lose your voice - not the way to go if you have a busy calling schedule!)

After the initial squeaking and chirping you'll produce during your first attempts at these exercises your middle voice will grow in ease and strength. You'll discover notes you never knew you had in you.

Do yourself and your calling career a favor and pick up a copy!



Getting Over My Fear of Calling Intro Tips

Allan Hurst – allanhurst@gmail.com

While I long ago recognized the value of teaching callers how to call intro nights (also called “party nights” and “one night stands”), I’ve avoided any such gigs in the past simply out of fear of the unknown. I was also fearful of perhaps traumatizing some non-dancer for life through clumsy calling. (I never said I had logical fears.)

This past June (2008), I volunteered to assist Ross Lopton-Crawshaw in starting a new IAGSDC square dance club in Salt Lake City during Utah Pride weekend. At first, I figured I’d call some demo tips. When I thought about it, I realized there was no way to “work the crowd” without calling honest-to-goodness intro tips.

Working from an old transcription of one of Andy Shore's superb intro night scripts and a copy of Nick Martellacci's excellent article “Calling Fun Nights” (from the July 2007 Call Sheet), I nervously cobbled together a series of intro tips for non-dancers to take with me to Salt Lake City.

I spent several hours practicing, figuring that I needed to sound confident, high-energy, and professional. I worked with the intro scripts I'd written until I got them edited down to a series of explanations I could speak clearly and easily, without verbal fumbling.

When I arrived on-site at Utah Pride, I realized that there weren't enough [experienced] dancers to angel a square, and I'd be working only with non-dancers. Color me intimidated.

Here's what I discovered that day, as well as by poring over Andy's and Nick's work:

- 4 to 6 minutes is plenty of time for an intro tip at a festival
- On-mic energy levels are everything during intro tips
- *Don't* use square dance terms to define a call (mea maxima culpa!)
- Keep choreo simple and short
- Don't worry about boring the dancers; remember, this is all totally new to them
- Remember: *Circle Left* and *Up to the Middle and Back* may be boring to you, but you have to make them sound like the coolest and most fun thing in the world to the dancers. Sell that choreo!
- Don't worry about singing calls for a 6-minute intro tip

Intimidated or not ... what to do?

[continued next page]



[Intro Tips, continued]

I ended up teaching an abbreviated list in every intro tip, consisting of:

- How to form a square (Absolutely, this was the hardest part; I'd love to see other callers suggest appropriate phrases for squaring up.)
- Who the boys are
- Who the girls are
- Where "home" is
- Who each couple is (#1, #2, heads, sides, etc.)
- *Circle Left*
- *Circle Right*
- *Up to the Middle and Back*
- *Promenade*
- *Allemande Left*
- *Right & Left Grand*

...and for a six minute tip, that was plenty. The dancers were thrilled with just that short list.

I also found that using square dance music derived from contemporary pop music worked well. *Abracadabra*, *Barbie Girl*, *Believe*, and *Dancing In The Streets* were all warmly received.

However, some of my favorite songs for calling and teaching - *Bei Mir Bist Du Schoen* and *American Pie*, for example - didn't fare as well. This was a younger crowd than normally seen in an established IAGSDC club, and they wanted music they could recognize.

To my surprise, several dancers during the day sang along as they danced. (Especially to *Barbie Girl* and *Dancing In The Streets*.) Remember, these folks had never been told that dancers aren't supposed to sing while dancing! (My only problem with this was trying not to giggle.)

Even when I messed up, the dancers were enthusiastic. After all, they had nothing to compare me with except bored gym teachers in grammar school!

By the middle of the day, not only was I comfortable with calling intro tips, I was sighting everything without referring to any of my scripts, and surprising myself by having fun with it.

For me, this experience was a revelation, and helped me work through a longstanding and low-level fear of sighting. If I hadn't agreed to call intro tips at a festival, I wouldn't have had the opportunity for that breakthrough. I highly recommend that other callers who haven't previously done so, try calling a few intro tips. It was surprisingly fun!



Next Issue

Allan Hurst - newsletter@gaycallers.org

In an amusing (to me, anyway) demonstration of synchronicity, both **Michael Maltenfort** and **Nick Martellaci** discuss methods for easily teaching *Relay the Deucey*.

I'm looking for still more articles to increase the breadth and depth of technical information for our readers. Here are some articles I'm looking for at the moment:

- Teaching and/or In-depth analysis of a specific call (especially Mainstream through Advanced levels).
- Choreographic techniques.- resolution, DBD, APD, positioning, novelty tips, etcetera.
- Working with other callers.
- Microphone techniques.
- Calling to seniors/elders with possible hearing, comprehension, or mobility issues.
- Your favorite music ... and why.
- The business side of calling.
- Calling horror stories (especially if there's a moral to them, so that others don't repeat the mistakes).
- How to teach a class.
- Professional ethics and behaviors in Calling.
- Calling to developmentally disabled dancers.
- Tips for traveling callers.
- Cultural differences in calling to straight and GLBT clubs.
- How callers “suss out” a floor to figure out how strong the dancers are.
- Digital music techniques and “how-to”s.



Colophon

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

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

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

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