



CHATTER FROM THE CHIEF - Claudia Littlefair

At CALLERLAB's April Convention in Mesa, AZ, we had the privilege of meeting Vic & Debbie Ceder, webmaster-extraordinaires of www.cedar.net - a widely used website by callers, cuers and dancers.

A convention highlight was when they were both presented with CALLERLAB'S prestigious *Milestone Award*. This award is the highest award CALLERLAB bestows. Since the first one was presented in 1975, there have only been 71 recipients. The award recognizes individuals, and in this rare case, a couple who have made outstanding and significant contributions to square dancing.



Vic & Debbie Ceder

Vic is a computer programmer by day and caller for Mainstream thru C4 by night. Together, Vic & Debbie designed the website in 1999, and have spent countless, countless hours inputting, updating, organizing, re-organizing, and maintaining their website for the benefit of anyone and everyone who is seeking information.

An excerpt from caller Clark Baker's presentation to the Ceders, gives a clear picture of the amount of information and work that has gone into this valuable and practical website.

"Unlike most square dance websites, www.cedar.net is still around and better than ever. I expect most of you have used it, perhaps recently. Here are some statistics to give you a sense of what they have accomplished and maintain:

- *Square Dance Article Co-op – 420 articles.*
- *Caller and Cuer Database – 1,992 callers and cuers from 22 countries.*
- *Club Database – 1,193 square and round dance clubs from 26 countries.*
- *Choreography Database – 8,845 sequences.*
- *Events Database – 61 events listed in 2017 (197 in 2012).*
- *FAQ Database – 600 frequently asked questions and answers, including choreography questions and opinions.*
- *Square Dance Resources – by Country, State or Province.*
- *Square Dance Links – organized and curated.*
- *Square Dance Calls – 500 calls with their own definitions, examples and commentary, translated into five languages, respected and used around the world.*
- *Record Database – square dance music, cue sheets, and lyrics. The section includes 16,945 records, representing 376 record labels; 13,972 sound clips – yes, they have digitized that many records. (The website presents the first 30 seconds of sound.); 12,479 cue sheets – yes, they have typed in that many cue sheets; 3,702 lyrics."*

The "Square Dance Article Co-op" which has hours and hours worth of reading, is broken down into these subsections:

- | | | | | |
|---------------|----------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| • Informative | • Stories | • Editorials | • Round Dancing | • Interviews |
| • Promotion | • Dancing Outside the U.S. | • Caller Resources | • Humor | |
| • History | | • Challenge | • Miscellaneous | |

Best of all, most of the articles may be reprinted with no further permission from the authors and/or publications. Permission has been granted in advance for the reprinting with the stipulation that credit be given to the contributing author/publisher. The following two short articles were chosen from the 420 available from the Article Co-op.

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SWINGING TIPS - by Bill van Melle

Source: www.ceder.net

Swing (Your Partner) is one of the few square dance calls that requires much physical coordination; it also takes most people the longest to learn to do well. In fact, even some experienced dancers don't swing especially well (shudder!), and many simply refuse to really dance this call. This is sad, as swinging can be a lot of fun. You haven't had much practice yet, so don't worry if you still feel clumsy at it.

It's difficult to put into words what makes a good swing; nevertheless, listed below are some suggestions to think about (not necessarily all at once) as you practice swinging. We also strongly encourage you to seek out club members who *do* swing well and ask them for practice and feedback. Pat and I are certainly more than happy to help people out in this way.

- Your right foot moves barely at all--just enough to trace out a tiny circle around your central pivot point. It is your left foot that propels you.
- There should be essentially no vertical motion; you are moving in a smooth circle, not bouncing up and down.
- The strength in the position is in the man's right arm, with the right hand securely in the small of the woman's back; there is also some firmness in the woman's left arm. The remaining arms are held only lightly for balance--too much tension here makes the swing less fluid, and getting out of it clumsy. In fact, it should be possible for the woman to drop her right hand (man's left) entirely and not substantially affect the swing.
- Give weight. Sometimes we say "Lean back." This doesn't mean lean your head back, but rather your whole torso, a bit like starting to sit down. The idea is to let some centrifugal force play a role in the figure. Try this physics experiment most of us have done in our youth at one time or another: Take your partner's hands in yours, lean *way* back, and spin around. Feel that force in your arms? Notice how, once you got started, the centrifugal force let you spin rather smoothly, and you didn't have to work very hard except to hang on? A good swing should have some of this feeling, except your arms are in ballroom position.
- Look into each other's eyes. This isn't essential (some people are shy), but it's friendly and may help keep you from getting dizzy.

DEMOS - PARADES, PICNICS, SHOPPING MALLS, FAIRS, ETC -by Pat Tardiff

Source: www.ceder.net

About the same time I had begun to unlock my repressed emotions, I discovered square dancing. Dancing for me afforded me the opportunity to romp with joy and abandon. Once I overcame my embarrassment of the 'costume' worn for square dancing and began enjoying the joy of dancing with crinolines flaring and skirts flying, demos were attractive to me. I was shocked and offended the first time someone called me a 'ham'. But once I overcame my upset, I realized they were right. I was having a wonderful time and I didn't care who knew it. If that makes me a ham, so be it!

What do we, as the square dance community, present to the general public when we do a square dance demo? I have participated in numerous square dance demos of every sort; parades, picnics, fairs and shopping malls. One in particular stands out as a positive experience. This demo was well orchestrated. It was comprised of a cross section of dancers from all ages - with one common denominator - enthusiasm. Let's not exclude the fact that the callers involved were lively and fun. They talked about their square dance club and dancers with pride. There was a colorful banner prominently displayed and equally festive flyers available to be handed out to the many onlookers. I remember teenagers who are usually seen at a demo snickering and rolling their eyes actually smiling and tapping their feet.

In contrast, I have participated in a demo where the caller showed up in a plaid shirt, jeans and a straw hat. The only thing missing was a fiddle. Little was said about who we were and why we were there. The group that showed up to dance were sour and no one smiled. The equipment being used malfunctioned which added to the overall picture of ineptitude. I was just as glad there wasn't a banner or flyers to tell them who we were.

Too many times I have participated in demos where there was no banner, no flyers and the caller delivered the information of who we were with the enthusiasm of a weather report. At the same time, dancers showed up in some ridiculous outfits. Save your funky outfits for fun night at your home club. We know it's fun to express your individuality, but to the general public it's just another reason to shake their heads and snicker. How do we expect to overcome the general public's prejudice towards square dancing if we don't consider their reaction when dressing to do a demo. Think: Would you like to be seen in a publicity poster wearing your choice for the demo? The most important thing to remember is to SMILE. If you aren't having fun, why would anyone else want to do it. Demos are fun, but consider why we do them. It's all about promoting square dancing; remember that the next time someone asks you to participate in a demo.



THE LIGHTER SIDE OF DARKNESS - by Dee Jackins

Dee is an avid square and round dancer, and enjoys writing. She shares the lighter side of some of her experiences, challenges and near disasters as a sight impaired person.

Not all situations and experiences were on the humorous side but who would ever expect that to happen on a regular basis. My daughter was still living at home when I first went blind. It had been about four years later and I had adjusted quite well by that time but you never are prepared for the unexpected.

She had a terrible under bite and had to go in for surgery to reset her jaw. After all the instructions for post-op, etc. I thought I had everything under control. They had to wire her mouth shut for six weeks and that meant food to be consumed through a straw and she was to carry her wire cutters with her at all times in case there was any breathing difficulties. What I didn't think through thoroughly was there would be no communication from her and, of course, no visual recognition from me.

Things were going just fine for a couple of weeks until one day I was busy in the kitchen and she was in the living room watching TV. Suddenly I could hear these frightening gasps and coughs! I rushed out to the other room, followed her sounds and put my hands on her head. Then I asked questions. No, she didn't have her cutters. Yes, she was breathing alright. So I asked her to go to the computer and type me a note so I'd would know what was going on. What a relief when she typed out that she was watching 'Friends' and she was laughing so hard, or better yet, trying to. We joke about it today but it was just another situation you don't think of at the time when there is no communication.

It was a lesson learned and a few weeks later she did catch a cold. I had pre arranged with my neighbor that if this should happened she would be willing to get us down to emergency. The shot they gave her had instant results. Thank goodness! It was such a relief when these wires were finally removed and gone.

On the lighter side, one time my in-laws invited me to come out with them to visit family on the West Coast. I graciously accepted this offer and away we went. As time went by he suddenly asked me, "Dee, what are you doing back there?" Caught by surprise with this question, I replied, "I'm reading my book and 'looking' at the beautiful scenery. Why?" He came back with, "Then how come you're looking straight at me in the rear view mirror?" Without hesitation I replied, "Well, didn't you know that this is one of the perks of being blind? It's called multi tasking; I can read my Braille book and keep an eye on you at the same time." Till next time, have a great summer!

A passenger in a taxi leaned over to ask the driver a question. He gently tapped him on the shoulder to get his attention. The driver screamed, lost control of the cab, nearly hit a bus, drove up over the curb, and stopped just inches from a large plate glass window. For a few moments everything was silent in the cab.

Then, the shaking driver said, "Are you OK? I'm so sorry, but you scared the daylights out of me!"

The badly shaken passenger apologized to the driver. He said, "I didn't realize that a mere tap on the shoulder would startle someone so badly."

The driver replied, "No, no, I'm the one who is sorry. It's entirely my fault. Today is my very first day driving a cab. I've been driving a hearse for 25 years."

CHATTER CLOSE-UP

Our Dance Community is an interesting mix of people, each with a story to tell. If you know of someone you would like to see featured in this section, email claudia.littlefair@gmail.com and I would be happy to contact them.



ROY & GERRI KUEHN, Calgary

In the summer of 1996 a neighbour in Cochrane asked us if we would be interested in square dancing with the local club, the *Big Hill Country Dancers*. My parents had been involved in the square dancing community in Calgary in the late 40's/early 50's as dancers when my dad had done some teaching in the school where he taught and had done some calling for his own pleasure. My first recollections of square dancing are going to a dance but falling asleep in the chairs along the walls of the halls while my parents danced, visits to dressmakers where dance outfits would be made and the wonderful people involved like Don & Pinky Fleming, Hank Bradley, Don and Helen Martin and many more, so I was ready to go. By the way over 60 years later that hasn't changed, there are still wonderful people involved.

Although we started dancing with the Cochrane club we have been so fortunate to broaden our dancing experience and enjoyment. We have spent over 10 winters dancing in Arizona in Tucson, Sierra Vista, Benson and Yuma. When we went to Yuma originally our club had warned us that we would not be able to dance there, so being good do-bees we didn't even try. A couple of years later Roy picked up a dance schedule from the local Tourist Information Booth and noticed a workshop opportunity. Thinking we couldn't screw that up too badly we took a chance and went. That was the second beginning and the start of a whole new wonderful experience.

After a couple of dances the caller, Bob Stutevoss, asked us if we danced Plus. We had never heard of it. He invited us to a dance and when we told him we knew we wouldn't be able to keep up he said of course you will, come and try. Upon arrival the cuer asked if we round danced and we eagerly said yes. At the end of the evening we sure knew different. What an eye opener. We were also fortunate to have met such a diverse group of dancers from all over Canada and the United States there and as a result we seldom if ever go to a dance now when we don't know someone we have danced with in Yuma.

We have also been able to add to our dancing fun by attending numerous campouts while at home. We figured if we could dance in the US we should be able to manage campouts, especially since the majority of invitations we received came while dancing with club members from Rocky Mountain House, Drumheller, Calgary, Olds, Three Hills, Strathmore and Edmonton. Our dancing life has been so enriched by these experiences.

Our trips to all these different dances led to our very favourite dance experience. In June of 2012 we attended the US National Square Dance Convention in Spokane, WA. What an experience! We joined a caravan group from Red Deer and travelled together to Cardston where we stayed in a campground and danced on the grass with one of our favourite callers, Palma Heming, doing the calling. Then the next night into the dance centre in Lolo, Montana where we camped, danced, and had a great time. The next day took us to Spokane where we parted with the Red Deer bunch and went on to stay with our Yuma bunch of friends who had an acreage just out of Spokane. Then, at the convention we found several of our Calgary dance friends that we didn't know were coming. Over 5,000 dancers and callers from all over the world were there for four full days of dancing. We had never seen anything like it. What a time it was!

We now dance Plus, Phase 2, 3 and most of 4 round dances and until the last couple of years have enjoyed dancing 5 or more times a week in Yuma, and a couple of times a week back home with a wide variety of callers. We figure that over the course of a year on average we would dance to a dozen callers. What Fun! Dancing is one of our main sources of enjoyment along with visiting the many dance friends we have made over the years, and travelling to visit family and friends. We also like to golf, we are big walkers, like to do puzzles and manage to keep ourselves as busy as we want to be. After Roy's years of long work hours both farming and trucking and my work in office administration and management in a variety of industries, that is just fine with us.

That is our story of the best of times. Don't we wish we could convince other people what a great time they could have too. To all our friends, and the friends we have yet to meet, as my son usually concludes his emails to us, "dance, dance, dance". Hope to see you across a square soon.

A Local Newspaper Reporter Just Showed Up At Your Dance Unexpected CONGRATULATIONS! NOW WHAT? - by Mike Hogan, CALLERLAB Convention 2015

Since you didn't have a chance to ask them ahead of time what they want to report on or to feed them information about the activity ahead of time, do it now! Position yourself as someone who can help them get the information they want to write about. Introduce them to the caller. Introduce them to a club member who would be a good spokesperson for the club and the activity – in other words, someone who visually represents what we want to portray, and who knows the benefits of the activity that they could then provide to the interviewer, even if they don't ask.

Generally, here are some ideas about what to say:

- Always start and end with FUN. The single most desired benefit of square dancing is the fun and joy that dancers experience. Smile. Be enthusiastic. Reporters notice this.
- Share stories about the lifelong friendships you've developed, or share a story of dancers who married someone they met square dancing.
- Share stories about your travels and square dancing where you travel. Travel is fun. Square dancing is fun. A story that mixes both is a great story.
- Talk about the members in your club and what they do for a living if it's appropriate. If there is someone in your club who does something unique, like a military officer, or a doctor, or an engineer, these are professions that buck the image of dancers only being pig farmers. (Nothing wrong with pig farmers by the way).
- Talk about the modernization of square dancing, that music is now played from laptops and the music is from all genres of music. Give examples.
- Talk about the underlying health benefits of square dancing.
- If you're asked how long it takes to learn, here's a great answer I stole from Lanny Weakland: "Three lessons. After three lessons it's either not for you, or you'll love it so much I can't keep you away."
- Talk about the changing dress code. Tell them the traditional square dance dress is still the standard, but today many dancers come in jeans, and we welcome that.

Some reporters just have to have the dirt! If it bleeds it leads. So you'll get questions that are fishing for negative stories, like "Isn't square dancing a dying art?" or, "Why aren't there any young people at your dances?" Clearly these are tough questions to answer, and issues we are dealing with, so answer these type of questions truthfully then follow up with information on how we're improving on these issues.

Here are a few things not to say:

- Do not make reference to the declining population of square dancers.
- Do not make reference to the increasing average age of square dancers.
- Do not make reference to the health benefits helping seniors.
- Do not make any comments that infer that square dancing is for seniors.
- Do not mention alcohol.

Gaining media coverage of square dancing is a very valuable tool we can use to enhance the public's opinion of our activity. The more we can get this kind of positive exposure, the more open the general public will be to participating. That in turn will make recruiting efforts more effective. You should always be prepared to handle an interview if one happens. Better yet, why not proactively seek media coverage. I hope the ideas about will help you in that endeavor.

A GLIMPSE OF THE PAST

This column features excerpts from the book "As I See Saw It –Bob Osgood", compiled and edited by Paul Moore, and reprinted by permission. Bob Osgood was a square dancer, caller, and publisher of the most widely read magazine on square dancing, Sets in Order, which changed its name to Square Dancing in 1969. He was the president of Sets In Order/American Square Dance Society which provided funding and leadership for many square dance projects. He established the Silver Spur award which was given to people who made outstanding contributions to the square dance activity and he founded the Caller's Hall of Fame. He was a charismatic leader who attracted the finest in square dancing to his causes. It was largely because of his leadership that CALLERLAB and LEGACY were formed.

HENRY FORD SAVES SQUARE DANCING

In 1923 Henry Ford visited the Wayside Inn in Sudbury, Massachusetts where he participated in the regular dance program of gavotte, the schottische, minuet and the Virginia Reel led by Benjamin B. Lovett. Ford enjoyed the program so much he offered Lovett a regular job to teach dancing and to train new dance leaders in Dearborn, Michigan. Lovett turned down the offer because he was contracted to the Wayside Inn. Ford, who had a personal wealth of \$20 billion (in 1920's dollars), simply bought the Wayside Inn and Lovett's contract. The contract was rewritten for Lovett to come to Dearborn for two months – he stayed for 26 years.

During the Depression of the 1930s Lovett was paid \$12,000 per year, plus a new Lincoln every year, a home, most of his meals, and all of his transportation costs. Ford and Lovett used the situation to promote American Square Dancing. Two hundred dancing instructors were invited to Dearborn to learn how to dance and to call the Virginia Reel. Lovett was also instructed to start a program for Dearborn public school children. The dances that Lovett taught were regularly printed in newspapers nation-wide. Every Sunday Lovett would travel to Chicago to call live on the radio the dances that had been printed in newspapers the previous week – with separate broadcasts to account for eastern and western time zones.

Benjamin Lovett became so busy that he had to train additional dance teachers. He developed a minimum staff of 12 to 14 dance instructors to help him with his ever increasing work load. The program kept expanding due to the generosity of Mr. Ford. Any school district that wanted a dance program merely had to contact Benjamin Lovett, Mr. Ford would write a check from his personal account, and Lovett or one of his instructors would be sent to that school. Lovett, again sponsored by Henry Ford, was responsible for bringing square dancing and ballroom dancing to 34 institutions of higher learning, among them Radcliffe College, Stevens College, Temple University, University of Michigan, University of North Carolina and the University of Georgia... with no charge to these universities.

Because square dancing took more space than ballroom dancing, Ford built a dance hall in Greenfield Village, site of the Henry Ford Museum. It was beautifully decorated with chandeliers and had a hardwood floor that would hold approximately forty squares of dancers. Ford even hired one man full time to polish the dance floor daily, whether the floor had been used or not.

In 1926 Henry Ford published an excellent book on early American Square Dancing entitled "Good Morning". The title page states: "After a sleep of twenty-five years, old fashioned dancing is being revived by Mr. and Mrs. Henry Ford." In the archives of the Henry Ford Museum, several written accounts of former executives report that Mr. Ford invited all of his executives to take lessons in early American Square Dancing. He was quick to tell them that he wanted them to take these lessons of their own free will, and not under any pressure. However, an invitation from Mr. Ford was tantamount to a command from royalty.

Benjamin Lovett was a strong leader in early American Square Dancing. He was the personification of a gentleman. Regardless of the fact that most of his dancers were people of great wealth and position, he told them what they were to wear and what they were not to wear. He insisted that the ladies wear formal dresses and corsages. Men were told that they were to wear dark suits. The ladies were instructed that they were never to cross their legs at the knees, but only at the ankles. And no one could cross directly across the dance floor except Mr. Ford.

When Ford passed away Lovett could no longer afford the promotion of square dancing. In 1949 he announced his retirement and he left Michigan, never to be seen there again. He died in Massachusetts in 1951. **Ford and Lovett moved square dancing out of the barn and into the ballrooms, but the leader who had the biggest effect on square dancing was a school superintendent from Colorado.**

Editor's Note: But that's another story! Look for it in the next issue of Alberta Chatter.

ALBERTA JAMBOREE 2017, FORT SASKATCHEWAN



Jerry Jestin
Yuma, AZ



Barry Sjolín
Penticton, BC



Gary Winter
Sherwood Park, AB



Ron & Donna Baba
Medicine Hat, AB

To Register for the ALBERTA JAMBOREE, August 25 to 28, 2017
go to: www.albertajamboree.com.

BRIDGE EVENTS BETWEEN JAMBOREE & CONVENTION

Wednesday evening AUGUST 30 CDCDA hosted dance at West Edmonton Senior Centre celebrating Edmonton & District Callers & Cues' 50th Anniversary!!

Thursday afternoon AUGUST 31 3:30 to 5:30 at West Edmonton Mall, free demo/dance (main level, below the Scotia movie theatre), providing fun to dancers, and encouraging general public to come to Convention.

Thursday evening AUGUST 31 after the mall dancing, head across to **Jubilations Dinner Theatre** to see *Downton Abbey Road (the Beatles)*. The price includes a four course plated meal and a three act musical comedy. Doors open at 5:30, seating for dinner starts at 6:15. Call Jubilations at 1-877-214-2424 to reserve your tickets. Mention 'Convention 2017' to get a discount off the regular admission (works out to \$52.50 + GST) or if eligible, just ask for the seniors rate for 60+ (\$48.25 + GST).

A Dieter's Musings

1. **Ate salad for dinner!** Mostly croutons and tomatoes. Really just one big, round crouton covered with tomato sauce. And cheese. FINE, it was a pizza. I ate a pizza.
2. **How to prepare Tofu:** A. Throw it in the trash. B. Grill some meat.
3. **I just did a week's worth of cardio** after walking into a spider's web.
4. **I don't mean to brag but ...** I finished by 14-day diet in 3 hours and 20 minutes.
5. **A recent study has found** that women who carry a little extra weight live longer than men who mention it.



ALBERTA DANCE CONVENTION 2017, EDMONTON

Gary and Eileen Smith, Chair Couple 780-778-3214

June 30, 2017

is your ***last*** chance to get the ***best*** rate to attend!

The earlybird rate is \$65 for the full convention weekend.
After June 30th, the rate is \$85 for the full convention weekend.

THE 12 BEST REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD COME TO ALBERTA CONVENTION!

1. I get a chance to dance at Fort Edmonton Sunday afternoon for free!
2. I can dance Wednesday night August 30th and help celebrate 50 years of the Edmonton & District Callers & Instructors Association.
3. I get to tell people I danced at West Edmonton Mall (Thursday August 31st).
4. I get to go with other dancers to Jubilations Dinner Theatre August 31st and enjoy the Beatles Abbey Road Show.
5. I can attend Jamboree the weekend prior, all on the same trip.
6. I get to dress up Saturday September 2nd in my Hippy 60's clothes in fine fashion and re-live my youth.
7. I get to dress up Sunday September 3rd in my Western Wear in style!
8. I get to try Square, Round, Clogging, Line, and Fun Dance as a beginner, and encourage new dancers to join our dancing on Saturday and Sunday, lunch and dinner hour, at special introductory sessions.
9. I get to enjoy entertainment Sunday night and special theme food at the Convention after-party.
10. I will be able to dance to some of the most experienced callers and cuers in the province, as well as esteemed visiting callers, and a sampling of new and upcoming callers.
11. I get to see all my old friends at the convention, who will otherwise wonder why I am not there, and talk about me behind my back.
12. Last but not least, if you don't come, we'll miss you!!

To register for the ALBERTA CONVENTION, September 1 -4, 2017
go to: www.communitydance.org.

20th CONVENTION 2018



20th Canadian National
Square & Round Dance Convention
London, ON Canada
July 19, 20, 21, 2018

Square Dancing - Basic to C2, all under one roof.
Also available - Round Dancing Phase II to VI,
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Registration Information

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Phone - 519-396-7228

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Make The Scene In 2018