

**S.A.R.D.A.N.S.W.**

## **CALLER'S CO-OPERATIVE**



### ***News, Notes 'n Nonsense for NSW Callers & Cuers***

## **Issue the Fifth : October 2016**

#### ***DATES to REMEMBER for 2016***

- **October 28th - 30th** : Special **SARDANSW/RED BARONS WEEKEND** with Steve Turner - full dance weekend and full Caller Clinic Weekend.

#### ***DATES to REMEMBER for 2017***

- **January 28-29:** **SPECIAL CALLER WORKSHOP WEEKEND** at Corrimal RSL Club (with working air conditioning).
- **January 28:** **SPECIAL DANCE** at CORRIMAL RSL CLUB
- **July (Date TBC):** **DINNER DANCE**

# WHAT'S INSIDE THIS MONTH

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## **Attachment –**

**January 28-29 2017 Caller training weekend and Dance – SARDANSW**

**October 28-30 2016 SARDANSW / Red Barons SDC Steve Turner Weekend Flyer**

# 2016 EVENTS STILL TO COME

**28-30 OCTOBER 2016.** A **FULL WEEKEND CALLER CLINIC** with Australia's only Callerlab qualified Caller Coach, Steve Turner. This will be held at the Port Kembla Leagues Club, here on the sunny south coast of NSW.

The Port Kembla Leagues club is situated in Wentworth Street, the main street of Port Kembla. The venue has a nice auditorium, with meeting room upstairs, gaming rooms downstairs, along with a superb restaurant.

Since we booked the venue, it has been purchased by another local Leagues Club, the Collegians (Collies to the locals). The Collegians has been around forever and has two other venues at Balgownie and at Figtree. The food presented by Collies is excellent and we expect the same cooperation from the new management as that received from the original Port Kembla Leagues Club.

**Caller Sessions** will be as follows:

FRIDAY	2:00PM – 4:30PM
SATURDAY MORNING	10:00AM – 12:30PM
SATURDAY AFTERNOON	2.00PM - 4.30PM
SUNDAY MORNING	10:00AM – 12:30PM
SUNDAY AFTERNOON	1:30PM – 4:00PM

**Dance Sessions** are as follows:

FRIDAY	7:00PM – 10:30PM
SATURDAY AFTERNOON	1:00PM – 4:00PM
SATURDAY EVENING	7:00PM – 10:30PM
SUNDAY	10:00AM – 12:30PM

This is a busy schedule over the 3 days. This weekend is a combined effort with SARDANSW (the Caller's Clinic) and RED BARONS SD CLUB (the dance sessions). This weekend is also the celebration is the Red Barons 42nd birthday and a truly unique event with one of Australia's most acknowledged caller/trainers.

Ticket numbers are limited due to the size of the dance venue, so please register as early as you can to avoid missing out on this unique opportunity. A flyer is attached at the end of the newsletter.

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# **SOUND ARCHIVE** The current library of Sound Recordings is as follows:

## **EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS**

- 2015 SARDANSW Training Day at Blaxland (quality varies)
- 2016 SARDANSW Weekend at Corrimal RSL Club
- 2016 SARDANSW Weekend at Port Macquarie
- CALLERLAB 1982 : Voice Session (2) with vocal coach Arden Hopkin
- CALLERLAB 1982 : Keeping Mainstream Fun
- CALLERLAB 1983 : Advanced Interest Session
- CALLERLAB 1983 : Challenge Interest Session
- CALLERLAB 1985 : Mainstream Choreography Session
- CALLERLAB 1985: Voice Interest Session
- CALLERLAB 1985: Programming Thru Music
- CALLERLAB 1985: Duties of MC / Showmanship
- CALLERLAB 1985: Techniques In The Use Of Music
- CALLERLAB 1985: Techniques For Self Improvement
- CALLERLAB 1985 : Plus Choreography Session
- CALLERLAB 1988 : After-Party Fun
- CALLERLAB 1988 : One Night Stands

## **DANCE RECORDINGS**

- SPECIAL DANCE with Bronc Wise & Jet Roberts
- 1977 NSW Square Dance Society Cabaret with BARRY WONSON (scary voice back then)
- 1980 Willoughby 1989 Weekend with KEN BOWER (plus Barry Wonson, Peter Humphries & David Smythe)
- 1988 Weekend with WADE DRIVER (plus Barry Wonson, Peter Humphries & Brian Hotchkies)
- 2014 RED BARONS Weekend with KEVIN KELLY & BARRY WONSON

## **NEW ADDITIONS-**

- *CALLERLAB 1985: Teaching By Definition Part 2*
- *2016 NSW State Convention Caller Sessions (Jaden Frigo & Gary Petersen)*
- *CALLERLAB 1983 Contra Session*
- *CALLERLAB 1983 DBD session*
- *CALLERLAB 1983 One Night Stands*
- *CALLERLAB 1983 Music*
- *CALLERLAB 1983 New & Innovative*
- *CALLERLAB 1983 Programming Session*
- *CALLERLAB 1983 Mainstream session*
- *CALLERLAB 1985 Advanced Session*
- *CALLERLAB 1985 Challenge Session*
- *SARDANSW 2017 State Convention Callers Seminars*

These recordings are available to any of our members. All you need is a flash drive.

I am currently working on more early recordings from CALLERLAB. These do take time as they have to be transferred from the original cassette tapes.

# ***TOOLS & HOW TO USE THEM CORRECTLY***

by Barry the Toolman

*For many of us the summer break from our Calling commitments gives us the opportunity to do all those little odd jobs around the house that continue to pile up. For many of these jobs, we need to use a variety of tools to make the job both easy and have a successful outcome. I thought it would be a good idea for a bit of a refresher course on some of the more common tools and how to best use them.*

**CIRCULAR SAW:** a fabulous cutting tool that is used to make boards too short.

**BELT SANDER:** An electric sanding tool commonly used to convert minor touch-up jobs into major re-finishing projects.

**WIRE WHEEL** (attachment for Electric power Drills): Cleans paint off bolts and then throws them somewhere under the workbench at the speed of light. Also removes fingerprints and hard-earned callouses in about the time it takes you to say "oh S\*\*T"

**DRILL PRESS:** A tall upright machine extremely useful for suddenly snatching flat metal bar stock out of your hands so that it smacks you in the chest and flings your can of beer across the room, denting the freshly painted object that you had placed in the corner in such a position where nothing could get to it.

**MULT-GRIPS:** Used to round off bolt heads. Sometimes used in the creation of blood blisters.

**HACKSAW:** One of the family of tools built on the Ouija Board principle....it transforms human energy into a crooked, unpredictable motion, and the more you attempt to influence its course, the more dismal your future becomes.

**WISE GRIPS:** Generally used after pliers to completely round-off bolt heads. If nothing else is available, they can also be used to transfer intense welding heat to the palm of your hand.

**OXYACETYLENE TORCH:** Used almost entirely for igniting various objects in your workshop for the purpose of creating a fire. Also very handy for igniting the grease inside the wheel hub out of which you want to remove a bearing race.

**TABLE SAW:** A large stationary tool commonly used to launch wood projectiles for the purpose of testing wall integrity. Also very useful for removing digits,

**HYDRAULIC FLOOR JACK:** Used for lowering an automobile to the floor after installation of new brake shoes, trapping the jack handle firmly under the bumper bar.

**BAND SAW:** A large stationary power saw used in most workshops to cut larger pieces into smaller pieces that more easily fit into the rubbish bin after you cut on the inside of the line instead of the outside of the line. Another item that is also very handy for digit removal.

**PHILLIPS HEAD SCREWDRIVER:** Normally used to stab the vacuum seals under lids or for opening old style paper-and-tin oil cans and splashing oil on your shirt, but can also, as the name implies, be used to strip out Phillips screw heads.

**REGULAR SCREWDRIVER:** A tool used primarily for opening paint cans. Also very commonly used to stir paint. Sometimes used to convert common-slotted screws into non-removable screws. Also good for creating blisters and other damage to hands.

**PRY BAR:** Used to crumple the metal surrounding the clip or bracket that you needed to remove in order to replace a 50 cent part.

**PVC PIPE CUTTER:** A tool used for making PVC pipe too short.

**HAMMER (AUSTRALIAN SCREWDRIVER):** Originally employed as a weapon of war, the hammer nowadays is used as a kind of divining rod to locate the most expensive parts adjacent to the object we are trying to hit.

**STANLEY KNIFE:** used to open and slice through the contents of cardboard cartons delivered to your front door. This tool works particularly well on contents such as seats, vinyl records, collector magazines, liquid in plastic bottles, refund checks and rubber or plastic parts. It is especially useful for slicing work clothes, but only while in use. It can also be handy for making sure that blood is flowing in fingers.

**SON-OF-A-BITCH TOOL:** Any tool that you grab and throw across the garage while yelling 'son-of-a-bitch' at the top of your lungs. It is also, most often, the very next tool that you will need to use.

*I hope that the above guide will be of invaluable assistance when preparing for all those odd-jobs over summer.*

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## Mel's Meanderings



ZOOM,  
ZOOM,  
ZOOM

By Mel Wilkerson

I was asked in an e-mail about resolving from boxes rather than two faced lines....The question and set up the new caller was asking about was however, from a double pass thru position rather than a standard box (or 8 chain 4) position. Nevertheless, the trouble he was having was indicative of a common mistake made by new and even experienced callers. That mistake is simply - **Forgetting some of the basic movements and looking for the complex resolution.**

With regard to the general resolution from Boxes, there are literally hundreds of articles and methods to describe the various techniques however; although there are a number of techniques available the query was that there are generally two options:

Option1: The key couple is paired up and on the outside – they are facing a couple (box or 8 chain thru formation)

Option 2: The key couple is paired up and on the outside – they are facing a couples back (double pass thru formation) – from here a pass thru takes you to the box.

I would like to point out first that these are two separate resolution formation techniques -- one is from a box, and the other is from a double pass thru. Do not refer to them both as box resolutions. Although that may be clear in your mind now, as you grow in your knowledge it may confuse you later on.

I like to look at it this way...

The hardest part of the whole thing is getting the key couple paired up and on the outside (regardless of whether it is a box or a double pass thru). No matter how you do it that will always be the key to success. Remember this:

1. If the key couple (Couple #1) is paired, then their opposites (Couple #3) are paired....the square is already 50% resolved.

2. If the key man is looking at his corner the square is now 75% resolved.
  - a. You know where the key couple is because you put them there.
  - b. You know where the key man's corner is because you put her there.
  - c. You know that the #3 couple and the #3 man's corner are in the opposite location because of the mirror image of the square.

Now there are only two options....the corner lady either has her partner or she doesn't.

1. If she does not have partner (centres are not paired)...allemande left
2. If she does have partner (centres are paired) swing thru, turn thru allemande left

Please note that there are other ways to get out of that box but just focus on remembering those ones at the start. Other solutions and options will come later.



If you follow those simple guides at the beginning; then when you sight call you will know that you will be right 75 percent of the time, and in reality you are only looking at one person at the end to answer the remaining question - **Does the corner lady have her partner?** Do not worry about all the other variations and resolutions....get to that point and make it yours. You can add more techniques once you know you can resolve a square. Once you know you can do it, a lot of stress is gone. Add more variations and resolution techniques

once you have mastered one and know you can do it any time.

Now back to the original resolution problem I was asked about. (From the double pass thru formation)

The problem the caller was having was: "I can get them to boxes (DPT formation) with no problem but am always finding the key couple in the middle rather than on the outside. I seem to be repeating pass thru right and left thru to sort them out. Is there a better way without having long modules"? (**Comment:** although it was not said in the question, I assumed that from the resolution this caller prefers to set them up in double pass thru formation to resolve his squares)

The answer is of course there is. There are many options available to you such as:  
SQUARE THRU 3, PASS TO THE CENTRE.

CENTRES PASS THRU, SWING THRU, BOYS RUN, COUPLES CIRCULATE,  
FERRIS WHEEL.



AND THE LIST GOES ON.

But, the question was without having to remember long sequences or modules. How about one movement – often the most underused move in square dance calling is often the easiest solution. That movement is of course ZOOM.

Have a look at the following sequences:

Heads Square thru 4, Right & Left Thru, Veer left, Couples Circulate, Ferris Wheel – (I now want to resolve and a quick look shows that my key couple is on the inside again) -- ZOOM (Now they are on the outside.) **I can resolve** – centres square thru 3 (ZB) or centres right and left thru pass thru (ZB)

Heads Touch  $\frac{1}{4}$ , boys run, right and left thru, veer left, couples circulate, bend the line... (I want to resolve so I am now going to get to my double pass thru formation again), pass thru, wheel and deal, (Damn the key couple is on the inside again....) -- ZOOM (Now they are on the outside.) **I can resolve** – centres square thru 3 (ZB) or centres right and left thru pass thru (ZB)

Once you get used to this, then you can start branching out and expanding on your technique....the zoom is a handy movement for resolution if this is your chosen resolution technique. Once you get used to it you can add variations such as:

Heads Promenade  $\frac{1}{2}$ , Square Thru 4, Right & Left Thru, Veer Left, Ferris Wheel, (they are on the outside but now I want to play with the zoom) -- ZOOM,(I am deliberately putting my key couple on the inside do I can call this known resolution) Double Pass Thru, Leaders Trade, (ZB)

If the resolution technique you prefer to learn as your first one has the Double Pass thru formation as its foundation, then make sure the movement ZOOM is part of your tool kit. It makes getting that key couple on the outside so much easier.

Do not throw away a simple underused movement like zoom because it is sometimes difficult to make singing calls with it. Use it in your patter to put your key couples where you want (inside or out) and you will find this simple technique adds a variation to your dance that pleases the dancers. It is a simple movement but it remains fun to dance.

Hope that answers the question.

As always...good luck and have fun.

Mel

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## **QUOTABLE QUOTES** (*well, sort of*)

More words of wisdom that have been attributed to some of our well-known callers (these all come from extremely reliable sources whose honesty and integrity is above reproach).

- "Today's teenagers are alike in many disrespects" — **Tony Bowring**
- "An adolescent's life between 12 and 18, can add 20 years to a parent's life" - **Wilma Flannery**
- ""The advantage of speaking a second language is that you can talk behind someone's back right in front of them." - **Alan Evans**
- "A recession is when your neighbour loses his job. A depression is when you lose your job. A recovery is when the Prime Minister loses his job." - **Paul Bristow**
- "In the beginning God made Heaven and Earth. Tasmania was an offcut." - **Kevin Kelly**
- "Nothing succeeds like a toothless budgie." - **David Smythe**
- "Timing is the essential factor in the success of a rain dance." - **Karen Fenton**
- "Parents spend the first 3 years of a child's life trying to teach it to talk, and then spend the next 16 years trying to get it to shut up." - **Jan Johnson**
- "Two can live as cheaply as one, but for half as long." - **Mel Wilkerson**
- "To err is human, but to really stuff up requires a computer" - **Maree Huffadine**
- "There are 3 kinds of men, the handsome, the caring, and the majority." - **Helen Hodalj**
- "If it wasn't for the last minute, nothing would get done." - **David Cox**
- "If we keep doing what we're doing, we're going to keep getting what we're getting." - **Glenn Wilson**

- "Humanity would be so much easier if we didn't have people." - **Jeffrey Garbutt**
- "I work until beer o'clock." - **Kevin Kelly**
- "Experience is the name that I give to my mistakes." - **Gary Petersen**
- "To get something done, a committee should consist of no more than three members, two of whom are absent." - **Barry Wonson**
- "Heredity runs in my family" - **George Pitt**
- "On the internet you can be anything you want. It amazes me that so many people choose to be stupid." - **Steve Turner**
- "The length of a progress report is inversely proportional to the amount of progress." - **Greg Fawell**
- "Many a meeting starts at 9am sharp and finishes at 11am dull." - **Mike Davey**
- "Everything was all different before it all changed." - **David Todd**
- "I used to wonder what it would be like if I could read other people's minds. Then I got a Facebook account and now I'm over it." - **Leanne Nicholson**



# ON PROGRAMMING

By Barry Wonson (composer) & Mel Wilkerson (arranger and conductor)

**Editor note:** One often overlooked aspect of choreography is that of programming. Much has been written on the subject but for this month I am going to explore as objectively as I can, the formatting difference between a “3 number” and a “2 number” bracket. I hope to look at how the difference in a bracket format can effect and affect all aspects of the Dancing and Calling Experience and the impact it has from both a caller and a dancer perspective.

## BRACKETS, TIPS, WHATEVER...

Since the introduction of Modern Square Dancing to Australia in the 1950's the term "Bracket" has been used to denote the group of pieces of music that comprise a short but continuous dancing segment. Australia is the only country that uses “bracket. To the rest of the Square Dance world, what we call a “bracket” is known as a “tip.

I really have no idea how this term “bracket” developed in Australia or why it replaced “Tip”. The chance of discovering the reason has likely long passed with the loss of the many great calling talents that were the originators of what we have today. I have heard a number of theories proposed - nothing to substantiate - just theories, and nothing more.

Regardless of what you call it however; a “Bracket” in square dance terms is simply the 10 to 15 minute time from when the dancers get on the floor, dance, and then get off the floor to have a short rest, change partners or whatever. At most clubs around the world, a bracket or tip is about 10-15 minutes. A 2-1/2 hour evening of dancing is usually 10 brackets in length or 4 per hour. This leaves room for announcements, administration and a round dance between some of the brackets if that is your format.

What is important however is the format of a bracket. What is it made up of? Are there rules? Can we change them? To answer; it is important to remember the history.

The actual make-up of a 'bracket' or tip in the early days, although a matter of some conjecture and argument is a point of debate. The options presented while researching for this article were:

- Just a single extended patter (hoedown) call;
- A pair of patter calls
- A patter call and a Singing Call; and
- Mostly single patter calls with breaks and an occasional Singing Call.

What we do know from historical records and films is that in all cases, the patter call (or hoedown) was always the significant aspect of a dance segment. It was often quite fast with lots of turns, counter direction movements, swings and partner changing concepts.

Many of these early (1950s and 1960s) patter calls were extemporaneous (unstructured routines) to a degree, however; there were still many fixed, firmly structured and well known “set routines” done as well. It must also be noted that it was during this time (1950s - 1960s) that the singing call with its

fixed choreographic routines for a specific song really developed becoming an equal partner in the square dance tip or "Bracket".

While I was involved for a short while in the Square Dance activity as a (**very**) young boy in the 50's, I only have hazy memories of square dancing. I remember lots of people and the caller, Billy Blinkhorn, but that is about all. I remember people singing "Oh Johnny", but really nothing else regarding the music or the make-up of the dance. My family moved on to other things and that was it until I was re-introduced to the activity around 1967.

IN 1967, I was an Electrical Apprentice, and the tradesman I was sent out with was Bob McInnes. Bob and his wife Shirley (along with a heap of kids) had discovered some Square Dance recordings and began a small group as part of a church couples club. I came into the picture because Bob and Shirley did not have a car and I did. I thus became transport, first and over time became more and more involved. I remember one of the first times I saw Square Dancing was when I took Bob & Shirley to a big dance at Paddington Town Hall in Sydney. I thought the music was great and liked the way that everyone got into the "swing of things" so to speak. I was hooked from then on.

My first attempt at calling was in Bob & Shirley's garage to this original group. We only danced with this group for a short time. Terry Dodd and Russ Eastment came down from Sydney to start a full class and it was a whole new ballgame. I attended my first Caller's Class run by Ron Jones the following year and I have never looked back.

My first trip to USA in 1976 was an eye-opening experience. They used these funny looking turntables that everyone just called "Hiltons". They also had a button on the microphone that when pressed, jumped the stylus to be instantly back near the beginning of the record so that the caller could just continue calling...wow! They also had a little knob that allowed the caller to turn down the volume when he was delivering calls and turn up the music volume in the spots where he was not. What an idea! Suffice to say that it was not long before I changed from my old Lenco 75 to a brand new Hilton.

It was also in 1976 on my first trip to the USA that I first came across the term "Square Dance Tip". The 'Tip' was a 2 musical number bracket which consisted of a piece of about 5 - 7 minute hoedown music and a standard record length choreographed singing call of about 4 minutes. This was considered the "standard" across the USA, Canada and pretty much around the world. This was no surprise as the United States was still the biggest influence on square dancing, around the world. They set the standards.

In my clubs, I quickly changed to the "new standard" – a 2 musical number system of a hoedown and a singing call - pretty well straight away. I know that in 1980 when I really began calling at functions other than at my own clubs, or when hired for evening dances or even full weekend events I would call each tip being a patter and singing call or as we refer to it a "2 number" bracket. The only time I use a "3 number" bracket at our club dances is to (sometimes) finish up with, a patter call and two singing calls, or 3 Singing Calls. At dances outside of my own club the same was true in the early days and the "3 number bracket" was generally only seen when one or more callers shared the last tip of a big event dance and they harmonized a patter and two wind up singing calls.

I had never really thought about it because from the 1970s through to about 2005 everywhere I went as a caller or a dancers was usually a "2 number tip", with the occasional "3 number bracket" at some clubs or dances usually when a new caller was being mentored on the microphone, or an all singing

call format was being used etc. It never really occurred to me that the idea of a 3 number bracket was still in use in some clubs, and was also used at many National Conventions.

I never really seriously considered the differences between a 2 number and a 3 number bracket until I was asked to coordinate the Program for the 2005 National Convention at Niagara Park in NSW. It was here that I came across my first conflict of belief in what was good for the dance and the dancers versus what was fair for the callers. In my opinion, I really and honestly felt that the best way to program for the evening 3 hour session was to go with "2 number" brackets where either a single caller did the entire bracket, or 2 callers shared the bracket.

As the coordinator however; it was my responsibility to look at and compare the overall timing, slot allocations for callers based on assessment criteria, and fairness based on what had been utilized for previous conventions. I noticed 3 specific things:

1. There was a relatively large number of "3 number" brackets (plus Round-Ups etc.) used.
2. Even though experienced callers had more time on the mic than newer or less capable callers, there was a large number of experience callers jumping all over the place in the "3 number" with no consistency of program – just a rough balance of mic time over the course of the event. And
3. "3 number" brackets were timed at 20 minutes and invariably ran long while "2 number brackets" were timed at 15 minutes and generally ran on time or short.

Generally the timing allocated was as follows:

2 Number bracket ( usually 1-2 callers)	
Round up	2 minutes
Introduction and Technical Preparation	1minute
Hoedown/Patter Call	6 minutes
Singing Call	4 minutes
Break to next tip	2 minutes
<b>Total time allocated</b>	<b>15 minutes</b>

3 Number bracket (usually 2-3 callers)	
Round up	2 minutes
Introduction and Technical Preparation	1minute
Hoedown/Patter Call	5 minutes
Introduction and prep	1minute
Hoedown/Patter Call	5 minutes
Introduction and prep	1minute
Singing Call	4 minutes
Break to next tip	1 minutes
<b>Total time allocated</b>	<b>20 minutes</b>

What this meant was essentially, in a three hour average dance, you would have either:

- 3 x 20 minute 3 number brackets listening to 6-9 different callers per hour.
- 4 x 15 minute 2 number brackets listening to 4-8 callers per hour

What this means in a 3 hour dance is you can have either 9 brackets (3 numbers per Bracket) or 12 brackets (2 numbers per bracket) as far as simple programming goes.

To look at this mathematically what this meant from a pure programming by the numbers was, if I wanted to give each caller a spot at doing a hoedown or a singing call so the dances are exposed to every caller for at least one number I have two options:

- Doing 3 three number brackets - I can program a maximum of 27 callers; or
- Doing 2 number brackets I can program a maximum 24 callers.

Programming is not however about the callers only. The dancers have to be considered in this.

Doing 3 number brackets, the dancers are standing and waiting 4 minutes while in a 2 number bracket the dancers are standing and waiting for 3 minutes. The dancers are also consecutively on the floor for a longer duration.

What was really interesting however, was the after action reports and reviews from dancers and callers as well as the committees regarding the programming schedule review. The key points were as follows:

#### **From a programming perspective:**

1. 3 number brackets ran overtime (22-25 minutes usually) almost every time
2. 2 number brackets almost always ran under time.
3. Round dancers dislike the 3 number format as they usually get less dance time

#### **From a Caller Perspective:**

1. Callers prefer to do a patter and a singing call (2 number bracket) because "bracket programming" is easier for them and better for the dancers
2. Callers had the full bracket to build and create an overall experience for the dancers...with an interesting hoedown and a singing call to balance what he had used in his choreography
3. Callers have difficulty doing one number and building variety into a three number bracket because it lacks consistency and unity between numbers
4. The only positive of a 3 number bracket is more callers can be programmed.
5. Some callers want to be programmed and seen at every venue and be part of every schedule but most would rather have continuity (patter call and singing call) of a full single 2 number bracket than bouncing one number in a shared "3 number bracket"

**From a Dancer's Perspective** (Note: remember this is dancer perception and not necessarily the mathematical reality, which dancers generally do not care about).

1. Square dancers generally dislike the "3 number" format as they feel like they usually stand around and it takes too long to get use to different callers.
2. Dancers feel that they do not get the same amount of dance time on the floor in 3 number brackets as they do with 2 number brackets -- 3 brackets per hour rather than 4-5 per hour

- a. Consistent 3 number brackets feel like too much time on the floor – the tips are too long
  - b. They were on the floor for shorter periods in “2-number” brackets therefore did not get as tired
  - c. The “3 number” brackets waste too much time with introductions, thank-yous, etc. These take up valuable dancing time, as well as bore the dancers.
3. Dancers would rather listen to one average caller with a structured bracket than listen to 3 exceptional callers for 1 song. – In summary it is better to dance a full bracket than be cheated out of dancing just to fit in more callers.
  4. Dancers can tell that Callers prefer to do a patter and a singing call because the dancing flows better and is easier for them follow.
  5. Dancers prefer the “2 number” bracket with one caller because each individual bracket was a unique experience, totally different to the preceding one, or what followed. The “3 number” brackets just seem to be thrown together and are very difficult to follow an idea. (**Note: by this I think they mean a theme or specific focus for the bracket**)
  6. There is generally no variety in a “3 number” bracket -- Only different callers.

Now hold-on-there readers! You might say, “of course there is variety. You have 3 different callers calling three different numbers. That is maximum variety”.

Logically this sounds good, but the dancer perspective and the caller reality are very different from fitting simple numbers in a box. When you come down to the wire, the very fact of having 3 different callers in each bracket does the opposite of giving variety.

For the dancers, each bracket will really sound and feel pretty much the same as all the others. This is because there is no UNIQUE aspect to any of the brackets. The only time it works from a dancer (and caller) point of view is when 2-3 callers can work together to share the numbers in the bracket. This is the only time in a 3 number bracket (or in a 2 caller 2 number bracket) that the dancers receive the “distinct 'uniqueness'”. It is that building from one number into the next with a shared idea (bracket program) that provides the variety necessary in order to give the dancers something more than just 'ordinary dancing'. If that is not done it is simply just another voice doing the same thing with a different tune.

All you have to do is to watch the floor in any function where constant or multiple “3 number” brackets are the norm. There is very little lift in the floor, and a 'wow' atmosphere very rarely is achieved. In a “3 number” bracket where one caller does only one number and the other two do only one number, it does not matter how good each individual caller is. The affect is still the same tired and generally bored dancers. However; when the 3 callers share the 3 numbers, build on a consistent theme and work with each other, you can feel the visible lift on the floor.

### **Basic psychology of perception – (perception is reality)**

Programming an afternoon, evening or even a weekend event when multiple callers are performing is a difficult task. It must be a balance of capability, performance exposure, venue availability, and dancer satisfaction. To program using just simple logic, objectivity and treating everyone equal is the sure recipe for a TERRIBLE EVENT”.



- Using cold logic, in order to expose the dancers to the maximum amount of callers, and treating each caller and dancer objectively the same, a “3 number” bracket consistently called for each session of an entire program event would give the optimum result.
- Callers can do one number in any bracket and a different number in a different bracket being switched from hoedown to singing call on a numerical rotating basis to allow maximum variety and consistency throughout the entire program. It is objective, logical and fair, and no caller could possibly be considered as having a better program or more exposure than any other caller.
- Using the same cold logic, by allowing a single caller to do a 2 number bracket by him/herself would reduce the number of calling slots significantly and thereby reduce the equal distribution of calling performance numbers available to each caller.

### **Understanding the perception**

The concept of “3 numbers” in a bracket has a very different psychological disadvantage in comparison to a “2 number” bracket.

- With “2 numbers there is a halfway point (regardless of time taken for patter)...first the hoedown, then it is just time to relax.”
- With 3 numbers there is no real definable halfway point. This is exacerbated even more with a round up, introduction of callers, different rhythm and beat of patter calls if there is two, and sometimes different lengths of hoedowns. The dancers just feel tired more quickly because they never really know where they are in the bracket.
- Mixing “2 number brackets” and “3 number brackets” can confuse the dancer’s sense of consistency.
  - Many years ago I shared a weekend event with a visiting US caller and 2 other local callers. The US caller, I and one of the others all called 2 number brackets. The other caller called a 3 number bracket. As was his club format, he started with a Singing Call, then a Hoedown. He received a good response from the floor. The dancers likely thought, “That was different doing the singing call first”, and still happy when he had completed his hoedown, the second number. Many dancers began a usual thank you to each other and began to leave the floor. When the caller then called another singing call, rushing the dancers back to their square, there was a sense of, “oh another one”, from the floor. Although the caller did a good job of the singing call, the “WOW” value was lost on the floor as they had expected to break after the second number.

As a side note, we in Australia have had many callers from overseas visiting our Conventions over the years. Every one that I have spoken to has always commented on the “3 number” bracket...and never in a positive manner.

### **WHAT HAPPENS IN A 3 NUMBER BRACKET?**

Let’s set aside convention programming for a minute or two and just look at simple programming for a 3 hour dance, with one or two callers sharing the program. There would be a general round up (2-3 minutes at the beginning and generally a single 3-number bracket to end the evening. A “number bracket” evening would give us 9-10 x 20 minute tips whereas a 2 number bracket would give us 18 x

2 number brackets. There is no need for introductions between brackets and 2 number brackets are generally 10 minutes in length as they are usually prepared to go with no fuss.

Time spent doing nothing but walking without thinking	
7:30	Patter Call
	Singing Call
	Singing Call
7:50	Singing Call
	patter Call
	Singing Call
8:10	Singing Call
	patter Call
	Singing Call
8:30	Singing Call
	patter Call
	Singing Call
8:50	Singing Call
	patter Call
	Singing Call
9:10	Singing Call
	patter Call
	Singing Call
9:30	Singing Call
	patter Call
	Singing Call
9:50	Singing Call
	patter Call
	Singing Call
10:10	Singing Call
	Singing Call
	Singing Call

If the first patter of the evening the dancers receive the round up, introductions, welcomes etc. and a short patter ensures which gets the dancers used to the voices of the callers. This is usually followed by each caller doing a single singing call or sharing the two singing calls that follow. Sometimes depending on the grand march and the announcements and welcomes, this is often shortened to a grand march, shared patter and shared singing call.

The rest of the evening is singing call, patter call, singing call. It looks good on paper and from a caller's ego point of view this is a chance to show off how good of a singer you are.

However what really happens?

In the standard 3 number bracket, there is a standard singing Call (4 minutes), Hoedown (Standard length of record 4 minutes), and another Singing Call (4 minutes), giving a floor time of 12 minutes.

What is given to the dancers in this time is actually:

2 Singing Calls made up of 7 x 64 beat stanzas. In dance terms this means (7 x 64 x 2) dance steps. Or 896 steps of dancing. What is in this dance however is interesting.

Let assume for these 2 singing calls, one has a grand square (open/middle/break) and the other has circle left and they all use allemande left and weave, swing partner and promenade.

- 14 Promenade: 7 x 16 x 2 (224 steps) ¼ of the 2 singing calls
- 3 grand squares: 32 x 3 (96 steps)
- 6 weave the rings: 6 x 8 (48 steps)
- 3 circle lefts: 3 x 24 (24 steps)

In other words (224+96+48+24) 392 steps of the total 896 (that is just over 43% and when we add the allemande left and swings it becomes over half the time...or basically one complete singing call just walking without thinking or challenge – just listening to the music and walking. No wonder caller-singers like this format. No wonder dancers get bored with the monotony of it.

If you want to put this in perspective, call join hands circle left one full circle, allemande left, weave the ring swing and promenade for an entire tip, with nothing else. That is dancer's reality of what two singing calls in a bracket really does.

The very idea behind a Singing Call is to give some 'relax' time to the dancers after the 'think' time and challenge of the hoedown. Simply but, one singing call in a bracket is good to relax and reward, but two is just a bit too much of nothing.

The hoedown in a "3 number bracket". Of course the Hoedown portion of the "3 number bracket" is meant to give the dancers some mental stimulation. We as callers present a problem to the dancers,

give them enough information in order to solve the problem, and then reward them with an "allemande Left" at the end, or the neat and unique resolve.

Of course they will not likely have been given the unique idea or focus for choreography in the hoedown with the first singing call because they may not be able to do what is wanted (especially if it is something a little different). All I have done with the first singing call is basically just show off that I can sing. – Oh and tire the dancers a little.

While the time frame is definitely limiting for more interesting and complex choreography, it still can be done. The caller can still use the remaining two numbers in this bracket to introduce a focus or interesting challenge to the dances and use it in the last singing call, but by this time, they have likely had enough.

### WHAT HAPPENS IN A 2 NUMBER BRACKET?

Still with the concept of convention programming set aside, simple programming for one or two callers, a 3 hour dance using a "2 number" bracket, gives a very different outcome for both the dancers and callers.

There initial 2-3 minute round up, welcome announcements etc. at the beginning, and the "3 number" bracket for the last tip would remain only it would most likely be a patter (hoedown) followed by two singing calls for the leave on a high note **WOW!!** factor. The average bracket length would be 10 minutes in length, with no introduction. The brackets generally mean 8 minutes of dancing with two minutes breaks between.

This allows caller workshopping (one or two longer tips), or even dropping one or two brackets for an interspaced Round. After all, 36 musical numbers (18 brackets) rather than 27 numbers (9 brackets) give a lot more flexibility, dancing and rest time.

With two callers sharing a 3 hour (2 number bracket) program, there would be a definite ability to build choreography and interest in each hoedown patter and reward with the singing call break, deliver the WOW to the dancers with each bracket and build an entire evening to climb and lift, without spending nearly half the dance walking without thinking.

However what really happens?

In the standard 23 number bracket, there is a standard Hoedown (4 minutes) and a Singing Call (4 minutes), giving a floor time of about 8 minutes.

Time spend doing nothing but walking without thinking	
7:30	Patter Call
	Singing Call
7:40	Patter Call
	Singing Call
7:50	Patter Call
	Singing Call
8:00	Patter Call
	Singing Call
8:10	Patter Call
	Singing Call
8:20	Patter Call
	Singing Call
8:30	Patter Call
	Singing Call
8:40	Patter Call
	Singing Call
8:50	Patter Call
	Singing Call
9:00	Patter Call
	Singing Call
9:10	Patter Call
	Singing Call
9:20	Patter Call
	Singing Call
9:30	Patter Call
	Singing Call
9:40	Patter Call
	Singing Call
9:50	Patter Call
	Singing Call
10:00	Patter Call
	Singing Call
10:10	Patter Call
	Singing Call
10:20	Patter Call
	Singing Call
	Singing Call

What is given to the dancers in this time is actually:

The same time use up by the two singing calls alone in the "3 number" bracket, however; less standing, circling and promenading and less walking without thinking movements.

There is one semi-structured, movement (or theme focused) patten, of 7 x 64 beat stanzas, followed by a more closely structured and still focused singing call also of 7 x 64 beats.

In dance terms this still means a total of 896 steps of dancing for the entire bracket or 2/3 of the amount of dancing per bracket of a “3 number” tip. What is in this dance however is interesting. But over the course of the evening there is both more dance time and perceptually more breaks. – Therefore a less tiring and more pleasant dance for the dancers.

More challenge and thought by the dancers. The hoedown patten is less structured and consists of much fewer allemande lefts, swings, promenades etc. and is quite focused - giving a clue or enticement as to what can be coming up in the singing call. There is a mental challenge that is faced fresh at the start of each bracket. There is a clear mid-point where the dancers can gauge their success and be ready for their well-earned reward (using the focus choreography in the singing call)

What is really interesting is that in the hoedown patten, the promenades do not feel like wasted time walking but rather a very short assessment break to get ready. The only time spent walking without thinking is during the open/middle/break of the singing call and that is where the caller can really shine with the singing and lift the floor.

Mathematically if you take out the hoedown allemandes and promenades of the hoedown and use the focus choreography of the hoedown in your singing call choreography, the dancer perception is that there are really only now 3 promenades, and 3 grand squares (or whatever the break figure is - allemande lefts and swings excluded). This equates to of the 896 beats steps of dancing per bracket, only 144 are taken up by movement without thinking.

In math perspective that is about 16% walking without thinking and 85% actually dancing each bracket. In dancer perspective this feels like, more dancing, less standing, better structure, consistency in choreographic flow, easier understanding and the feeling of successfully beaten the choreographic challenges given by the caller(s). In short and simple terms; it makes for a much more fun and enjoyable evening.

### **The devil you know. Three caller, “3 number” brackets will be used.**

The convention conundrum.

“3 number” – 3 caller brackets are often used at conventions but generally for two reasons.

1. New callers can be showcased or presented with support in the bracket from a more experienced caller; and
2. Programmers are catering to “caller ego” trying to give everyone equal time behind the microphone.

**BUT, what happens when the caller is just playing it safe (as sometimes happens at Conventions)?**

With three callers in a bracket, particularly when each caller wants to give his or her best “bang for the buck” presentation, there is little if any coordination or structure to link each number in the bracket together.

- Unless there is an experienced caller that modifies his/her choreography to build on the preceding callers focus, there is generally no theme or link between the music, and/or the movements used in each number.
- There is no ability to build on a theme and develop it for the “relaxation reward” earned by the dancers for solving the choreographic puzzle of the hoedown patter.
- More often than not, a more simplified set of choreographic routines are used.

An example of this simplified, safe routine presented itself most recently at the last Australian National Convention. I danced to a caller who, in his middle number, the central hoedown, had 6 Promenades. They all followed an allemande left which brought the dancers back to their position. Nevertheless, each time the allemande left was followed by the Promenade home!!! In other words, of his 4 minute patter, the allemande lefts and promenades used up 2 minutes. This did not allow the caller to showcase his talent or build upon anything with the other callers. In reality all he did was play it safe and do a slightly different form of singing call without the tags to sing along with. While this may be expected from newer callers, the “3 number” bracket gives little time to callers and this happens more frequently from experienced callers.

“3 number” brackets, especially when used frequently or as the “norm” are simply, tiring, become boring, waste dancing time, not conducive to building a choreographic flow through the bracket and generally do not make for a good dancing experience.

We need to think more about our dancers....their age, their needs, their wants, their expectations, etc. and less about making sure everyone gets an equal chance to look mediocre and bring down the dancing experience of the floor.

While I have been looking at 3 number brackets more from a Convention point of view than anything else, the same applies to use in a general club situation.

Bill Peters, during one of his first trips to Australia, ran a callers school weekend. He discussed the Australian idea of a 3 number bracket in depth. He noted that if a general Mainstream club only has 3 number brackets, the dancers, overall, will have no where near as much exposure to choreography as those in a 2 number system.

He explained that with a 6-7 minute hoedown (the norm at club level is 4-6 minutes for a hoedown), the caller has the opportunity to work and plan many interesting concepts, each of which add to the dancers overall knowledge and understanding. A concept that has been featured in the hoedown can then be used in a relaxed mode within the singing call framework.

On the other hand, the caller who is only using a standard hoedown length (4 minute convention hoedown) will only be providing half of that same interest. In other words, he argued that dancers who have the opportunity to dance longer hoedowns will end up being better dancers than the ones who don't.

- In a Singing Call figure we can only usually feature a specific call or idea 4 times.
- In a hoedown, we are only limited by the time set aside for that hoedown.

Square dancing as an activity is a combination of mental and physical skills. The more we dance in order to learn the calls (the skill set), the more proficient we will become.

What a caller does within in his club is up to the caller, but as Bill noted, facts are facts.

While “3 number” bracket has several psychological disadvantages, a “2 number bracket” also has further psychological advantage. Many of the dancers, due to age and health, swap at the halfway mark. This is far more complicated with a 3 number bracket.

At conventions there is also a further advantage in a solo or shared “2 number” bracket in that the “technical administration” and “Standing time” is significantly reduced compared to that of a shared “3 number” bracket. This problem is often referred to as “the change-over aspect”. When we all used records, even with 3 callers, this was not a problem usually. Plug the mic in, put the record on and begin to call. With 3 callers today however, the job is far more difficult.

- The sound person has 3 separate laptops, and systems to organize.
- 4 different sound levels adjusted for voice and music for each individual caller.
  - We have all see the times when the first caller is too loud or too quiet and has to be adjusted.
- The time taken for an excessive number of “round ups”, introductions eats into the calling time and increases standing time (boring). Worse, excessive introductions sometimes have taken over 20 minutes causing an entire program to run late

From a dancer perspective, this effect is annoyance, frustration and collectively, elimination any chance to build a good up-beat atmosphere. But wait, there’s more. The third caller now has to be introduced, the computer plugged in, the right music found, the music and voice have to be adjusted, and .... . The end result is tired, bored dances, loss of atmosphere and lowering rather than lifting excitement levels.

“3 number” Brackets – 3 callers

Positive Points	Negative Points
More Callers get to call on the program	Age of average dancer
New callers can have mentor support for single bracket	Length of bracket
	Reduced brackets per evening
	Over ½ walking without thinking rather than dancing
	Excessive set up and Technical Administration time
	Dysfunctional choreographic flow
	Music and choreography between numbers is not linked
	Choreography is usually simplified – opportunities lost
	Redundancy and boring for dancers
	Overall more tiring due to standing time
	No Identifiable ½ point
	No choreography reward in singing call from patter call
	Dancers have to adjust to more callers
	It is hard to recover a floor from a bad bracket.

“2 number brackets (shared or solo caller)

Positive Points	Negative Points
Age of dancer easier to cope with	Less callers may be programmed – egos hurt
Shorter bracket length – less programming difficulties	New callers feel sink or swim on solo brackets
Increased brackets per evening	
More than 80% dancing rather than walking without thinking	
Significantly less Set up and Technical Administration time required.	
Ability to build choreography and flow	
Easy to link choreography, music, theme and focus in a single cohesive bracket	
Choreography is easier to modify, adapt, challenge and inspire the dancers with. Opportunities gained.	
Very little redundancy in patter Not boring – well-earned successfully met challenge	
Less time standing, more time dancing and thinking makes the evening less tiring.	
Identifiable half way, take a breath and relax point.	
Singing call is a reward to relax with and confirmation that I got the message of the patter.	
Fewer callers in the bracket for the dancers to adjust	
Each bracket is a unique experience	
Caller can show case his/her talent in both patter and singing call	
Presentation is easier for newer callers to have a supporting mentor share the tip.	
It is easier to re-build a sinking floor from a bad bracket and lift them up again	

Bill Peters summed up his comments by saying that  
***"Three number brackets are to please caller's egos.  
 Two number brackets are to please the dancers"***

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## ***Definitions***

**ADVERTISEMENT:** Something that makes you think you've longed for it for years, but have never heard of it before.

**PEDESTRIAN:** A motorist with teenage sons.

**FETE:** A boring picnic worse than death.

## ***FUN WITH NUMBERS***

Last month I featured an interesting look at the many strange things that can be done with the number "9". For this month; I have discovered some more fascinating and mind-boggling facts about numbers.

1. USING '8'. This one has almost magical results when you multiply the numbers below:

$$\begin{aligned}1 \times 8 + 1 &= 9 \\12 \times 8 + 2 &= 98 \\123 \times 8 + 3 &= 987 \\1234 \times 8 + 4 &= 9876 \\12345 \times 8 + 5 &= 98765 \\123456 \times 8 + 6 &= 987654 \\1234567 \times 8 + 7 &= 9876543 \\12345678 \times 8 + 8 &= 98765432 \\123456789 \times 8 + 9 &= 987654321\end{aligned}$$

2. Another interesting sequence with the number "4"

$$\begin{aligned}8 \times 4 &= 32 \\88 \times 4 &= 352 \\888 \times 4 &= 3552 \\8888 \times 4 &= 35552 \\88888 \times 4 &= 355552 \\888888 \times 4 &= 3555552 \\8888888 \times 4 &= 35555552 \\88888888 \times 4 &= 355555552 \\888888888 \times 4 &= 3555555552\end{aligned}$$

- 3) Back to number '9' again

$$\begin{aligned}123456789 \times 9 &= 1111111101 \\123456789 \times 18 &= 2222222202 \\123456789 \times 27 &= 3333333303 \\123456789 \times 36 &= 4444444404 \\123456789 \times 45 &= 5555555505 \\123456789 \times 54 &= 6666666606 \\123456789 \times 63 &= 7777777707 \\123456789 \times 72 &= 8888888808 \\123456789 \times 81 &= 9999999909\end{aligned}$$

Who ever thought that mathematics could be so interesting!!!



## LIFE'S LESSONS

An old prospector shuffled into the town of El Indio, Texas leading a tired old mule. The old man headed straight for the only saloon in town, to clear his parched throat. He walked up to the saloon and tied his old mule to the hitch rail. As he stood there, brushing some of the dust from his face and clothes, a young gunslinger stepped out of the saloon with a gun in one hand and a bottle of whiskey in the other.

The young gunslinger looked at the old man and laughed, saying, "Hey old man, can you dance?" The old man looked up at the gunslinger and said, "No son, I don't dance... never really wanted to."

A crowd had gathered as the gunslinger grinned and said, "Well, you old fool, you're gonna dance now!" and started shooting at the old man's feet. The old prospector, not wanting to get a toe blown off, started hopping around like a flea on a hot skillet.

Everybody standing around was laughing. When his last bullet had been fired, the young gunslinger, still laughing, holstered his gun and turned around to go back into the saloon.

The old man turned to his pack mule, pulled out a double-barreled 12 gauge shotgun and cocked both hammers. The loud clicks carried clearly through the desert air. The crowd stopped laughing immediately. The young gunslinger heard the sounds too, and he turned around very slowly.

The silence was deafening. The crowd watched as the young gunman stared at the old timer and the large gaping holes of those twin 12 gauge barrels. The barrels of the shotgun never wavered in the old man's hands, as he quietly said;

"Son, have you ever kissed a mule's ass?"

The gunslinger swallowed hard and said, "No sir... but...but I've always wanted to."

There are a few lessons for all of us here:

- Don't be arrogant.
- Don't waste ammunition.
- Whiskey makes you think you're smarter than you are.
- Always make sure you know who is in control.
- And finally, don't screw around with old folks; they didn't get old by being stupid.

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## *More Definitions*

**BORN EXECUTIVE:** The bloke whose father owns the Company

**ADAMANT:** The very first insect

**AWE-STRUCK:** being hit with a paddle

# *All things Considered.....*

by Ed Foote

*(Note: Ed Foote and I have been friends for many years. We first met at a Callerlab Convention in the dim past, and have maintained a great relationship ever since).*

*Ed has written a huge number of articles over the years for American Square Dance (ASD) magazine on a wide number of topics that relate to our activity. Ed does not pull any punches in his writing, he calls (punny) it as he sees it.*

*Ed has kindly agreed to send articles for us to publish each month (some previously published in ASD).. Topics will cover all aspects of Calling and Dancing. While some may be aimed more at dancers than callers, they still represent valuable ideas for all to consider and pass on. While some of the comments relate specifically to the USA, we can all still learn from what happens elsewhere).*

## **WE GET QUESTIONS**

Over the years dancers have asked me questions about how callers call. These include specific questions about how I call, and general questions about all callers. Here are some of the questions I have received.

**QUESTION:** Are you nervous before you call a dance?

- **ANSWER:** No. I have always believed that thorough preparation eliminates nervousness, and that this applies to anything in life, not just calling. The only exception is when a person is new to an activity - now nervousness is to be expected.

**QUESTION:** How do you judge the ability of the floor?

- **ANSWER:** I ask myself the question: "How good do these people look doing the calls they think they know well?"
  - On calls like Square Thru and Wheel & Deal from standard positions, do the dancers look crisp and sharp or do they look sloppy?
  - Do the dancers take hands immediately after every call? If they do, it means they have been well-trained and are likely strong dancers. If they do not take hands, it is a weak floor.
  - Also, are the dancers "walkers" or do they dance to the beat of the music? Those who dance to the beat are always better dancers.
  - Many callers judge the ability of the floor by having a few prepared sequences they use in the first tip to see how the floor reacts. This works well also.

**QUESTION:** How long does it take you to judge the ability of the floor?

- **ANSWER:** I better know the ability level halfway through the patten portion of the first tip. Occasionally I may not determine the ability level until early in the second tip, but this means I have probably been lazy and not truly observant.

**QUESTION:** Do you ever misjudge the ability level of the floor?

- **ANSWER:** Occasionally. If I have judged them too low and they prove they are better than I thought, I am quick to provide more creative choreography. If I have judged them too high, this becomes quickly apparent, and I have no problem backing off to an easier level.

**QUESTION:** Do you always make a front square your "pilot" square?

- **ANSWER:** Never. Dancers are under a misconception that callers have one square they are focusing on all the time. Callers are actually watching squares all over the floor, to be aware of how the floor is handling the material. New callers may only have the ability to watch one square, but they need to start watching more squares as soon as possible.

**QUESTION:** But don't you need a pilot square to find the corner?

- **ANSWER:** There are two parts in calling material. 95% of calling is just having dancers moving smoothly - only 5% is finding the corner.
- Most dancers think the caller is always tracking the corner, but in actual fact the caller is usually not thinking about the corner until less than 30 seconds before a Left Allemande. So a caller only needs a "pilot" square when it is time to go for the Left Allemande.

**QUESTION:** So where is your "pilot" square on the floor in terms of finding the corner?

- **ANSWER:** I don't have one - I have a minimum of 3, and preferably 4. By "pilot" I mean knowing partner and corner relationships in a square, and my goal is to have 4 such squares. These squares are scattered all over the room. Most experienced callers operate in this manner.
- Sometimes dancers, for fun, will intentionally change partners in a square right in front of the caller, or try to confuse the caller by dancing 1/2 sashayed, thinking that this will cause him/her trouble. This does not affect experienced callers at all, because they will simply shift their attention to other squares in the hall, both for regular dancing and for finding the corner. The only person it will adversely affect is a newer caller, because they are likely only watching one square, and it is not good etiquette to try and get a new caller nervous.

**QUESTION:** When you decide to go for a Left Allemande, how long does it take you to get there?

- **ANSWER:** 12 seconds or less. Any good sight caller can do this. At caller schools I work with callers to get to a Left Allemande in 15 seconds.

**QUESTION:** How involved is it to get to a Left Allemande? It seems like it would be very difficult.

- **ANSWER:** It is actually quite easy. There are a few simple formulas to memorize, any one of which will result in a Left Allemande. Once a caller has memorized a formula, it is no effort at all.

**QUESTION:** When you call material, how do you know what call to give at what time?

- **ANSWER:** Experience. Certain calls go well together, and over time you learn these. You also learn what combinations not to call.
- The bottom line is that the material must be smooth-flowing from one call to the next. To accomplish this, a caller must know all the starting and ending formations for every call, and also know the body flow for each call - is it right, left or straight ahead? The caller must also know "hand availability" for each call – i.e. which hand is free to begin the call based on what the previous call was.

**QUESTION:** Do you get disappointed if a floor does not do what you expect?

- **ANSWER:** No, because I have no expectations. If I had expectations and then the floor did not measure up, I would be disappointed and this would come across in my calling. So I play a psychological game with myself. I go into every dance expecting nothing; then if I get just a sliver of something from the floor, I'm happy, and this happiness shows in my calling.

**QUESTION:** But if you have been to a club several times, you know ahead of time how they dance?

- **ANSWER:** True, but I always expect less. That way I am never disappointed.

**QUESTION:** How often do you have an off night and call a bad dance?

- **ANSWER:** I never call a bad dance. My goal is to have 98% of my dances be labeled either "A" - excellent, or "B" - good. It has to be this way to give the dancers a good time and to get re-booked. If I have an off night my grade is "C" - average. No caller should ever have a grade below "C".

**QUESTION:** Do you like to have rounds at dances?

- **ANSWER:** Yes. It makes for a more complete evening. I have always maintained that all square dancers should take round dance lessons, because it helps smooth out a person's square dancing.

**QUESTION:** Do you prefer one or two rounds between calling tips?

- **ANSWER:** It makes no difference to me. Both are fine.

**QUESTION:** Have you called overseas?

- **ANSWER:** I have made 18 calling trips overseas, 16 to Europe (calling in 10 countries) and 2 trips to Asia (calling in Australia & New Zealand).

**QUESTION:** Which country have you called in the most?

- **ANSWER:** England - 11 times.

**QUESTION:** How does the ability of overseas dancers compare with those in the U.S.?

- **ANSWER:** Their ability is far better. In Europe the strong countries are: England, Germany, Belgium, Netherlands, Denmark and Sweden. In Asia the strong countries are: Australia, New Zealand and Japan.

**QUESTION:** Why do they dance better?

- **ANSWER:** Because their philosophy of dancing is different from that of the U.S. It is a cultural thing. (It would take too long to elaborate on this here. This topic will be a separate article in the future.)

Happy Calling  
Ed

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## **2017 SARDANSW CALLERS WEEKEND**

This two day Conference will be held on the weekend of January 29-29, 2017 at Corrimal RSL Club. Cost will be \$50 per person which will include full hot lunch on both Saturday & Sunday, dance Saturday Evening and all sessions and materials.

Program:

SATURDAY MORNING	10.00AM - 12.30PM
SATURDAY AFTERNOON	1.30PM - 4:30PM
SATURDAY NIGHT DANCE	7.30PM - 10.30PM
SUNDAY MORNING	10:00AM – 12:30PM
SUNDAY AFTERNOON	1:30PM – 4:00PM

Please send form and payment to SARDANSW, PO Box 453, Casula Mall, 2170 or direct deposit to CBA a/c 10436279, BSB 062329 (ref Jan 2017)

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

EMAIL.....PHONE.....

# TICKETS.....AMOUNT PAID.....

Well, that brings us to the end of another issue. I do hope that you have enjoyed the content and found the articles and items, informative and entertaining.

I would re-iterate that the best way to read this Newsletter is to print it out as a double-sided document. There are a lot of pages to go thru, and I know that I find it difficult to just sit in front of my computer and read something of this length....it is just too much to digest all at once!!

I am always looking for anything that would be of interest to callers. This includes choreography, ideas, comments, articles, and basically anything that could possibly entertain and enrich our overall square dancing and calling experience.

In coming issues we will have articles on presentation, ethics, and many other topics that affect us all, plus more choreography, and hopefully, an occasional dash of humour. Please feel free to pass this Newsletter on to any of your friends who you feel will gain some form of benefit from the contents.

I have attached the flyer for the Saturday Night dance at Corrimal in January 2017. As noted earlier, we will also have a full weekend Callers Clinic, presented by Mel Wilkerson. This weekend will be similar in format to that of our first one at this venue in January this year. Mind you, we will have one major change: the air conditioning is now working!!

This year we utilized a number of presenters with a variety of topics for all callers who attended. For next year we are changing the format for this specific weekend where we will only have a single presenter over the two days. This allows for a more structured event. Mel has been involved in many similar Caller Weekends overseas and we look forward to his presentation.

I look forward to catching up with many of you at the Steve Turner Weekend, 28-30 October 2016 at Port Kembla Leagues Club.

Best wishes

*Barry*



**For your dancing pleasure:**

**SATURDAY**

**featuring**  
**MEL WILKERSON**

**& Special Guests**

**JANUARY**  
**28TH**

**7.30 - 10.30pm**

**THE SQUARE & ROUND DANCE**  
**ASSOCIATION OF N.S.W.**

**PROUDLY PRESENTS**  
**A SPECIAL NIGHT OF**  
**SQUARE DANCING**

**CORRIMAL RSL CLUB**

**Princes Highway, Corrimal**

**WITH WORKING A/C**

**Come along and join**  
**us for a great night**  
**of dancing**

**MS & PLUS**

**ADMISSION**

**\$15**

# THE SQUARE & ROUND DANCE ASSOCIATION OF NSW

in conjunction with

## THE RED BARONS SQUARE DANCE CLUB'S

### 42<sup>ND</sup> BIRTHDAY WEEKEND

*Friday Night (MS & Plus)*

*Saturday Afternoon (MS, Plus, A)*

*Saturday Night (MS & Plus)*

*Sunday Morning (MS & Plus)*

*Bounds with Barry & Guests*

*SARDANSW WILL ALSO BE RUNNING A FULL 3 DAY  
CALLER CLINIC WITH STEVE OVER THE WEEKEND*



FEATURING  
**STEVE TURNER**  
AND  
**BARRY WOLSON**

A great weekend of dancing

with 2 of Australia's Top Callers

**Port Kembla Leagues Club**  
Wentworth Street, Port Kembla Place.

**28TH - 30TH  
OCTOBER  
2016**

S.A.R.D.A.N.S.W. / RED BARONS 42<sup>ND</sup> BIRTHDAY WEEKEND & 2016 CALLERS SCHOOL

Name(s).....

Address.....

Postcode..... Phone.....

Email Address.....

EARLY BIRD (before July 30th) *includes Saturday Evening Meal* .. \$55.....

Weekend Ticket (after July 30th) *(inc Saturday night Dinner)* . \$65.....

Please make cheques payable to SARDANSW and post to SARDANSW, PO Box 453, Casula Mall, NSW 2170 or Direct Deposit to CBA A/C 1043 6279 BSB 062 329 (ref Oct 2016).

For information (02)42294059 or email [bjwonson@gmail.com](mailto:bjwonson@gmail.com)