

by

Jerry Story

*** WHAT WE'VE LOST * WHY WE LOST IT ***

*** WHAT WE STILL HAVE ***

*** HOW TO MAKE THE BEST OF WHAT WE HAVE LEFT ***

Good afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen

First of all let me say what an honor it is to be speaking with you today at the 65th NSDC here in Des Moines, and my home state, the great state of Iowa. We hope you all are enjoying the convention and some good old fashioned mid-west hospitality. Welcome everyone we're happy you're here.

Before we dive into the serious matter before us today I would like to take this available opportunity, (could be the only chance I'll ever get), to tell you all a little bit about my Iowa roots. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank a few deserving people who helped me along the way, especially when I was first getting started. Over the years Iowa can certainly enjoy and boast about rearing many great square dance callers. One in particular made a lasting impression on me at a very young age and I'm going to tell you all a true story of how we met and how I got started calling square dances over 45 years ago, just 2 hours down the road in Fairfield, my home town!

I started playing an old \$5 guitar and singing country music when I was 5 years old. At 7 years old, using my saved allowance and a little help from Mom & Dad, I bought a brand new Gibson Guitar. My parents Kenneth and Marian Story (my mother's here today) I love you Mom. They took me everywhere to talent shows and most every Sunday I would sit in to play and sing on one of 3 local Sunday morning Gospel TV shows during the 1960's. (either Ottumwa/Kirksville/Quincy) At age 14, I had 30 guitar students taking weekly lessons. I also had my own country dance band. I hired a 65 year old couple (boy friend girl friend). He played electric guitar, she played electric piano for which I bought a state of the art electronic drum set and I played rhythm guitar and would sing 70 songs a night in honky-tonks and clubs all over our tri state area. Needless to say my parents were starting to get a bit worried with me growing up singing in these rough conditions most every weekend.

Yup, I was a business man at age 14! I charged the honky-tonks and night clubs \$65 for the band. I made \$25 a night, paid my musicians \$20 each, had them come pick me up every Friday and Saturday and drive to the gig usually a few hours away, plus,, pay for the gas. I was having a lot of fun & living a dream.

Yes Sireee, I was headed to Nashville. I was doing all the right things. I was going to be a big country star. Everything was going just the way I had it planned out. THEN,,, in 1969 I got grounded. I can't remember what I did but it must have been pretty bad. You know what part of my "pre-meditated" punishment was? My parents made me go to a Square Dance. Guess who was scheduled to call? One of Iowa's top stars, a new caller by the name of Ken Bower. It's easy now to see, my mother and father had an ulterior motive. Get me out of the bars and honk-tonks and into Modern Western Square Dance Calling. My father was the President of the Fairfield Square Dance Club at the time. He heard Ken call at the state convention and booked him to drive down from Des Moines to Fairfield for \$35 to call for the Fairfield Square Dance Club, (totally different than the Fairfield Square Dancers of today), The Club was up in arms that my dad had agreed to pay Ken such an enormous fee. They told him they had never paid any caller that high amount. Well, Dad told them not to worry that he'd cover any short falls. Of course the dance was a great success and yes I did meet Ken Bower.

We drove out to the 4 H building early the night of the dance. Outside the front door was a loong gold Cadillac. I said “who’s car is that? Dad said, “Must be Ken Bowers”! Well I was impressed right off the bat. When we walked into the hall I walked over to introduce myself to Ken, after speaking with him for a few minutes, I was REALLY impressed. He gave me a couple records to practice and told me I should think about becoming a square dance caller. After watching and listening to Ken call that evening with no beer bottles being thrown at him and no smoke filled bar room, and the fact that he made \$35 for 3 hours work and I was making \$25 for 5 hours work, it was a no brainer,,, I was changing careers!!! Look Out, Square Dancing here I come, Yee Haw!! See Kenny,,,, it was all your fault. □

Well, the local club had lessons in progress. I had missed the first 3 or 4, took the next 3 or 4 then decided to just read the book of illustrations to learn the calls in the last 3 or 4 lessons. I learned a couple singing calls and went to a couple party dances where they let me call. I quickly booked my first dance for the Circle Square B Square Dance Club in Burlington, Iowa for \$35. The scary thing was,,, I didn’t even know how to call. My first few dances were horrible. All I knew was a half a dozen singing calls.

In 1972 my parents took me to the 21st National Square Dance Convention, right here in Des Moines, Iowa. We stayed in my Parents camper out at the fairgrounds and took the bus back and forth each day to the convention center. I was on the bus coming back to the fairgrounds and sitting next to me was a famous caller who I had seen in all the square dance magazines. His name was Clint McClean and he had just heard me call at the convention. He turned to me and said “ya sing pretty good but your choreography sucks”. I’m sure I had the dumbest of a dumb look on my face and politely said “Well Thank You Sir”. When back at the camper first chance I got I said to my mother, “Hey Mom, what the heck does choreography mean”? Later during the convention Dave Lightly, one of the best callers Iowa every produced, told me the same thing. God rest his soul. So, that’s all it took to kick me in the seat of the pants and off to Callers school I went. I attended the Central Iowa Caller Association Caller Training right here in Des Moines and then signed up for the Bettendorf Callers School with Earl Johnston (a well known and respected caller coach from Connecticut) and Bob “Blue Boots” Yerington from Muscatine, IA. I guess they spotted a little potential in me because they picked on me something awful the entire week.

A quick story that callers will relate to more than dancers but it's still funny. For years, Callers have heard me harp on the importance of knowing relationships. (who are you with corner-right hand lady-opposite-partner) Along with my Central Iowa Training, and this lucky experience I'm going to tell you about, was my first look at relationships. Now 45 years later these tools are the foundation and corner stone to my success as a hash caller. Here's what they did to me in front of a dozen other callers at my first callers school. Old Blue Boots Bob told the practice square to promenade don't slow down, keep on walkin' that girl around, girls roll back like a Chinese fan and promenade your left hand man. (which I now know was my right hand lady) Heads Wheel Around Make Lines of 4 Bob shouted! OK, Earl said, "Story get 'em out!" I've never been so scared in my life. I didn't have a clue what to do. Well, I learned right then and there, this was my Right Hand Lady and this was a Right Hand Lady line. The get out they gave me for this right hand lady station I still use today. Square 4, (and since we didn't have trade by yet) Right to Partner Pull By, AL.

It's people like Bob and Earl & Clint and Dave that I can never thank enough for getting me started correctly early on. They were all true leaders.

My Beautiful wife Kristy is with us today. I love you honey! She was in my 2nd class, before I went to Callers School. Kristy's Dad & Mom were in my first class. Kristy has always said she wishes now she'd waited until my 3rd class,, after I had gone to Caller School. I can't really remember but my teaching must have been awful. ☺

I've been very fortunate, and lucky, to have had so many wonderful people help me along the way and I want to take this opportunity to thank them at this time. Many of you newer dancers will not recognize these names. For us "older" folks it will be a precious walk down memory lane. One of the best ever, Frank Lane, from Estes Park Colorado, gave me the opportunity to run his Ranch Hand circuit clubs from the Rockies through-out the Mid-West early in my touring years. This was quite a catapult to my young career. Dave Taylor from Naperville, Ill. was an incredible leader and also gave me a chance at very young age. There was nothing like calling for D Notes at the Boy Scout center in Arlington Heights, Ill. Thank you Dave.

Gary Shoemake and recording with all of Chaparral Records super stars, Beryl Main, Jerry Haag and Ken Bower, was an incredible boost onto the touring circuit. Gary gave me the opportunity to run his circuit clubs thru Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas and Nebraska. After this exposure my career was now unstoppable. Thanks Gary Shoemake, I appreciate everything you did for me! The next path on my journey was Rhythm Records and Wade Driver. How lucky was I recording for the best producer in the business? Thanks Wade for all the great music and all the wild Rhythm weekends with Pat Barbour, Bob Baier and Kip Garvey. Lord what a motley crew we were and Lord how I feel blessed to still be alive.

Then along came Royal Records. It was inevitable, after touring the world with my long-time friend and business partner Tony Oxendine, that we start our own recording company. Thanks Tony, it's been a great ride. We were both very fortunate to ride the tail end of the Hey Day. I'm proud to say that after 37 years Tony and I are still best friends and we both remain engaged in training callers. Our goals remain the same,,,, help create a more Sustainable Square Dancing activity for future generations to enjoy. It's our duty to at least try. Doesn't everyone feel that way?

I would certainly be remiss if I did not mention a rare individual who was part of my entire career until he retired several years ago. Does anyone remember my Dear Friend Larry Letson? Now there is what you call a “one of a kind original”! Marshall Flippo thanks for bringing Kristy and I to the most prestigious Square Dance Resort of it’s time, Kirkwood Lodge in Osage Beach, MO. What fond memories we have. Jon and Deborah Carroll Jones, thank you for pushing me to make me a better caller and a better caller coach. Thank you for teaching me dignity in the face of adversity, patience in the face of volunteer beaurcracy, but most of all, Thanks for being my friend. It’s too much to mention everyone so let me say this. To all my friends and to all of you here today, I say thank you. It’s been a great ride. Unless we get serious and get busy creating a new “marketable” base of dancers then, Ladies and Gentlemen, this ride is over.

Restoring the “Base” that’s been crumbling for years and completely non-existent in most areas, can be done without disrupting what the current establishment clubs are dancing now. All the establishment clubs need to do is CHANGE the way they market the activity. Get out of the beginner business and into helping us create a new 50 call SA (standard application) Base.

The Plus clubs should get into the Plus class business. More on this will follow in the “What Do We Do Now” section. I’m looking forward to explaining everything. I understand that many of you, especially the newer dancers, are scratching their head say, “I don’t see the big problem,, I made it, I survived.” I’m looking forward to explaining why this is not the way it is supposed to work. Many of the older dancers, I’m sure, will be enlightened as well. I believe most dancers were/are simply not aware of the “REAL Problem” and instead have chosen to believe their own excuses for why the activity is failing. However, after checking the Key Note Speech’s for the past 20 years they all have one common denominator. They were all talking about the same thing, changing the way we deliver our product to our customers. But, change never comes.

2011 Mike Seastrom in his Key Note Speech to CALLERLAB called for a “Shift in our Thinking”. That shift never came. Mike went on to say and I quote: “I say again, this "paradigm shift" has great potential to bring our dance form to future generations in our rapidly changing society.” Oh how correct Mike was. The problem is not how we dress or how we recruit or how much more food we need to bring to the dance. Even tho these things may be important they are not the problem.

The problem has been, we've never really openly and honestly addressed our problems and then offered solutions. That all changes today! Let's get going!

OK, let's answer the 4 main questions being asked. Please understand this will be a 40 year look back to fully understand what has happened. What I say may upset some people. Please understand, facts are facts. Very little of what I'm about to explain is "my opinion". I'll try and let you know which is which but I think you will be able to figure that out. So, please don't shoot the messenger. There is no blame being cast. It is what it is. My hope is that more of you will get involved after hearing the "unvarnished truth with solutions" that do not alter what people are dancing today. What it will do, over time, is create better teaching, calling and dancing.

What have we lost?

Answer - The "Art" of Teaching, Calling and Entertaining using Basic Square Dance choreography.

Answer - Quality dancing with little to no emphasis put on smooth well timed choreography or square dance etiquette.

Answer - Caller Leadership

Answer - Our Way

1. Why we lost it?

Answer - We lost the “Art” of Teaching, Calling and Entertaining using Basic Square Dance choreography, Quality of dancing, Caller leadership, and we’ve lost “Our Way” all because of the Plus program, or should we say, the bastardization of the B/MS and Plus program, by both callers and clubs. May I explain? Let me give you a quick history lesson so we can all understand how we all got into the mess we find ourselves. When I was first getting started touring many callers, mostly the touring callers used a little trick to equalize experience level of a dance. Integrating new dancers into the activity and not boring the experienced dancers has always been the secret to successful and Sustainable Square Dancing or “The Art of Calling”

Instead we went the other way and Segregated the activity with organized programs. During the early 70’s there was a flood of new calls being written. It was a fascinating time to be involved. We had a 50 to 60 call core or “Base” and we were smart enough to know this base needed to be protected above all else. It was the life line of the activity. Now, along comes CALLERLAB and standardized these “Base” calls worldwide, today known as Mainstream Square Dancing and all was good. Back to the little trick I was speaking about that we used to equalize a floor

of both new and experienced dancers. We would use these new experimental calls as we all traveled from town to town. It was great! We could pick a couple new calls and feature them during the dance. The new dancers and the experience dancers all learned something together and these tools help level the playing field. After the dance they could forget all about the new calls. If they ever heard them again the callers would feature them as a workshop the same way we did. It REALLY helped callers take care of one of our toughest challenges, Integration (keep new and experienced dancers happy together).

Well, just when things were going well. We had a core base of calls and callers learned how to use these calls with variety. We actually had caller associations that met every month and actually worked on becoming better callers, together.

But, some callers got upset. They were upset because their dancers would come back from a special dance somewhere and say to them, “why don’t you call the fun stuff like that caller does”? “We liked it when he taught us Relay Your Wing Ding and Flip the Widget”. Understandably these callers were upset. They also watched some of their own area callers using these new experimental calls and attracting dancers. They could have chosen to do their homework like the other callers and do the

same thing. But instead they teamed up with a few who just wanted to use the whole thing as a tool to make money and here they came. They teamed up and chose the lazy and destructive route. They brought their issues to CALLERLAB and lobbied for a new program that contained a lot of these new experimental calls. It was an easy sell. It was first Plus 1, then Plus 2, then combined and made just Plus (over 30 more calls). The BAR had just been raised. Protecting the "Base" and Receiving "New Dancers" was just made much more difficult.

There were some fierce debates concerning the wisdom of such a move. I was adamantly against it, as were most of my peers. We didn't need it and we knew if this passed it would be the beginning of our demise. We knew this hair brained scheme would ruin most Mainstream clubs. The sucking sound of dancers be drawn out of all our beautiful MS Square Dance Clubs would be deafening.

When asked why they were so determined to do this, the answer we got was ludicrous. They said, "now we can call like all the hot shots". I think they honestly believed that. This reminds me of something the late great Beryl Main told me 40 years ago, he said Jerry, "It ain't what you call, It's how you call it". No Truer Words Have Ever Been Spoken.

IMHO, the Plus calls were created for disingenuous and for wrong reasons. This made for lazy calling to manifest itself time and time again over the next 35 years. The Plus calls did all the work for us. Good Basic teaching and calling slowly started becoming non-existent. Because of the extra calls and very little extra time to teach, quality of dancing began to wither away. It was kind of like socialized calling and dancing. We were now all the same. Quasi Plus was it, all while receiving new dancers was becoming more challenging and the quality of dancing continued going down. The cream could no longer rise to the top of the can. We were all calling and dancing this rouge program called "Soft Plus" This program was crammed down the throats of our new people who today we call survivors,, not graduates anymore. In the beginning it had the appearance of success but at what cost? It soon become very clear,,, we were in trouble. The new dancers would go dancing to "one of those hot shot callers" who calls something from the Basic or MS program these so called, Plus dancers don't know? NOW these callers are the bad guy and forced to dumb everything down and relent to what I simply call "Cheaters Crappy Plus" dancing.

That's what we have in most parts of America today, "Cheaters Plus". The basics are no longer being taught and danced. Dancers are rushed thru the Basics and not even taught all the calls. MS is no longer taught and danced. Dancers are rushed thru MS and not even taught all the calls. The Plus program in, most parts of America, has never really been Plus. It's been an amalgamation of the B/MS/P and varies slightly from region to region. The ACA One Floor Level, along with most Areas of America where it's all crammed together into one program, would be an example. There was a time when I thought this type thinking was maybe the right way to go. Well after 30 years of watching the decline and watching society drastically change, I've changed my mind. The fact is, it's still too much to teach, especially for TODAY'S busy people. THINGS ARE DIFFERENT NOW! Our product needs delivered to our customers in the proper dosage. Not the dose we want them to take, which is, (0 to wishy washy plus in 9 months), but the dose that fits better with their busy life styles like 12 weeks SA (standard application) with multiple starts each year. Something easy for our customers to remain part of even if they do not want to go all the way to Plus. Multiple starts so they can bring their friends right away instead of waiting an entire year before their friends can join in only makes too much sense.

At present we have no such product available in most parts of this country, and that's a shame.

The only thing in common with all the slightly different versions of wishy washy plus dancing, is the degenerating quality of dancing we've watched over the years and getting worse. From a leadership standpoint the Cream had Simply Settled to the Bottom of the Can. When good callers showed the dancers some B/MS in a little bit different way or actually tried to help make them a better dancer many balked. They had already learned Relay the Duecy and Load the Boat.

How dare we insult them by teaching them how to Circulate. Yes, we were losing the game.

I hear about a very few clubs who are really touting success using this antiquated and failed model of marketing our activity. (I.e. 0 to Plus in 9 months). If this is what success looks like I certainly do not wish to see failure. IMO,, Plus Clubs and "so called" MS/Plus Clubs, need to get out of the beginner business and get into helping CALLERLAB and many other brave leaders stepping up to the plate to create a new SA (standard application) base of 50 calls. Something that can be taught multiple times each year and suited for today's active people.

Out of this effort, if left alone so they can build, will not only create a new sustainable base for the activity in general it will also create a sustainable future for all the dying Plus Clubs. However,,, THIS WILL TAKE ORGANIZATION & DETERMINATION on part of the Associations, Clubs and Dancers.

Now the dirty little secret. 40 years ago, when the Plus program was being formed, many in CALLERLAB knew the only hope was to try and mandate the use of Variety or today we call it Extended Application.

So, a statement was created and placed at the bottom of all CALLERLAB MS teaching lists, the same list we ALL use when teaching. This statement says, "These Mainstream calls should be taught from more than a single formation and arrangement (a little EA) and These same MS calls should be danced for another entire year before moving on to Plus". How many of you out there even knew that? How do you think that went here in America? Since there was no way to mandate this all we could do is have CL highly recommend it and hope for the best.

Germany and a few other places in Europe today are still doing the best job trying to adhere to this CALLERLAB Recommendation. There I see MS dancing still alive with all ages dancing Extended Applications at each program, the way it was designed. Japan has done a very good job of following these CL recommendations. Sweden and Denmark, at one time, were also following the CL recommendations and did quite well for many years until they adopted the American model. (rush 'em thru the programs with total disregard for CL recommendations). Canada used to go a great job at insisting dancers stay in MS for a couple years. That's all changed. Australia did a pretty job but I'm not too sure but what they haven't slipped as well.

America didn't even try. America, straight away created a new rogue program called Soft Plus. (not all calls from Basic, not all the calls from MS, not all the calls on Plus and absolutely zero Extended Applications on anything.

Completely contrary to CL recommendations. This wishy washy Plus program was used, or misused depending on how you're looking at it, by many callers to just to make money and most clubs misused it simply because they didn't know any better.

Most callers totally ignored CL's recommendations for teaching multiple formations and arrangements and dancing for another entire year before moving on to Plus. Instead America chose a different path and it did not work. It's been a failed experiment. Ladies and Gentlemen over the years we have watched as CL leadership (I'm talking from Chairman of the Board, to the EC and BOG) totally ignored our own recommendations. What type leadership was this? What type leadership are we still seeing in this regard today? Take a look, you won't find many operating their programs according to CALLERLAB recommendations. Far too many don't even teach new dancers. Callers say they are being controlled by their clubs and the clubs say their caller can't call good without the Plus calls.

Jack Pladdy's can call the best dance you've ever danced using 50 calls. Ask him how he likes be controlled by a quote unquote so called Plus Club to deliver new Plus dancers to this club in 9 months. Jack will tell you straight up, he does not like it and that he must modify his teaching considerably to make it work.

When a professional like Jack Pladdy's has trouble making it work how in the world is local Joe from Whoopisbutt, Mississippi, that calls 2 dances a month, suppose to make it work?

Well folks, it doesn't work. That's the point. It's never really worked,,,,, anywhere. As I said before, it may have given the façade of success but at what cost? Callers being forced to go against their principles or fear losing their job? This is not right and it's happening far too often all over America by struggling clubs unwilling to change. Please don't get me wrong. Callers are just as quick to not rock the boat because change means a little extra work on their part. It means they just might have to get a little better at calling so the dancers might then get a little better at dancing. What a novel approach. There are a few, who have always worked hard at doing things correctly, according to CL recommendations, but it is a very small group. It's sad to say that this small group of callers have paid the price many times for standing up for their principles. Dancers that have been rushed through and thinking they are Plus dancers usually do not enjoy dancing to them until they find out that a lot of **the FUN is exactly what they were cheated out of! Funny how that works!** These callers are the cream and it's time that they rise back to the top. Plain Vanilla, SA every program does not work. These brave callers should be commended. Many have quit out of frustration. More will surely follow.

Because of the poor training some dancers grumble because they don't like it if the caller does not stay pretty true to the wishy washy Plus side of this upside down CALLERLAB program system.

When the membership of the organization who wrote the rules refuse to play by them, I will suggest to all of you,,, there is no way to go but down. So what should we do? Should we just continue raping and pillaging, interested in short term invested only?

Blast Class this! Condensed that! Fast Track it! Easy Advanced! Soft C1! C2 Blast Single position only. These are all terms of destruction designed to continually suck dancers on up thru the levels, even when there is **NO WAY THEY ARE ANYWHERE CLOSE TO BEING READY to move** on. The program system design **must** be to learn each program in it's entirety before moving up, which includes EA training and dancing experience, exactly the way CL recommends it be done. We have some absolutely awesome leadership in CL at the present time. I want to thank them for their true leadership and wisdom. I have been plenty critical of CL over years when I watched what I considered to be a bone headed decision. I'm here today to tell all of you, unequivocally, I have never been prouder of CALLERLAB in my entire life.

CALLERLAB is stepping up to the plate with a solution. Let's move onto the next question, What's Left for us and What Do We Do Now? I'm anxious to tell you all about it.

CALLERLAB has set forth a new committee called the Sustainable Square Dancing committee. Make sure you get the hand out explaining all about it.

Before we move further into the "fix it" stage I want to speak to all the leadership of our wishy washy Plus clubs who refuse to change, even when nothing in their world changes except the way we approach new dancers. Too be honest, I don't get it! It's a new marketing strategy and all that's required from you, the establishment dancers and clubs, is patience. Maybe something in this speech today will change your minds. For the sake of our activity we sincerely hope so.

First of all, SA Choreography, there is so much really cool standard, plain vanilla 50 call choreo not even being used or even considered today let alone any EA choreo. We'll get to it in a minute. The sad part is, most Plus dancers are not able to dance a variety of easy SA plain vanilla routines.

But, by God they can Load the Boat and Relay the Duecy,,,,,, from one way. How many plain vanilla

Relay the Duecy's can you do before you are sick of it? There is also a ton of easy, fun, flowing EA dancing being totally ignored just so we can instead use this time to teach the dancers to holler "Toot Toot" on Track Two.

This has gone on so long that we have all, well not all of us, but most of us today accept this as normal. Ladies and Gentlemen, this is not normal! This is where the "ART of Calling Square Dances was lost. We all know this is the most important part of re-setting the activity on to a successful path. Callers must learn how to REALLY call and TEACH the BASICS once again. The reason Basics are no longer being taught is the same reason round dance Basics are not being taught. Everyone is trying to consolidate new and experience dancers together to not have to give up another night of the week or another session during the week. Simple as that! There is just too big of gap for trying to integrate the new dancers together with the experienced dancers today. THE BASICS END UP NOT BEING TAUGHT and this destructive antiquated way we continue going about it works polar opposite against us. It runs new people away. A round dance class today may teach a phase 4 and 5 rhumba to new dancers who couldn't even dance the simple two step classic "Frenchy Brown" even if it was cued. Reason?

They were never taught the BASICS. Square dancing, same thing. Square Dance Clubs are trying to accommodate Plus & MS & Classes, again trying to do too much too soon all in one venue.

We are battling human nature, I guess. Whatever the reason, we are dearly paying the price now. The product that has evolved is not sustainable and becoming less marketable by the day. It's certainly not sustainable if callers continue holding their nose working against their principles for clubs who Simply Will Not Change. I'm sorry but, one session a week for 6 to 9 months does not allow dancers to be properly accommodated thru MS or Plus. It's been a proven failure all over the world. It has proven to be very destructive and interruptive to the activity. There is a plethora of facts and statistics to back this up. Callers must take back a big part of the leadership roll. Clubs must HELP! Or???????

This is the DIVORCE!!! Here is where we must walk away. Not walking away from the activity but rather walking away from the poor stewardship the activity is enduring today and has endured for years. The CALLERLAB SSD (sustainable square dancing) committee is the ONLY hope on the horizon to LEAD the activity to a better place.

Callers who jump on board will know they are about to become a much better caller. More caller mentoring will be coming available through the CALLERLAB Sustainable Square Dancing Committee.

For any of you who want to walk with us down a much more viable and sustainable path or folks out there (caller or dancer) who just want to come along and be part of this exciting movement, we want you working with us. So stop by the CALLERLAB booth and ask to be placed on the NEW SSD Committee and keep up with what's happening.

The concept is pretty easy to understand. Our mission is to create a new 50 call Standard Application base of dancers. Not to promote segregation but rather keep the 50 call group going forever promoting integration like we did in the good old days. The difference in today and back then,,, today we will use a little EA (extend application) to equalize the floor and level the playing field. This is where callers get back to dealing with a limited vocabulary becoming better callers and dancers in turn will become better dancers. After a couple years when the "base" is back strong there will be a steady stream of dancers who will chose by themselves when they're ready to move on.

These new dancers, because of dancing for a couple years, will be better trained and experienced so teaching the Plus calls will be a breeze.

There will be one BIG issue that will need to be nipped in the bud very early on or it will ruin all your hard work and efforts and create failure again. This is going to be a long slow process. Some clubs will tell us to go straight to “you know where”. Then they will add insult to injury by coming by and cherry picking your new dancers to try and take them on to their Wishy Washy Plus Clubs. It will happen I assure you!

Maybe we could put up a sign that says “No Fishing” or “Catch & Release”. All joking aside this is a HUGE problem and will play a HUGE roll in successfully re-setting the activity on to a more sustainable path. It would be so nice if the Associations and Clubs got together and started working with CALLERLAB and the Sustainable Square Dancing Committee to make this venture a journey together for the betterment of the activity. Oh what a proud moment it would be all working together and completing these NEW GOALS,,, TOGETHER! As Chairman of the CALLERLAB Sustainable Square Dancing Committee I appeal to everyone to get involved and support the new

CALLERLAB 50 Call Sustainable Square Dancing Initiative.

I want to thank you all for listen to the 65th NSDC 2016 Key Note Speech. I hope you come away more knowledgeable concerning the issues and now prepared, for the first time, to follow the lead of CALLERLAB and together we will make a huge difference. Get excited and Get Involved!

Thank you all and enjoy the rest the convention.