

# **SAVE SQUARE DANCING**

**“Sustainable Square Dancing” Following CALLERLAB Protocol  
“It’s all about the Base” and “Resetting the Activity on to a Sustainable Path”  
Presented by Jerry Story & Deborah Carroll-Jones**

For Square Dancing to ever thrive again, we have 3 known FACTS that must be addressed:

- 1) Having only ONE class each year does not work very well anymore.
- 2) Plain Vanilla Standard Application to EVERY Level does not work.
- 3) Compared to the rest of the world, American dancers are a bit sloppy.

Clubs, Dancers, Dancer Associations and Callers ALL want the same thing! We all want this very special activity to continue, to grow and to thrive. We are all on the same side and we must work together if we are going to bear witness to this goal. That means things as we have always known them or done them HAVE TO change.

Fact #1 - Having only ONE class a year ...

If today's people are having fun they certainly do not want to wait an entire year to invite their friends! THIS MUST CHANGE!

Today's people will bring us plenty of dancers with 3 starts each year. Square Dancing has always been built strong by "Friends bring Friends bring Friends". Our current structure makes it difficult for new dancers to excite their friends about taking lessons a whole year later. It just takes too long.

50 Calls Standard App (SA) with 3 Starts each year is much more suited for success. This will reinstate our most powerful marketing tool, (friends bring friends bring friends).

Fact #2 - Plain Vanilla Standard Application to EVERY Level does not work

This takes the integrity out of the Programs and destroys the recruitment base.

The reason it destroys our recruitment base is because without EA (extended Application) it creates a rush to the next program.

When NEW dancers are rushing to the next program the last thing on their mind is bringing in new people!!

So, how do we start to reverse our current (unintentionally) destructive trend? Before it's past the point of no return, before our clubs are completely dead ...

They make a 2 year Pledge to use their resources and help create 50 call Standard Application Clubs. There IS "something in it for these Mainstream and Plus clubs" in due time. This requires PATIENCE as well as FORESIGHT!

Fact #3 - Sloppy dancers ...

Instead of taking these new dancers to PLUS or even Mainstream (like we've been doing), when these new dancers *want to go on* we take them through Extended Application training. This whole process (from start to finish) should take about 2 years and could include the MS calls along the way.

BUT, from this point forward, EVERY YEAR thereafter, new dancers will begin coming into all the Mainstream & Plus clubs!

After dancing 50 calls from multiple formations and arrangements for a couple years, it will only take a few weeks to finish off Mainstream and/or Plus, whatever the area calls for.

The neatest thing is: these new dancers will know how to dance!!! We all know the effort it takes to keep new dancers' confidence up as they learn where and how to maneuver. By giving them MORE TIME to learn, dance and assimilate the 50 calls, they naturally become more proficient.

Part of our new wave criteria would be to EMPHASIZE Team Dancing, doing the same steps and flourishes all together. Grand Square will eventually be 32 steps once again!! We want smooth flowing well timed choreography with no more stop & go dancing. It's all about the FLOW! CALLERLAB & the new Sustainable Square Dancing committee will be there every step of the way helping callers achieve these goals.

The greatest thing will be the high rate of retention due to this new structure. It would be entirely probable for the retention rate for existing Mainstream & Plus clubs to shoot up to nearly 100%.

The last great benefit is the "user friendly," positive marketing transfer we will create. Square Dancing will now be available and served in the doses *today's people like it served to them*, instead of in the doses that we have insisted it be served to them.

Many may be wondering if we have any proof that this new system will work in practice. It is ... in little old Fairfield Iowa, Jerry Story's home town. There are others, in Wisconsin as well as several other states - who are not afraid to step out of the OLD and into the NEW - and are successfully building SA 50 Call Square Dance Clubs! It's even getting ready to take root in California, a place where no MS groups exist. This program will help areas like California rebuild the activity the correct way for a Sustainable Square Dancing future.

Twice a year we offer, to the SA Club 50 folks, the opportunity to go on and learn Extended Applications as well as the rest of the MS and/or Plus program. We also highly recommend the current existing dancers join these new dancers during these EA workshops. EA is the key factor to our successes. This is where callers get better calling and dancers get better dancing.

Hear this interesting statistic: After Four 12 week rotations in Fairfield, IA they had built their Club 50 group to over 100 new dancers. Out of 100 new 50 call SA dancers only 30 *chose* to go on. The 70 that did not *choose* to go on but rather stay where they are for now and bring in their friends to the next NEW CLASS starting in just a few short weeks. It all just makes too much sense. These 70 new dancers, who chose not to go on, would have been our current structures DISCARDS. These would be the dancers, who today, we throw away. Ironically, this same 70% figure is very close to our average national dropout rate. There are brighter days ahead for our wonderful activity.

Some have mentioned that it takes 2 nights a week to make this initiative work and that they just don't have the time. We say, please re-evaluate your current situation and try again to join us. In other words: If need be, give up that 1 square in your A group or fold up that dying Plus club with 5 couples in it, and join our winning team.

Generally speaking today, to go through to Mainstream, requires 2 nights a week ... Club on One Night - Class on the other. We have Class & Club on the same night once a week. The 2nd night is Extended Application workshop followed by an Extended Application dance. It's all where your priorities lead you!

We hope your priorities lead to the 50 call initiative. Dancers now have choices! They can dance 50 calls Standard Application and never know they

are not dancing Mainstream. Or, they can go thru one or both of our 2 Extended Application classes offered each year, and/or dance at our EA-MS dance following the EA class each week. We like options with no hurry to go to Plus! Patience is a Virtue! If clubs have patience, we can use their help and they will reap the benefit. Contact CALLERLAB at [callerlab@aol.com](mailto:callerlab@aol.com) and join the Sustainable Square Dancing committee for guidance and mentoring.

The Basic Goal,,,,, Adhere to CALLERLAB's strongly suggested recommendation "MS for 2 Years with EA Training along the way before moving to Plus". Simple Really & IT WORKS by Resetting the Activity on a Sustainable Path.

## FAQs

Q1. Let me make sure I have this correct ... After your group learns 50 calls Standard Application, we (our MS or Plus club) will be able to come dance with them (the new 50 call SA dancers)?

A1. YES

Q 2. But, they will not be able to come dance with us, right?

A2. YES

Q3. Now, after THEY choose to go and learn the rest of Mainstream and Extended Application to all those calls they will be able to come dance at our Mainstream Standard Application Club, right?

A3. YES

Q4. Now, they will be better dancers than either our MS club or Plus Club, is that right?

A4. YES

Q5. Well, if we don't dance as well as these new dancers they may not want to come back and dance with us; is that the way you see it?

A5. YES

Q6. So, do you have a solution to this problem?

A6. YES! Come enjoy the yearlong Extended Application workshops with the new class. It's a Brand New Day!!

## Jerry Story & Deborah C. Jones \* Talking Points

1. Puts our best tools back to work: “Friends Bring Friends Bring Friends”
2. Replaces the eroded base of our activity.
3. Callers get better at Teaching & Calling
4. Dancers get better at Dancing and Socializing
5. Out of this effort will come many younger and energetic Club 50 Callers
6. Now we’ve given Square Dancing the best chance possible to thrive again.