

B.C. S. & R.D.A.
2nd VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT
BOD 2016

New Callers:

I have continued my work on the creation of a course which can be taught to qualified individuals outside of our recreation with the hope of attracting some high calibre talent to fill the calling void which is already being felt in some areas, mine included. The concept is to recruit talented performers, demonstrate to them the many ways calling can be an extension of their art and show them how much potential there is for personal growth both creatively and as an entertainer in this endeavour. This will be a “get your feet wet” course and is not intended to be the end all in training for new callers. If it can foster an interest in calling to the point where some of the new recruits are eager to learn more, I will consider it a success.

Traditionally a new dancer isn't asked to try calling until after he or she has had at least a year or two of dancing experience. Then the new caller is given a record or two to practise with, complete with demo vocals using some random Mainstream figures and this works relatively well because the calls on the record have already started to become part of the caller's subconscious vocabulary. However, callers trained in this manner tend to skip a lot of the basics and eventually have to back up when they are asked to teach a class (speaking from my own experience here). What is unique about the way this course would work is that the new caller will be expected to learn to square dance while simultaneously learning to call. One advantage of this approach is that by necessity, the new caller will start with the simplest calls and figures and work his or her way through to more complex modules. The object is to create callers from the ground up who can entertain at any level regardless of the ability of the dancers they encounter on the dance floor.

I've found the biggest challenge in putting this program together is that there aren't a lot of square dance records with basic figures that can be made available to new callers taking the course. To that end, I have been adding vocal tracks to a variety of music using basic modules and creating lyric sheets to go along with that. New callers would have to purchase the music but I could then provide them with a vocal demo consistent with their level

of training. Putting a working collection together though is proving to be fairly labour intensive.

Additional progress: I have put together some points to consider for potential candidates laying out some optimum qualifications for becoming a caller, I've concocted a rough draft of a ten week lesson plan (will probably have to be expanded), I've set down a collection of modules set in 16 bar timing charts, and assembled definitions for each of the calls to be taught. I hope to have a final draft completed in time to try a pilot project at the Powell River Academy of Music this fall. I believe I can sell this to the directors there as a traditional art form which should be preserved. I have designed this course to be harmonious with the West Coast square dance program. My vision for this is that one or more of the graduates would be capable and willing to take on a weekly WC dance and enhance the overall square dance program in my community while gaining some experience calling along the way. This would allow for a greater variety of dance opportunities to serve dancers of all abilities – one of the cornerstones of the West Coast Program.

Funding Committee:

The implementation of the new caller / cuer training bursary criteria, allowing all applications to be considered at once has brought some order to the administrative process. As with every system however, glitches pop up and we discovered one with the first application we received. The applicants' training took place shortly after our annual cut off date which means they will have to wait almost a full year to find out if their application for funding will be successful. The way it now stands, the best advice I can give anyone considering training is "Don't count on receiving a bursary!" We have two which can be awarded annually but we have to consider all applications at once and depending on how many applicants there are, you may or may not be fortunate enough to be one of the successful applicants.

I would personally like to see bursaries approved prior to training occurring (payment pending proof of attendance) based on something more than how far an applicant has to travel to receive training. For instance: "Is a caller or cuer urgently needed at a given location?" "Does this applicant have the support of the club he or she wishes to work for?" "Does this applicant have the endorsement of the regional caller / cuer association where one exists – or alternately, does the applicant have the endorsement of another professional caller or cuer?" In short, what I am saying is that the

Federation has a limited supply of funds. We should be spending them where we'll get the biggest bang for our buck. Throwing money at faint hopes just doesn't seem very economically prudent to me.

Library:

The library has once again been in limbo for the past seven months. It has been so underused that I am contemplating whether there is any justification for our organization to continue to maintain it. Any regional association interested in participating in the time sharing program is encouraged to download an application which can be found in the Handbook under DVD Library or Mobile Library Time Sharing Program, fill it out and send it to me at: Gordon Ruedig, 2540 Weldwood Rd, Powell River B.C., V8A 0L4.

This concludes my report,

Gordon Ruedig
Second Vice President
BC Square & Round Dance Federation
email: gordonruedig@hotmail.com