

BOD 2010
Region 8 Caller Teacher Association Report

The caller teacher's association in our region hosts three events each year to promote dancer growth and encourage dancers from around the region to travel and mingle.

The first is our Roundarama which has been struggling with attendance for the past several years. Last year we began promoting it in square dance circles as being two thirds square dance level rounds and one third higher phases. That helped somewhat and numbers improved. Same thing this year, combined with word of mouth from last year's attendees and we had a full floor at the Bradley Center on February 17, in spite of the snowfall that has been causing havoc everywhere this winter. The lesson to be learned here is that the more inclusive you become, the more participants you will have at your dances.

Our next event will be our Freshman Frolic on March 24 and a good number of new square dancers are expected to join us for this dance in their honour.

We wind it all up with our June Special dance on the first Sunday in June, featuring our region's callers and cuers. As well as being a great way for dancers to meet others in the region, our association sees these events as an opportunity for callers and cuers to hone their skills working with larger and perhaps unfamiliar crowds.

In terms of new dancer retention, a couple of ideas are being tested this year. One club has limited the number of angels who attend class by inviting only a few each week. They've made it up to those who would be angels by adding extra workshop sessions for experienced dancers on alternate evenings. The intent is to provide new dancers with more instruction from the caller and less from the floor. The result has been very encouraging according to the caller who reports that the class is leaps and bounds ahead of those from prior years, and the positive atmosphere has resulted in much improved retention.

Another club is testing a "flexible learning" system in conjunction with the West Coast program. This also has shown some promise in its ability to be adapted to the needs of the student without disrupting the class in progress. An overview of how it works can be found at westcoastsquaredance.com by clicking on the "caller info" tab.

This concludes my report.

Respectfully submitted by,
Gordon Ruedig, Region 8 Caller / Teacher Delegate