

For Immediate Release  
May 2013



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**CALLERLAB PRESENTS  
NEW MISSION STATEMENT**

Periodically, every organization has to take a step back from the daily fray and take stock of how it is doing. Are its goals still relevant? Is it still effective? Does its structure still work? Is it really working towards a better future? It has been quite a number of years since CALLERLAB has gone through this exercise, and our world has changed considerably since our last review.

Crucial to answering such questions is having a clear idea of our mission: why does CALLERLAB exist? Before we can determine how well we are doing, we have to know what it is we are trying to do. Since our annual Convention is the only time of year when a large number of us gather together, the EC decided to seize the occasion to start the process of updating our mission statement. Members of the Board of Governors and Past Chairmen were invited to participate in a day-long session on the Saturday before Convention to formulate an updated mission statement.

Ideally, a mission statement needs to be concise – as few words as possible. So few, in fact, that it can be easily memorized and called to mind whenever making a decision about where to allocate time and resources. Each decision should be made on the basis of how well it serves that overall mission. On the other hand, this concise statement must embrace and encompass all the areas the organization needs to concern itself with. This is a delicate balance.

We believe our meeting was highly successful in creating a mission statement that meets these criteria. People sometimes wonder why it takes a group a whole day to come up with a single sentence, but a sentence that conveys so much meaning in very few words takes a lot of discussion.

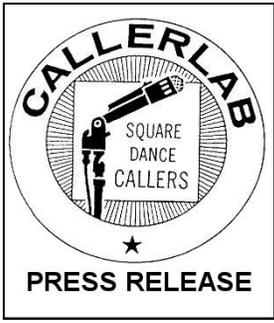
In the end, our new mission statement turned out not to be a radical change in substance from the old mission statement. However, it is dramatically different in form. The old mission statement was about two-thirds of a page long, contained a number of bullet points, and was not remembered verbatim by anyone. The new mission statement is a single short sentence:

**“To foster the art of square dance calling, and improve caller skills.”**

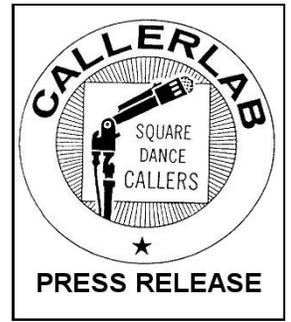
While it may be brief, this sentence incorporates or implies all the information contained in our previous mission statement. It is easily remembered, and can be used to measure each and every activity we undertake on behalf of CALLERLAB—how well will it further this mission?

One of the foremost implications of this mission statement is that it firmly establishes CALLERLAB as an organization of callers, concerned primarily with the art of square dance calling. For many, the first question that comes to mind is “What about dancers and dancing—are we not concerned with them?” Of course we are concerned with dancers and dancing. Without them there is no art of square dance calling. So dancers and dancing are a huge concern of CALLERLAB—but not our main mission. Our purpose is to “foster the art of square dance calling” and our interest in dancers and dancing must be viewed through that lens.

Today we are hugely concerned with the declining population of square dancers. Without square dancers there is no square dance calling. Therefore, JOB #1 for us is to increase the number of active square dancers. In today's circumstances, that is the first priority that flows from our mission statement. The following statement, which appears on our home page, provides our mission statement and lists the current top priorities that derive from it:



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**(continued)**

CALLERLAB is an organization of square dance callers. The CALLERLAB Mission Statement is:

**“To foster the art of square dance calling, and improve caller skills.”**

In pursuing this mission, we engage in activities supporting a number of goals:

1. Increase the population of square dancers.
2. Maintain high standards of education for callers and dancers by establishing standard curricula, training materials, and accreditation standards.
3. Maintain high professional and ethical standards among callers.
4. Maintain open and continuous communication among callers, dancers, leaders, and other organizations associated with the activity.
5. Encourage high standards of dance practice, responsibility, and ethics among all leaders of dancing.

Primary among these activities are:

1. An annual international convention which provides meetings and education sessions targeting all our goals.
2. The maintenance of dance programs and definitions that set the standards which shape the practice of Modern Western Square Dancing.

Written and presented by Barry Clasper, Chairman of the Board of Governors

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**We thank you for the coverage you have given us in the past and for your continued support in the future.**

**THE CALLERLAB BOARD OF GOVERNORS**