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The "Walk Thru" - A Tool for Dancer Success

by Jim Mayo

I found myself thinking the other day that perhaps the end of the walk thru at square dances was the beginning of our troubles in the activity. Way back, Dick Steele in Lexington, Mass. ran an interesting program. He taught class every other week alternating a first year program with a second year program. On the weekends he ran dances alternating between the two experience levels. On the 5th Saturdays he ran "No Walk-Thru" dances and thereby introduced a new concept. Until that time (early 60's) standard practice was to walk the floor thru the intended choreographic material before every tip. In those days nearly every caller memorized complete dance patterns (not unlike the CDP) and we didn't think it unusual that we should help the dancers in this way.

Following this line of thought makes me aware that the advent of sight calling and increased choreographic understanding by callers has brought us many of the problems we see in modern square dancing. We now expect even class dancers to be able to react to calls without knowing in advance what the dance pattern will be. In fact, we have placed the "known in advance" or repetitive dance pattern in disfavor. We still allow it in singing calls but even there we find a strong tendency to change figures at least once and sometimes for every chorus.

One of the reasons that we did away with the walk thru was that callers learned how to work with choreography without having to memorize. They could make dance patterns that exploited the "all position" use of calls and the conceptual demands on dancers increased substantially.

In the Community Dance Program we must always understand that our goal is to make the dancing less complicated - to reduce the conceptual demands on the dancers. One of the best ways to do this is by walking them thru the routine before we call it to them for dancing.

Callers who are interested in broadening the appeal of square dancing (i.e. the Community Dance Program) should take careful note of the importance of a walk thru. When we walk the dancers thru a call or sequence of calls and then use that call or sequence, differences in experience and choreographic ability become less critical to the overall success rate. Dancers want to be successful and one of the best ways to assure success is to let them walk thru the routine before we ask them to dance it.

The argument that modern club callers will give us against the use of a walk thru is that it takes away the surprise element from their choreography. In the CDP we are not selling surprise - we are selling a dance experience. Anything we can do to improve the dancer's chance of success will improve that dance experience. The interest in our program comes from the much greater variety of dance patterns and music that we use. We don't need surprise or challenge to keep our dancers interested.

**Want to know more about
the CDP?
Order the handbook for the
Community Dance Program
\$3.00 each from
CALLERLAB**

A Call for Articles and Dances for the CDP Journal

Many of you sent material for possible publication in the CDP Journal. We thank all of you. If you don't see your dance in this issue, it will probably be used in a future issue.

We encourage the rest of you to contribute as well. The Community Dance Program needs your ideas and your knowledge. Please share all you can.

For many of us, square dancing will be the core of our community dance program. Any caller probably feels that they can call many tips using only the basics, but one area that needs special attention is the really clever use of the 24 square dance basics that CALLERLAB has suggested for the Community Dance Program. How can we make the best use of these basics? What dance routines do you use that have stood the test-of-time?

CDP in Action

Bob and Jean Fisher started a Community Dance program in Brownwood Texas in January 1991. The group is composed of mainly singles, some who attend with their children.

Bob uses squares, mixers, solo dances, some country/western, polkas, waltzes, etc. The group varies in size and skill level, but there is never a dull moment and everyone dance as long as Bob will call and teach.

So far the club has had three weddings and many happy couples who have met there. Some older couple visit just to share the fellowship. Several couples have even gone on to take square dance lessons.

CDP is Alive and Well in the Washington D.C. Area

The Community Dance Program in the D.C. area is enjoyed mainly by the senior citizen population. Several area callers are using the program.

Most of the dances are organized through local government recreation department and the city and county recreation offices in the area.

Decko Deck currently has six 2 hour programs operating weekly with requests for new programs coming in steadily.

Decko uses squares, rounds, contras, quadrilles, line dances, etc. The breaks are even occupied with a mixture of ballroom and country dances. Decko says that diversity and simplicity with a strong musical focus, are the key factors to the huge success of the program.

Square Dance Figures

Figures such as the ones below stay within the 24 basics recommended by Callerlab and still add variety to a program.

Jack Murtha uses the following routines in his dance programs. Notice that each of the figures has the dances moving in an easily identifiable big pattern.

Patter Figure

Head Couples Promenade 1/2
2 Ladies Chain ...
Same Two Promenade 1/2
Pass Thru ... Courtesy Turn ...
Pass Thru ... Promenade 1/2 ...
Lead Right ... Split 2 ...
Separate .. Around 1 to a Line ...
Pass Thru ... U Turn Back ..
Pass Thru ... Left Allemande

Patter Figure

Heads Promenade 1/2 ...
Circle four 1/2 and 1/4 more ...
Pass Thru ... With the outside 2
circle 1/2 and 1/4 more ...
Back away to a line of four ...
Pass Thru .. Courtesy Turn ...
2 Ladies Chain ... Pass Thru ...
Courtesy Turn ...
Circle 1/2 and 1/4 more ...

Using Solo and Line Dances in a Recreation Program

by Calvin Campbell

Solo or Lines Dances are enjoying a huge popularity right now. They have become a staple of the western night clubs all over the country. Unfortunately many of these line dances require several nights to teach and are complex enough to drive away many dancers.

Line dances are very useful with the Community Dance Program as long as they are kept relatively simple. They are an excellent way to start out a dance when a few people have arrived, but not enough to really be able to do much in the way of other types of dancing.

Line dances are also a good filler in the middle of a dance program. They fit in well at the point in the program where some people are wanting to take a rest and some people are still raring to go. They can give the opportunity for one partner to rest while the other partner dances.

If the routine is simple enough, many line dances can be taught by the *show -um* method. Just get on the floor and let the dancers follow your lead. Some dances need to be taught in parts. An old standard used to tune of **Amos Moses** by Jerry Reed (RCA 447-0896) is a good example. If you try and teach this dance as originally written, about 25% of the people will fail. Try the following routine first. Tell the dancers it is the first of two variations they will learn. Let them dance the first variation until everyone is comfortable with the movements and then introduce the second variation.

Amos Moses Variation #1

Counts

1-4

Right Heel, Left Heel

Touch the right heel on the floor and bring the foot back and stand on it. Touch the left heel on the floor and bring the foot back and stand on it. The weight is now on the left foot.

5-8

Walk, 2, 3, Turn Right

Starting with the right foot walk four steps forward and pivot on the fourth step to make a quarter face right face turn. End with your weight on the left foot.

Amos Moses Variation #2

1-4

Right Heel, Left Heel

Touch the right heel on the floor and bring the foot back and stand on it. Touch the left heel on the floor and bring the foot back and stand on it.

5-8

Side, Behind, Side, Turn Half

The general direction of the first three steps will be forward from the starting point. The following body movements keep your feet from getting tangled up. Starting with the right foot step forward and turn your body left so the next step can be taken with the left foot passing behind the right foot. The third step with the right foot moves straight to the side. On the fourth step turn half way around. The entire movement results in a quarter face right face turn.

Young people with probably add at least two more variations as they get familiar with this dance. They will either spin left face or right face once completely around. I recommend only two rules with this happens. First, the dance variation can't interfere with any other person on the floor. Second, everyone must end up facing the same direction at the end of the routine.

Some line dance routines can also be adjusted to fit different popular tunes or different groups. The original dance was done to "Little Black Book" by Jimmy Dean (Columbia 13-33051.) The same routine works well to the singing call tune "Pink Cadillac" (Red Boot RB-3017.) Which tune do you think would be more popular with the younger generation? When you have enough room, the younger people like to expand the three quick steps in counts 13-15 to three long running steps.

Counts

1-8 Side, Behind, Side, Kick, Side, Behind, Side, Kick
Starting with the right foot. Step to right. Step behind with the left foot. Step to the side with the right foot. The fourth step is a short kick with the left foot. The same action is repeated moving to the left and starting with the left foot, crossing behind with the right foot, stepping to the side with the left foot and kicking forward with the right foot.

9-20 Slow, -, Slow, -, Quick, Quick, Quick, Turn & Kick, Backup Three Steps -
Starting with the right foot take two slow steps forward. Then three quick steps to turn right face on the fourth step & kick forward with the left foot. Back up three steps Left, Right, Left and wait one count with the weight on the left foot.

Contra Dances

In Contra dances the dancers need to get used moving either up or down the formation with each repetition of the routine. One of the tricks-of-the-trade is to first use dances that have little chance of failure early in the teaching experience. Since dancers are used to working as couples, it is easy to set up a contra formation with couples facing couples and then use the following dance. If this record is not in your record case, experiment with some other singing call tunes until you find one that fits or pick out any good Irish jig.

Slaunch to Donegal

Adapted by Ede Butlin from "Beckett's Reel" by Herbe Gaudreau

Formation: Couples facing couples, lady on partner's right, in long lines down the hall. An even number of couples is required.

Record: Windor 4183

Tip: Tell the dancers that one couple at the head of the set and one couple at the foot of the set will have no one at the slant position for a right and left thru. Just stand still and wait and a couple will soon be in position for the right and left thre across.

Intro - - - -, With your corner allemande left 1

- 1-8** - - - -, Everybody swing your own
- 9-16** - - - -, Slant left and right and left thru
- 17-24** - - - -, Straight across right & left thru
- 25-32** - - - -, Same four two ladies chain
- 33-40** - - - -, -- Chain back
- 41-48** - - - -, Same four star Left
- 49-56** - - - -, -- Star right
- 57-64** - - - -, With your corner allemande left

Couple Dances

The following mixer was written many years ago to be sure that a very excellent recording was saved and to fill a gap in a teaching sequence. This dance is now done all over the world. In Europe most of the people know the dance as *Swish*.

The only non square dance term in the dance is the varsouvianna dance position. Otherwise, all the people have to be able to do is walk.

C. J. Mixer
Calvin & Judy Campbell

Formation: Couples in a circle, lady on man's right, facing LOD. Varsouvianna dance position. Footwork opposite throughout, each starting with outside foot. Directions are given for the man.

Record: Grenn 15018 or
Lloyd Shaw 3316

Counts

- Intro** **Wait 16 counts**
This dance has a very long intro. Just be patient or tap your toe.
- 1-8** **Walk, 2; 3, Turn; Back-Up (in LOD), 2; 3, 4;**
In varsouvianna pos, walk fwd in LOD counterclockwise) 3 steps and turn 1/2 R-face individually on 4th step to face RLOD (clockwise) with W on outside, M on inside while maintaining the hand hold; back up in LOD 4 steps. The lady is now on the left side of the man.
- 9-16** **Walk Forward (in RLOD), 2; 3, Turn; Back-Up (in RLOD),**
Walk fwd in RLOD with 3 steps and turn 1/2 L-face as a cpl on the 4th step to face LOD; back-up in RLOD with 4 steps. Thelady is back on the right side of the man.

17-24 Star Left, 2; 3, 4; 5, 6; Change Hands;

Drop R hands but keep L hands joined and guide the W to the inside of the circle making a L-hand star and turn the star formation for 6 cnts; then turn around in 2 counts and join R hands in a star.

25-32 Star Right, 2; 3, 4; 5, 6; To a New Partner;

Move around in the R-hand star for 6 cnts then on cnts 7 and 8 the M moves back (W fwd) to a new partner and assume varsouvianna pos ready to repeat the dance.

Ending Walk, 2; 3, Turn; Back-Up (in LOD), 2, 3; 4 Walk Forward (in RLOD), 2; 3, Turn; Back-Up (in RLOD), 2; 3, Face Partner & Bow.

Note: Varsouvianna position -- Lady on man's right and both facing LOD. The man's right hand and arm extending behind the lady's back slightly above the shoulder of the lady and holding the ladies right hand. The man should be careful to not rest his right arm on the ladies right shoulder. The ladies left hand and arm is in front of the man at waist level holding the man's left hand.

The next edition of the CDP Journal will discuss places where caller's can receive specific training on how to teach and run a CDP. Right now I only know of one school. Please send any information about other schools to:

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343 Turf Ln.

Castle Rock, CO 80104

Remember, to receive the CDP Journal you must be registered on the interest list at the CALLER-LAB home office.

Resources for CDP Dance Material

Bob Dalsemer, PO Bx 181, Brasstown, NC 28902-0181 sent samples of three publications. "When the Work's All Done a Square dance party for Beginners and Old Hands" and "Smoke on the Water" are aimed at the traditional style of square dancing and contain music and chords for use by a live band. Most of the material fits within the 24 square dance basic recommended for the CDP. Music is available on cassettes.

The third booklet titled "New England Quadrilles" contains instructions for how to call traditional square dances and prompt quadrilles as well as many good solid routines.

Jack Murtha Enterprises, Po Bx 3055, Yuba City, CA 9592-3055 produces records for a Diamond Program that uses 19 out of the recommended 24 CDP basics. Some of the records do use Do Paso which is not on the recommended list. Jack has even been able to persuade some of the big-name callers to make some Diamond Program level recordings to popular tunes.

Grenn Inc., Box 216, Bath, OH 44210 produces four record labels. Several catalogue combinations are available that list dances that would be suitable for the CDP. The dances are even graded as to the difficulty so that you have the opportunity to pick and choose records that will fit within the skills of your dancers.

The Lloyd Shaw Foundation Sales Division, Po Bx 11, Macks Creek, MO 65786 produces a wide variety of records for contras, squares, quadrilles, rounds and folk dancing. They have a recreational square dance kit and manual that generally stays within the CALLERLAB guidelines. Other records vary.

Editor's Note -- The above references are the one's I know for sure still sell records and books. Does anyone know of other resources that are still in business? If they would send me records and/or catalogues they will be listed in future editions of the CDP Journal.

Quadrilles

Quadrilles are prompted dances done from the standard square formation. They can be fitted to many 64 beat tunes. Some singing call records adapt very well to quadrilles. Other candidates are Irish and Scottish Jigs, Hornpipes and Reels.

The following quadrille was taken from *New England Quadrilles* by Bob Dalsemer. It is also listed as one of the dances available from Jack Murtha Enterprises (see above resource listings for addresses.) It is an excellent example of how a very interesting dance can be made from just simple basic movements.

This quadrille has a corner progression and is 64 beats in length. It could be prompted as a quadrille or used as the figure in a singing call or adapted to a patter routine by having the four ladies chain instead of doing the allemande left, etc.

Gordo's Quadrille

**Head Couples Lead Right ...
Split the Sides ...
Separate ... Around One...
Come Down the Middle ...
Right & Left Thru ...
Side Couples Lead Right ...
Split the Sides ...
Separate ... Around One...
Come Down the Middle ...
Right & Left Thru ...
(Each man is now at home position
with the opposite lady)
Allemande Left New Corners
Pass by New Partners ...
Swing the Next & Promenade**