



Nyhedsbrev nr. 2 - 2026

Kære callerkolleger

Så er sæsonen ved at være overstået for denne agang - og en lang og dejlig sommer venter forude. En af de ting der hører sommeren til er naturligvis Danish Convention.

Årets generalforsamling er overstået og læs mere om de senere i dette nyhedsbrev.

Kursus med Søren Lindergaard

Kurset blev traditionen afholdt i Sinding. Det var igen et udbytterigt kursus med mange ting der kunne ages med hjem.

Der blev efterspurgt om hvorvidt det kan gentages næste år. Det ligger lidt hen i det uvisse af flere grunde.

- Sinding Feriecenter er solgt.
- Elsebeth ønsker ikke mere at bruge en hel weekend til at sørge for maden.
- Undertegnede er selv stoppet med undervisningen, og håber en ny formand fra næste år er klar til at tage over.
- Antallet af kursusister er faldet.

Jeg håber så der til den tid vil komme en bestyrelse, som er klar til at tænke nye tanker.

Kursus med Carsten Nielsen

De nye calleraspiranter arbejder på fuld tryk og er gået sammen om nogle fælles callertræninger i løbet af sommeren.

Det forventes at vi lægger et par kursusdage ind i efteråret igen. Der er endnu ikke aftalt tid og sted.

Generalforsamling

Årets generalforsamling var godt besøgt med hele 7 fremmødte. Vi havde en god aften i Middelfart. De forskellige dokumenter fra generalforsamlingen er vedhæftet dette nyhedsbrev.

Fremtiden for vores deltagelse i Danish Convention var til diskussion og der var enighed om at vore medlemmer bør stå sammen og sørge for at bakke op om Convention 2027.



Pladebørsen

I forbindelse med generalforsamlingen kom Bent Husted med 2 kasser plader. Nogle fandtes i Pladebørsen i forvejen, men der dukkede også mange »nye« op. De er nu digitaliseret og lagt ind.

Indholdet er dags dato 1152 titler / 1502 plader.

Log ind og se om der er noget du kan bruge. Jeg har 5 store kasser plader til at stå i værkstedet og vil MEGET GERNE af med en masse af dem.

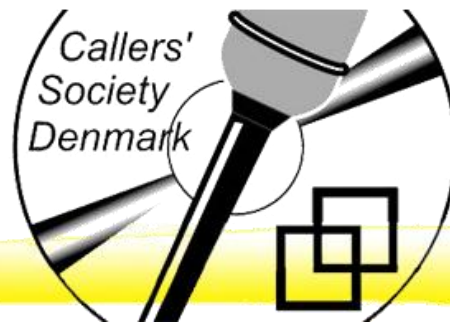
Fra formanden

Som nævnt har jeg lagt den aktive calling på hylden og forventer at stoppe som formand i CSD fra generalforsamlingen næste år.

Derfor bør I allerede nu overveje, hvem der er klar til at gribe depechen og styre foreningen videre.

Det er vigtigt at sige at det ikke er jer - de aktive medlemmer - der er grund til mit valg, men jeg har undervist i 30 år og vil også godt nå at bruge min tid til andre ting i fremtiden.

**CSD -
Denmark**



Beretning 2026

Først tak til de medlemmer som er kommet til generalforsamling.

Der er gået et år siden sidste generalforsamling.

I året der er gået, er der sket en del i CSD. Der er igen lagt mange timers frivilligt arbejde i at skabe interesse hos vores medlemmer. Heldigvis tyder det på at medlemmerne er klar til at blive mere aktive i vores aktivitet.

Året er blandt andet brugt til forberedelse af en gentagelse af callerkurset med Søren Lindergaard.

Jeg har en hilsen fra Poul Erik Sørensen som sidder i bestyrelsen. Han er pga. en anden generalforsamling desværre ikke i stand til at møde op her.

Callerkursus med Søren Lindergaard.

Efter callerkursus i januar 2024 ønskede deltagerne at kurset skulle gentages i 2025. Igen med hovedvægten blev lagt på bevidst at arbejde med sværhedsgraden i vores calling og indlæring. Denne gang var der tilmeldt 6 deltagere, hvor alle fik en udbytterig weekend.

Kurset var igen placeret på Sinding Fritidscenter, hvilket gjorde at vi ikke skulle ud for at betale hotelpriser for hverken overnatning eller forplejning. Elsebeth Lillevang stod for køkkenet og gjorde en fantastisk indsats.

I forbindelse med evalueringen, opfordrede kursisterne til en gentagelse af kurset i 2026, stadigvæk kun med 6 deltagere af hensyn til mikrofontid.

Callerkursus med Carsten Nielsen

Som vedtaget på generalforsamlingen i 2025 har CSD forsøgt starte et hold op med nye calleraspiranter. Det skete i oktober måned over 2 lørdage med 2 ugers mellemrum. Det var vel en succes, da der dukkede 5 nye aspiranter op. Coach og frokost til deltagerne blev betalt af CSD's benefitmidler som aftalt. Allerede nu kan vi glæde os over, at ved de 2 opfølgende kurser i marts i

år, var der stadig 4 af dem, der kom igen. Alle fire får lov til at øve sig hjemme i klubben under kyndig vejledning af den stedlige klubcaller.

Danish Convention

Traditionen tro er CSD inviteret til at deltage ved Danish Convention 2026 i Sæby. Der er desværre kun tilmeldt 2 af CSD's callere. I den forbindelse vil vi tage en snak senere under bestyrelsens planer for fremtiden.

Hjemmeside

Hjemmesiden bliver til stadighed vedligeholdt med de nyeste oplysninger fra Callerlab.

Hvis der er nogen der ikke kan huske login til siden, kan de blot kontakte mig. Så skal jeg nok hjælpe jer videre.

Pladebørsen

Vi har modtaget flere gamle vinylplader som er indspillet, rensset, komprimeret og lydclip lagt ind. Der ligger i øjeblikket følgende:

- Titler: 992
- Plader: 1213

Log ind på hjemmesiden og lyt - måske er der noget DU kan bruge.

Flere af de nye calleraspiranter har allerede nu bestilt plader.

Newsletter

Newsletter er udkommet 3 gange i løbet af 2024. Vi har valgt at vedhæfte Callerlabs "Direction" til nyhedsbrevet, da der tilsyneladende ikke er mange der logger ind på vores hjemmeside for at læse den der. De elektroniske nyheder fra Callerlab bliver lagt på forsiden af csd-denmark.dk hvor de kan tilgås uden login.

Der er kommet flere positive tilkendegivelser på kontaktformens, så den har vi planer om at fortsætte med. Hvis der er nogle af CSD's medlemmer der har lyst til at bringe et indlæg, er det altid velkommen.

Callerlab

Som tidligere meddelt har Callerlab foreslået nye lister. Forslaget med de nye lister i Mainstream og Plus blev vedtaget på Callerlab Convention. Der er STORE ændringer. Det vil sige at de nye lister gælder fra den 1. september i år.

Der er skrevet mange kommentarer – både positive og negative – i forbindelse med de nye lister. I den forbindelse er det vigtigt at huske at det er Callelabs personlige medlemmer der har stemmeret. Derfor: **Vi du have indflydelse må du tegne et personligt medlemskab...**

Bestyrelsesmøder

Bestyrelsen har afholdt 2 møder i løbet af 2025. Møderne er afholdt online, hvilket betyder at kørselsomkostningerne til bestyrelsen er skåret ned til et minimum

Referater er lagt ind i medlemsområdet under "Dokumenter".

CSD fremadrettet

Det store og tilbagevendende spørgsmål til medlemmerne er:

- Hvad ønsker du af CSD?
- Hvilken form for kurser kan få **dig** til at deltage?
- Har du opgivet at udvikle Squaredansen eller...?

CSD og SquareDanceDanmark

Vi forsøger til enhver tid at tage del i diskussionen om Square Dance i Danmark.

Camilla Kjær Haagensen er formand, og vi forsøger at bakke op om hendes nye tiltag.

Fra formanden

Selv har jeg valgt at stoppe min aktive callerkarriere – ikke på grund af de nye lister – men jeg har undervist i 30 år og har et ønske om, at bruge min tid til andre ting.

Jeg er først på valg ved generalforsamlingen i 2027, men er der en der har lyst til at overtage hvervet allerede nu, trækker jeg mig uden protest.

Afslutning

Så vil jeg endnu engang takke de fremmødte på generalforsamlingen. I skal vide, at det er jer der er med til at sikre fremtiden for såvel CSD og squaredansen.

Forslag til CSD's generalforsamling fredag den 17. april 2026.

Forslag:

Det foreslås, at medlemmer af den til enhver tid siddende bestyrelse, for fremtiden fritages for betaling af kontingent. Dette skal tjene som godtgørelse for de udgifter og det tidsforbrug, der er forbundet med varetagelsen af bestyrelshvervet.

Forslagsstiller:

Bestyrelsen 2025-2026



Årsregnskab 2025

Driftsresultat for perioden 1/1-2025 – 31/12-2025:

Indtægter:

Medlemskontingenter	9.450,00
Callerkurser	21.000,00
Indtægter i alt:	30.450,00

Udgifter:

Kontingenter, DAASDC, Callerlab	1.979,96
Generalforsamling	0,00
Internet og WEB hotel	234,00
Bankgebyrer	1.068,00
Callerkursus	24.623,06
Udgifter i alt:	27.905,02
Perioderesultat overskud:	2.544,98



Status pr. 31.12.2025:

AKTIVER:

Danske Bank Medlemskonto	36.833,22
Danske Bank Benefitkonto	16.100,30
Kontant kasse	21,00
AKTIVER I ALT	52.954,52

PASSIVER:

Egenkapital pr. 31.12.2024	27.929,24
Egenkapital Benefit pr. 31.12.2024 ¹	22.480,30
Årets resultat	2.544,98
PASSIVER I ALT	52.954,52

Helsinge, den 5. februar 2026

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Poul Erik Sørensen".

Poul Erik Sørensen

kasserer

¹ Benefitandelen af egenkapitalen pr 31 december 2025 er 16.100,30 kr. Dette skyldes, at et callerkursus for nye callere betales af benefitmidlerne. Dette betyder også at CSD's egenkapital pr 31 december 2025 stiger tilsvarende til 36.854,22 kr.

**CSD -
Denmark**



Revisionspåtegning

Jeg har i dag revideret årsregnskabet og fundet det i overensstemmelse med de mig foreviste bilag, ligesom de anførte indeståender i bank såvel som kontant kasse er konstateret til stede.

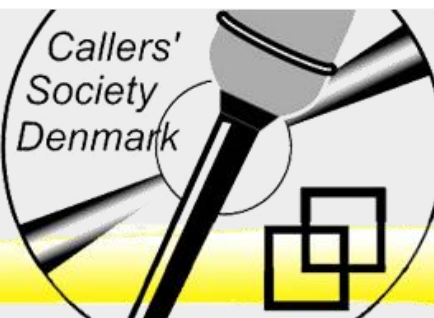
Hinnerup, den 22-02-26

Einar Sølvesten

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Einar Sølvesten".

Revisor

**CSD -
Denmark**



Lemvig den 28. marts 2026

Budgetforslag 2026

Indtægter

Kontingent (28 medlemmer)	9.800,00
Callerkurser	19.900,00
Indtægter i alt	29.700,00

Udgifter

Medlemskontingent DAASDC	1.500,00
Medlemskontingent Callerlab	500,00
Callerkurser	23.000,00
Generalforsamling forplejning/kørsel	4.000,00
Internet, Domæne og hjemmeside m.v.	500,00
Gaver, Repræsentation	400,00
Bankgebyr Danske bank	1.300,00
Øvrige administration	500,00
Udgifter i alt	31.700,00



Referat fra CSD's Ordinære Generalforsamling fredag d. 17. april 2026 Severin kursus og conferencecenter, Skovsvinget 25, Middelfart.

Mads Nielsen bød velkommen til alle fremmødte:

*Mads Nielsen, Finn Egholm Sørensen, Einar Sølvsten, Peter Junker, Bent Husted
Tom Mortensen, Ruth Nielsen*

1. Valg af dirigent, referent og stemmetællere

*Einar Sølvsten blev valgt som dirigent og kunne samtidig konstatere at
Generalforsamlingen var lovligt indvarslet den 4. marts 2026.*

Ruth Nielsen blev valgt som referent

*Man valgte at udsætte valget af stemmetællere til det viste sig om der var brug for
det. stemmetæller*

2. Årsberetning

*Mads Nielsen gennemgik den udleveret årsberetning – (Er vedhæftet som bilag til
referatet). Beretningen blev godkendt*

3. Gennemgang og godkendelse af årsregnskab

*Mads Nielsen gennemgik regnskabet – (Regnskab er vedhæftes som bilag).
Regnskabet viste et overskud på kr. 2.544,98
Regnskabet blev godkendt*

4. Bestyrelsens planer for foreningens virke i det kommende år.

*Mads Nielsen fortalte at der allerede er afholdt flere callerkurser. Et weekend kursus
med Søren Lindergaard og et 2 x 1 dags kursus for nystartede callere. Der forventes
at der afholdes endnu et 2x1 dags kursus for nye callere i efteråret.
Finn Sørensen spurgte om man skulle CSD dansen til convention da der i 2026 kun er
tilmeldt 2 dansere. Man enedes om at forsøge igen i 2027.
Formanden Spurgte om vi arbejder hen mod en lukning af CSD pga. manglende
interesse fra medlemmerne? Det mente de fremmødte ikke.*

5. Indkomne forslag

*Bestyrelsen havde fremsendt et forslag om at de 3 bestyrelsesmedlemmer
fremadrettet skulle være kontingentfri – (Forslaget er vedhæftet som bilag til
referatet).
Forslaget blev vedtaget.*



6. Godkendelse af budget for det kommende år, herunder fastsættelse af kontingent

*Mads Nielsen gennemgik budgettet.- (Budget er vedhæftet som bilag til referatet).
Der forventes et underskud på kr. 2.000*

Kontingent fortsætter uændret til kr. 350,00 pr medlem og man besluttede at fortsætte med at bruge nogle af benefitmidlerne til kursus for caller spirer.

7. Valg af medlemmer til bestyrelsen

*På valg: Poul Erik Sørensen som modtager genvalg.
Poul Erik Sørensen blev genvalgt*

8. Valg af 1 bestyrelsessuppleant.

*På Valg: Ruth Nielsen.
Ruth Nielsen blev genvalgt*

9. Valg af 1 revisor

*På Valg: Einar Sølvsten
Einar Sølvsten blev genvalgt*

10. Valg af 1 revisorsuppleant

Peter Junker blev valgt

11. Eventuelt

Peter Junker spurgte om der var interesse for at lave en dans til fordel for kræftens bekæmpelse. Det var der ikke da der allerede er en dans i nordjylland d. 19. april og derfor mente man ikke der var grundlag for dette.

12. Afslutning

Generalforsamling blev afsluttet kl. 20.30 og Einar Sølvsten takkede forsamlingen for god ro og orden og Mads Nielsen takkede for fremmødet.

Dirigent: Einar Sølvsten

Referent: Ruth Nielsen

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CONVENTION FLASH

This 'FLASH' issue of DIRECTION is published as soon as possible after the Annual Convention in order to inform all CALLERLAB Members of significant actions taken at the Annual Meeting. This issue includes the results of any voting during the 2026 Annual Meeting of the Members, information about award presentations, and reports from certain committees. Additional reports are included with the minutes of the 2026 Annual Meeting.



MELTON LUTTRELL
Life Time Achievement Award
2024
Gold Card 2010
Milestone Award 1986

Melton Lee Luttrell, a man of extraordinary laughter and creativity was born on October 27, 1928, in Eastland, Texas. Melton passed away on March 14, 2026, in Willow Park, Texas. As a child, he grew up in Caddo, Texas, graduating from Breckenridge High School in 1945. His life took a meaningful turn when he married the love of his life, Susia Mae Caraway, in 1949. Their marriage, filled with love and laughter, lasted 68 beautiful years until Sue's passing in 2017. Together, they moved to Fort Worth in 1952, marking the beginning of a new chapter in their lives.

Melton was a hardworking man of many talents. He juggled working full-time, going to night school to earn his degree at TCU, square dance calling on weekends, and raising his beautiful family all at the same time. He was known for his wit and charm. He built a remarkable career as an engineer, dedicating over 37 years to Convair (General Dynamics) as Chief Senior Project Design Engineer. His passion and expertise significantly contributed to the F-111 and F-16

Future Conventions

March 21-24, 2027—Indianapolis, IN

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programs, marking him as a respected figure in his field. However, Melton's talents reached far beyond his professional career. He was a pilot, a skilled portrait artist, an engaging magician, an avid Horned Frog football fan, and a multi-season ticket holder.

Melton's passion for square dancing was legendary. Begun under clever persuasion from his wife, Sue, Melton found an unexpected love in square dance calling. Over time, he became a respected caller in high demand, traveling across the globe to call dances in Australia, New Zealand, Japan, England, Canada, and Asia. His expertise extended to teaching, with an impressive record of teaching 13,000 students in his 75 years of calling.

His dedication to this craft was recognized with numerous awards, including:

- 1977 ~ inducted into the American Square Dance Society Hall of Fame.
- 1986 ~ awarded CALLERLAB's [Milestone Award](#), the highest recognition of achievement.
- 1998 ~ as a lifetime member, he was inducted into the North Texas Callers Hall of Fame.
- 2008 ~ inducted into the Texas State Callers Hall of Fame.
- 2010 ~ awarded the CALLERLAB [Gold Card](#)
- 2024 ~ by unanimous decision, he was awarded the CALLERLAB [Lifetime Achievement Award](#), honoring his legendary status.



Melton had the honor to orchestrate the design and construction of a premium square dance hall...his dream was realized when Swingtime Center opened its doors in 1974, and it remains today one of the finest square dance facilities in the nation.

Some more of Melton's extraordinary achievements include creating the Square L Record Company, where he produced and co-wrote many songs. And at the ripe age of 92, he wrote and published a mystery novel entitled "Who Drew the Two?"

Melton's life was filled with laughter, love, and a zest for life that was infectious. He adored his family, taking great pride in their accomplishments and enjoying every moment spent with his beloved great-grandchildren. The Luttrell house was always filled with friends, laughter, and enjoyable shenanigans.

IN MEMORY
Melton Luttrell, Aledo, TX

DIRECTION is the official newsletter of CALLERLAB, The International Association of Square Dance Callers, with offices located at 494 Emerson Ave, Ste H1, Greenwood, IN 46143-1953; Phone: (785) 783-3665; E-mail: info@CALLERLAB.org. *DIRECTION* is published and mailed first class or electronically to all Members and affiliates of CALLERLAB. *DIRECTION* is edited by Teresa Berger, Executive Director.

The opinions expressed in articles submitted by Members or affiliates do not necessarily reflect the policies of CALLERLAB. All articles submitted for publication must be signed by the author.

The editor reserves the right to exercise discretion in accepting, editing, or rejecting any material submitted for publication. Articles submitted for publication that describe square dance formations or arrangements MUST be in accordance with CALLERLAB standards.



51ST CALLERLAB CONVENTION

The 51st CALLERLAB Convention was held March 28 to April 1, 2026 at the Grand Sierra Resort in Reno, NV with 299 attendees. Participants represented 5 countries and 36 U.S. states, reflecting a strong and diverse turnout. One caller, Jon Jones, was in attendance and has attended every convention. Ten past Chairmen of the Board were present, along with eight invited organizations as VIPs and representation from 22 Affiliated Organizations. The Convention welcomed 35 first-time attendees and featured an inspiring keynote address by Kristina Riggs, social facilitator.

Keep reading for more Convention updates.

A special thanks to **Ray Owens**, Square Dance Tech for his photography during the event:

[2026 CALLERLAB Convention Photo Album](#)

[April '26 ASD Magazine -- Moments and Memories from CALLERLAB 2026 -- Ray Owens Video](#)



CHAIRMAN'S SPEECH

Speech Presented by Ted Lizotte



Good evening, everyone. May the Force be with you.

So here we are again. Third times a charm, right? Three is a magic number – at least according to School House Rock.

Once again, I sat alone in my office staring at a blank screen and blinking cursor for weeks, trying to determine what to say to everyone tonight. I'm sure I just overthink the whole thing. The only person that's going to watch this video and recall what I say is possibly some future Chair, like I did. But still, I feel it's important enough to really warrant the reflection on my part.

Don't get me wrong, my previous speeches were still a hill to climb, but at least with those I felt I had an overall point I needed to make at the time.

In my first speech, I tried to speak to change and the importance of being open-minded and embracing to change, even change we didn't desire or advocate for. You can probably guess why. In my second, my message was that it was important to remain unified as we continue to move forward, in whichever direction the vote took us. Some listened, some did not.

For this one, I tried to get Teresa to let me just say "Thank You, have a good night!" I got "the look" on the zoom meeting that said "sure, you could do that..." which is her basically saying, "um, no."

So, I finally just sat down and started. Which in my case means I began talking to my windshield while my voice memo captures me rambling on about different things all while traveling at 75 miles per hour. I was able to take that and coalesce it into THIS; so as you can see, I did overcome the adversity in front of me. I mean I'm here reading this to you after all. As painful as it may have been to sit down and get it done, I eventually got through it.

Okay, for the grammatically inclined in the audience I concur that adversity may be a bit much. I mean adversity is defined as "a state or instance of serious or continued difficulty or misfortune." Having to write a speech isn't really a misfortune or all together that serious of a predicament, even though my brain might make it out to be.

At best it might be considered a small hardship or unpleasantness. In the big grand scheme of things, one would argue that preparing this talk ranks low on the totem pole, if not buried underground somewhere.

It might also be considered a "first world problem?" For those not in the know, the term refers to something that's considered a trivial or minor inconvenience faced by people in wealthy, industrialized nations. Things such as slow Wi-Fi, forgotten passwords, or cold food, which are insignificant compared to global issues like poverty, disease, or lack of food and water.

Since this is a square dance crowd, let me try and craft the metaphor into something that seems more apropos to the moment.

Let me think, oh I don't know, like say complaining about being unable to call a mainstream dance without 14 calls that you've used for a long time; forgetting that you call party dances and teach first night students without 85-90% of those same calls. It's not like you've never faced this particular challenge before. It's just a little more permanent.

I mean, as humans, we're always learning to adapt without things, like how we continued to drive without a stick shift, or how we figured out how to change the channel on our TV when they removed the knobs. We don't all have to be Marines to Improvise, Adapt and Overcome.

Let's not forget the other side of the coin, complaining about our inability to teach and utilize new calls to dancers. Again, forgetting that at some point we had to learn ALL the calls, and that few of us go "back to class" when call definitions get updated or calls are moved from list to list. Most self-educate and move on. Just like we moved on from 8-tracks, landlines, and cable. Some of us have even learned how to bring up those stupid restaurant menus with a QR code. (Not saying I like to, but I can.)

A lot of us were here to listen to the "compliant free world" keynote of last year, but it's weird how quickly we forget, me included. It does seem easy to find things to complain about, doesn't it?

Like, remember when you could park right next to a store's entrance? Now there's what seems like a million spaces between you and the front door. It's GOT to be wrong to complain about THAT, right? All I need to do is see some people with wheelchairs and the like just trying to do the same thing that I'm trying to do, and suddenly the fact that I need to walk a little further doesn't seem so bad. I'm positive most of us in this room are willing to shoulder a little inconvenience for the greater good, am I right?

Oops, sorry I need to make this a square dance analogy – my bad. Maybe I'm wrong here, but for most of us, there is a world of difference as to knowing and dancing calls compared to understanding and teaching calls. Similarly, I would argue that learning to call is much more of a complex task when compared to just having to modify how one calls, once the skill is learned.

I mean in terms of adversity or difficulty, starting out is much more difficult than tweaking something a little after you've got it down, one would think?

So, I guess this speech, like a lot of the changes that are headed our way, doesn't really classify as "serious difficulty or misfortune", so I'm going to reframe the changes as "speed bumps".

Minor things that need to be dealt with so that we can get on with the bigger challenges that life could throw our way at any moment.



I look at what some of my friends are going through right now, and complaining about having to modify how we entertain people, just doesn't cut the mustard. The fact that I'm still privileged enough to have the opportunity to do this regularly is something that I try not to take for granted, and honestly each of us should take a moment to ponder on and be thankful for it.

We will get through this "bump in the road" and in a few years, we'll be telling the next round of new callers how "we were there when." Going through change can be life altering – think caterpillar to butterfly. Handling pressure well turns carbon into diamonds. Now is the chance to take some time to make a better YOU. Seize it while you can.

Things can change quickly, and if I had a wish for everyone in this room it would be that I hope that these organizational challenges that CALLERLAB has put in front of you are the biggest issues you have to deal with for a long time. If only life was so gracious.

As I love a good format, for the last time, I'll leave you with one last thing.

Today is March 31st. Twenty-five years ago, at about this time of day, my brothers and sisters and I were sitting in a hospital conference room trying to come to grips with how to honor my dad's wishes as he laid a few rooms away. That, my friends, is what I would consider adversity, not a list change. And even though the five of us all agreed to the same result, unity doesn't always equal happiness or serenity. For me, April Fool's Day lost its ability to be funny, when I became the patriarch of my family on April 1st, 2001.

It's been on my mind since Teresa let me know that my tenure is complete as of April 1st, 2026. So many things have changed in 25 years. About the only constant since then, is that if I needed something done, well, it's been up to me to do it. And at this point, I'm finished here, and it's now up to you.

Let me put it this way. It's time for me to let go of this chair and move on to something else. Get up out of yours and go make a difference while you still can. Thank you.



**CHAIRMAN'S AWARD PRESENTED TO
TERESA BERGER**
Speech Presented by Ted Lizotte

The Chairman's Award was first presented in 1981. I enjoy this award, because there are so many individuals working hard daily for the greater good of the activity. Not everyone achieves Milestone or Gold Card status, but that by no means diminishes their contributions. The fact that I'm allowed to take a few minutes to recognize some of these people, to me is an excellent use of this platform and our time.

For this presentation, I only want to keep you in the dark for a short time. When I decided to recognize this individual, I had to learn to jump through a few hoops that I knew nothing about.

For that I needed to reach out to the only person I thought could help me... Paula Swift.

Now unfortunately, through no fault of their own, Paula isn't with us this weekend. She does send her congratulations and really wishes she could be here, but tonight's recipient thought there was a more important role Paula needed to play by manning the Home Office due to the end of renewal season. Through it all, Paula kept my secret, which is remarkable as she's worked undercover for over the last 6 months. She's aware she'll probably get a stern talking to at some point as well, and she's good with that.

Once Paula was on board, I needed another accomplice, I mean assistant. Enter Jack Pladdys. I called Jack, told him my idea, and that Paula was on board. I explained how he could help, and Jack being Jack, was all in. I appreciate his willingness to aide and abet. Thank you, Jack.

Lastly, I needed someone to read this and to do an open and honest critique of it. Because let's face it, I

couldn't really ask our recipient to do it. Enter Shelly. Well, she didn't need to enter, she was already there, but you get the idea. As the recipients "other mom", I also needed to swear her to secrecy, and she has fulfilled her role beautifully as usual. Thank you, Shelly.

If you haven't figured out tonight's recipient yet, you're not paying attention. Let's unpack a little about her with a quote from her own website.

Teresa, beloved daughter of Frank and Elisa Berger, grew up in the square dance activity and began calling in 2010. She calls and teaches square dancing through Plus, cues rounds through phase III and teaches line dances. She is a member of CALLERLAB and a life member of the Indiana Dancers Association (IDA). She records for Rhythm Records.

Teresa currently serves as the Executive Director of CALLERLAB, the International Association of Square Dance Callers, and as the Executive Secretary for the CALLERLAB Foundation for the Preservation and Promotion of Square Dancing.



Ted, Shelly, Teresa, Elisa, Frank

And it is to this last paragraph that I will be focusing on.

Teresa began as an assistant executive director in 2018, and in 2020 took over the job of Executive Director from Dana Schirmer, which were big shoes to fill. Let's face it, while there have been 26 different chairs of this organization, Teresa is only the 5th Executive Director. Kaltenthaler, White, Reed, Schirmer and now Berger. First, we had four almost or mostly retired older gentlemen. Now we have a young lady in this historically male dominated role and she shines, people, she shines.

I've always tried to be cheerleader / protector of her, though she's never asked, and honestly probably doesn't need me to be.

I'll pause briefly here to mention the "Waiter Rule," which suggests that a person's true character, empathy, and kindness are revealed by how they treat service staff. Many of us are familiar with this idea.

I want to acknowledge that I have read and responded to some of the emails sent to Teresa, and I've also heard about a number of the phone calls. Some of the messages have been disappointing to read and/or hear.

I encourage everyone to remember that words matter and that the way we communicate reflects who we are. Due to the respect, I have for this organization and office I currently hold in it, my responses to these events have been tempered with restraint. But as I'm leaving, I thought a reminder that we should all hold ourselves to a higher standard and choose our words and actions more carefully was warranted.

As I said, I've tried to spend some of my time as chair championing what we do as an organization, and what this lady does in particular. Make no mistake, this job has grown and changed since its inception, the pay however has not kept up.

Let's really think about this for a moment. If we were going to run an ad looking for a candidate to take this position, besides the lines that say "willing to work for peanuts" and "an ability to handle/assist and deal with aging boomers and inflated egos," what would we ask for? Here are just a few things to consider:

- Square Dance Involvement
 - Must understand and "speak" the square dance language. Ability to call is necessary. Ability to call well is preferred.
- Secretarial Skills
 - Must be able to type quickly to keep up with a blabbering Chair, EC, and BOG.
- Office Manager
 - Must handle all functions of a small office team, including HR, payroll, hiring/firing, training, scheduling, facility management, janitorial services and all communications such as email, phone and yes, snail mail.
 - Oh, and also at times, pest control.
- Merchandising Coordinator
 - Must handle creative conceptualization, implementation, acquisition, marketing, sales, and distribution of all items including the chair's "You know what would be cool?" ideas, like T-Shirts and yearbooks, etc.
- Public Speaking
 - Will be called on often to speak to many different organizations domestic and abroad. Must be comfortable speaking slowly and be deeply knowledgeable about the organization's roots and beginnings.
- Event Planner
 - Need to scout pristine and inexpensive locations, deal with hotels, vendors, and Visitors' Bureaus. Negotiation skills a must and the ability to squeeze every last drop out of a budget are paramount.
- Audio Visual Mastery
 - Acquire and utilize equipment and software necessary to provide members with in depth understanding of all things CALLERLAB, though in reality many will choose to ignore it.
- Social Media Manager
 - Understand and utilize social media platforms such as Facebook and YouTube to reach membership and the general public to keep this organization relevant in the 21st century.
- Webmaster and Database Guru
 - Must be exceptionally competent in Microsoft Office, QuickBooks, MailChimp, DropBox,

Canva, Google Groups, WordPress, Adobe, Zoom, Chat GPT and other platforms as needed. Ability to run and maintain multiple servers and firewalls a must.



- Librarian
 - Must catalog, update, review and maintain all existing, historical, and future documentation – constantly.
- Membership “Gopher”
 - Must be at the beck and call of what feels like literally everyone, all the time. Preferably with an enduring smile and a ready “it’s fine.”

Look, I could add lines for Paralegal, Insurance Agent, Historian, Cheerleader, Referee, and keep going, but let me wrap this up and get serious for a minute.

I realize that I only know a fraction of what Teresa has to deal with and accomplish for this organization on any given day. And I can’t understand how she does the things I know about, much less the things I don’t.

Most Chairs work a full-time job and call, which means the time to easily reach me is outside of her normal business hours. Teresa gives this organization almost 24/7/365 attention. Just because the office is closed or she’s overseas, she’s still knee deep and getting everything done.

As I mentioned in my last “From the Chair,” that I’m sure EVERYONE watched... we are all here going through what is arguably the biggest change this organization has seen since its inception. Trust me when I say that THIS chair is telling you that none of this happens without the lady in THAT chair. It just doesn’t.

It’s impossible for me to speak highly enough of tonight’s recipient. Besides everything else I’ve mentioned, in our five years together she has grown to be my grammar police, a sounding board, a guidance counselor, a thought partner, a confidant and a close friend. I will miss our time together and I look forward to seeing what she does next.

Ladies and gentleman, the daughter I never had, **Teresa Berger.**



2026 Chairman Award

HIROSHI NAKAGAWA & JSDA AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

Presented by Tony Oxendine

Good evening, everyone.

Tonight, it is my honor to present the CALLERLAB Award of Excellence. These awards recognize individuals and organizations who have made extraordinary contributions to CALLERLAB through their dedication and support.

For the first time ever, CALLERLAB held a Mini-Lab in Japan! The 2026 Japan Mini-Lab, held January 10–11, 2026 in Tokyo, was a historic event, marking a major milestone in our international outreach. **Hiroshi Nakagawa** served as General Chair, and the event was proudly sponsored by JSDA with support from GSI.

Mini-Labs bring the CALLERLAB Convention experience closer to existing and potential members, offering a unique mix of caller training, insights into the future of square dancing, camaraderie, and invaluable opportunities for attendees to exchange ideas with CALLERLAB leaders.

The Japan Mini-Lab was a tremendous success, with 104 participants: 94 from Japan, four from the United States, two from China, and four representatives from CALLERLAB, including Chair **Ted Lizotte**, Executive Committee member **Tony Oxendine**, and Executive Director **Teresa Berger**. Additional US participants included **Shelly Lizotte, Mike and Lisa Seastrom, Travis Cook, Amand Skidmore**.

The schedule included a pre-dance party on January 9, sessions on January 10–11, and an after-party on January 12. Sessions featured presentations on the new Program Policy, including New Mainstream 50 and New Plus 50, scheduled to take effect in September 2026, along with Q&A discussions and call technique clinics. Organizers also noted strong interest in holding a future Mini-Lab in Japan, potentially with increased participation from younger callers.

Of course, none of this would have been possible without the tireless efforts of the local organizing team and the generous sponsorship of the Japan Square Dance Association. Their support ensured that every detail was carefully managed, creating an unforgettable experience for all attendees.



It is with great pleasure and admiration that I present the CALLERLAB Award of Excellence to the Japan Square Dance Association, recognizing their extraordinary contributions and sponsorship of the first-ever Japan Mini-Lab. **Hiroshi Nakagawa**, as General Chair, is here tonight to accept not only his award but also the award for the JSDA award. Please join me in celebrating their remarkable accomplishment!



THE FOUNDATION

For the Preservation and Promotion of Square Dancing

FOUNDATION AWARDS Presenter: Amanda Skidmore

Good evening. On behalf of the CALLERLAB Foundation Board of Directors, it is my pleasure to recognize several individuals whose generosity continues to support the important work of the Foundation.

The Patron of the Foundation Award recognizes individuals who contribute \$1,000 or more within a calendar year to support the mission of the CALLERLAB Foundation.

This year, we are pleased to present seven Patron of the Foundation Awards to donors who have met that level of support. As I call your name, please stand to be recognized. (encourage applause at each.)

First, we'd like to recognize the Denver Fundraising Dance, sponsored by **Bear and Sandy Miller**.

Another Patron Recipient is **Ned Newberg**.

We'd also like to recognize those whose work on the "Square Dance Is On" record project helped raise over \$10,000 for the Foundation.

Please stand as I call your name:

Scott Bennett
Ted Lizotte
Tony Oxendine

We would also like to extend our sincere thanks to the Dillander family for their generous donation of all the vinyl pressings used for this project. While **Pam Dillander** was unable to attend the Convention, we would still like to recognize her and her family for their support.

In addition, we would like to recognize a few Patrons of the Foundation who were unable to join us in person this year:

Ted & Tonia Hofmeister and the 74th National Square Dance Convention
Dana & Donna Schirmer

Please join me in thanking all of these donors for their generous support.

Next, we move to the Directors Award for the Foundation, which recognizes donors who contribute \$5,000 or more in a calendar year.

This year, it is my honor to present 11 Foundation Directors Awards.

Would the following donors and their partners please join me on stage?

Barry & Pam Clasper
Betsy & Roy Gotta
Eric Henerlau
Mike & Denise Hogan
Jerry Junck
Harlan Kerr
Mike Seastrom
Lanny & Carol Weaklend

These individuals each pledged a \$5,000 matching contribution during the “\$50K for the 50th” fundraising campaign held at the 50th CALLERLAB Convention. Their proactive support helped make this campaign a tremendous success.

We would also like to recognize **Kris Jensen**, another matching donor who was unable to attend Convention this year. Her plaque will be sent following the Convention.



Foundation Director's Award Recipients

In addition, the Foundation Executive Directors would like to acknowledge two additional major donors who were unable to join us this evening.

An anonymous donor has made another very generous second gift to the Foundation of \$100,000 to support caller scholarships, helping ensure the continued development of future callers.

Please help me recognizing this generous gift.

And finally, it is my honor to recognize the largest single donation in the history of the CALLERLAB Foundation.

This extraordinary gift comes from the estate of **Murray “Chip” Kellogg and Susan Yara.**

Chip was a retired caller who traveled internationally sharing square dancing, and Sue was a retired badge maker in the Rochester, New York area. Together they were well known and deeply loved within the square dance community.

Although they had no remaining family, they chose to list the CALLERLAB Foundation as a beneficiary in their estate. The Home Office had the opportunity to correspond with their family friend, who shared that:



“Murray and Sue are smiling down on all the good that will result for CALLERLAB.”

Please join me in acknowledging this extraordinary gift of more than \$368,000 to the CALLERLAB Foundation.

Thank you all for your continued generosity and support of the CALLERLAB Foundation.



SMALL WORLD AWARDS

Presented by Juli Burr

The Small World Award is presented to those callers from outside the continental North America and Hawaii who are attending a CALLERLAB convention for the first time.

Of the 240 current Overseas Members, 70 have attended a CALLERLAB convention in the U.S. and received a Small World Award.

Of those Small World recipients, 9 are attending again this year. Please stand and be recognized as I call your name:

Philipp Aff, Germany, First Convention was 2018 – 4th US Convention

Michael Braithwaite, Germany, First Convention was 2023 – 5th US Convention

Juli Burr, Germany, First Convention was 2011- 9th US Convention

Walt Burr, Germany, First Convention was 2008- 11th US Convention

Don Casper, Germany, First Convention was 2001- 19th US Convention

Trevor Day & his partner Chris, United Kingdom, First Convention was 1999, 23rd US Convention

Katrin Fehl, Germany, First Convention was 2025 – 2nd US Convention

Jetta-Katharina Junk, Germany, First Convention was 2025 – 2nd US Convention

Martin Kromer, Germany, First Convention was 1994 – 4th US Convention

Hiroshi Nakagawa, Japan, First Convention 2015, 8th US Convention

This year, I'm pleased to present three new Small World Awards to first-time attendees. Would the following attendees please join me at the front of the room to be recognized.



Dörte Hauptmann (upper right)

Hideyuki (Jake) Shimada & his partner, Naomi Shimada (left)

Mitsutoshi Sugawara (lower right)

First up – **Dörte Hauptmann** is from Germany and started calling in 2008 and joined CALLERLAB in 2024. Welcome, Dörte!

Next, **Hideyuki (Jake) Shimada & his partner, Naomi Shimada** from Japan. Jake started calling in 1983 and joined CALLERLAB in 2002. Welcome, Jake & Naomi!

And last but not least, **Mitsutoshi Sugawara** from Japan. Mitsutoshi started calling in 1969 and joined CALLERLAB in 2021. Welcome, Mitsutoshi!

Congratulations again to all of the Small World Award Recipients. We're glad you could join us to celebrate the 51st CALLERLAB Convention. Thank you!



QUARTER CENTURY AWARDS

Presented by: Wendy VanderMeulen

Quarter Century Certificates are awarded to CALLERLAB members who have been calling for 25 or more years. The first awards were made at Baltimore in 1986 and have been awarded annually since then.

Since 1986 a total of 1,578 CALLERLAB Members have received the Quarter Century Certificates 59 are present at this convention. Would those members and their partners please stand.

Twelve Members attending this convention received their 25 Year Certificate by mail in the year they reached this milestone. This is the first convention we have the opportunity to honor them by name at a convention. Would these callers and their partners please stand as I read your names and remain standing so that we may recognize this achievement.

Ronald Bell-Roemer – received in 2024 – 27 years of calling

Warren “KC” Curtis – received in 2023 – 28 years of calling

Kurt Gollhardt – received in 2021 – 30 years of calling

Darin Keith – received in 2021 – 30 years of calling

Bruce Lowther – received in 2020 – 31 years of calling

Francois Lamoureux – received in 2013 – 38 years of calling

Cathy Villa – received in 2012 – 39 years of calling

George Hermann – received in 2011 – 40 years of calling

Larry Davenport – received in 2010 – 41 years of calling

Hideyuki (Jake) Shimada – received in 2008 – 43 years of calling

Tonight I'm pleased to award one Quarter Century Certificate to a caller who has reached this milestone this year.

Michael Kious (right)– from Gladstone, OR. Began calling in 2001 and joined CALLERLAB in 2008. This is Michael's second convention.

This year we have five Members who were unable to attend this convention but will celebrate their 25th anniversary of calling this year. Their certificates will be mailed by the Home Office following the convention. They are:

Diane Ashton

Steve Cooper

Bodo von Reth

Torben Nielsen

Ryo Sasaki

Congratulations!



HALF CENTURY AWARDS

Presented by Ken Ritucci

Half Century Certificates are awarded to CALLERLAB members who have been calling for 50 or more years. The first awards were made at Baltimore in 1986 and have been awarded annually since then.

A total of 335 CALLERLAB Members have received the Half Century Certificate. Of the 138 current CALLERLAB members who have previously received this award, 31 are attending this year. Would these callers and their partners please stand and remain standing so that we may recognize this achievement. They are:

Casey Parker	51 years	Craig Abercrombie	57 years
Scott Pearce	51 years	Daryl Clendenin	57 years
Dan Preedy	51 years	Tom Crisp	58 years
Bob Riggs	51 years	Doren McBroom	58 years
Ken Ritucci	51 years	Mike Preskitt	58 years
Rick Gittelman	52 years	Donn Thomson	59 years
Rick Hampton	52 years	Hal Barnes	61 years
Tony Oxendine	52 years	Ray Brendzy	61 years
Tim Tyl	52 years	Don Beck	62 years
Toby Thomason	53 years	Dave Harry	63 years
Bob Amsbury	54 years	Mike Seastrom	63 years
Bob Elling	54 years	Betsy Gotta	64 years
Mike Sikorsky	54 years	Jay Henderson	66 years
John Carlton	55 years	Roger Putzler	67 years
Bob Gaunt	56 years	Jon Jones	71 years
Larry Marchese	56 years		

These callers have almost 1,800 years of calling experience!

Two Members attending this convention received their 50 Year Certificate by mail in the year they reached this milestone. This is the first convention we have the opportunity to honor them by name at a convention. Would these callers and their partners please stand as I read your names and remain standing so that we may recognize this achievement.

Rod Shuping, received in 2021

Doug Davis, received in 2023

Tonight I'm pleased to award nine Half Century Certificates to callers who have reached this momentous milestone this year.

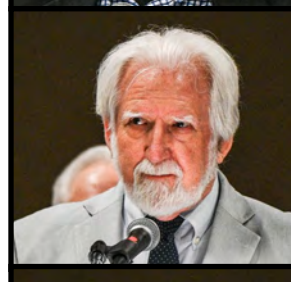
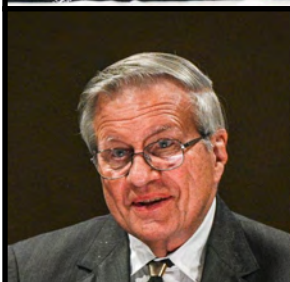
Sandie Bryant, joined CALLERLAB in 1992
Allen Hahn, joined CALLERLAB in 1991
Mike Hogan, joined CALLERLAB in 1989
John Kephart, joined CALLERLAB in 1979
Mike Pogue, joined CALLERLAB in 2018
Glenn Raiha, joined CALLERLAB in 1982
Mike Turner, joined CALLERLAB in 1991
David Vieira, joined CALLERLAB in 1982
Greg Weber, joined CALLERLAB in 1989

There are 12 additional Active CALLERLAB Members who have earned their Half Century Award this year. Although they are unable to attend convention, we would like to honor them by announcing their names. Certificates will be mailed to them immediately following this convention. They are:

Paul Bristow	Kenny Campbell
Brad Deibert	Dave Eno
Wayne Hall	Roy Kirkland
Dick Russell	Harry Slocum
Dale Smith	Dale Stead
Keith Stevens	Arie Stoffer

If you know any of these callers, please congratulate them the next time you see them.

Thank you.





BOARD OF GOVERNORS SERVICE AWARDS

Presented by Ted Lizotte

"The Board of Governors Service Award is presented to retiring Board members in recognition of their commitment to CALLERLAB as demonstrated by the selfless sharing of their time, talent and leadership skills.

This year we have two retiring Board members. When I call your name, please join me on the stage.

1. Tom Davis, (left) from Xenia, OH began calling in 1978. He joined CALLERLAB in 2016 and attended his first Convention in 2022. This is his 5th CALLERLAB Conventions. Tom served on the Board from 2023-2026. He currently serves as Chair of the Plus Committee.

I'm pleased to present the Board of Governors Service Award to retiring Board member, Tom Davis.

2. Buddy Weaver, (right) is from San Marcos, CA and began calling in 1977 and joined CALLERLAB in 1981. He attended his first convention that same year and has attended 24 CALLERLAB Conventions. Buddy served on the Board from 2017 to 2026. He served on the Executive Committee from 2021 to 2024 including one term as Vice Chair.

Buddy currently serves as a co-Chair of the New Mainstream Committee.

I'm pleased to present the Board of Governors Service Award to retiring Board member Buddy Weaver



CONVENTION RECORDINGS

The audio recordings from the 2026 CALLERLAB Convention held in Reno, NV are now available! Contact the Home Office to order a set today. The recordings are available via DropBox for \$25 or USB for \$40.

Purchase your copy online at: <https://callerlab.org/audio-mp3/>.

The Home Office will be closed on
July 3, 2026
celebrating the US holiday.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Presented by Kristina Riggs

A highlight of this year's CALLERLAB Convention was the engaging keynote by **Kristina Riggs**, whose energy and insight set the tone for a meaningful and forward-looking event. Her message resonated with members, sparking thoughtful conversations about connection, leadership, and how we engage our dancers.

Kristina Riggs, founder of Ridgeline Leadership LLC, brings 22 years of hands-on experience helping teams and communities build trust, communicate clearly, and create real belonging through experiential learning. She holds an MS in Experiential Education and designs immersive programs—from a 32-hour trainer development course for the aerial adventure industry to intimate practitioner workshops that build facilitation confidence and practical skills.

Kristina's work focuses on creating spaces where people feel seen, valued, and heard, so groups can engage honestly, resolve conflict, and carry learning forward beyond a single session. Thank you to Kristina for delivering a presentation that truly connected with our community and inspired continued dialogue well beyond the session itself.

If you missed it—or want to experience it again—you can catch the replay in the Members Only section of the CALLERLAB website.



Kristina Riggs



2026 Keynote Address

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

As we reflect on another successful year, we extend our sincere appreciation to the CALLERLAB Executive Committee for their continued leadership and dedication. Guiding the organization—and shaping a meaningful Convention experience—requires vision, collaboration, and countless hours of behind-the-scenes effort. This team has once again delivered.



Justin, Jack, Tony, Shauna, Ted

Following the Convention, the current five-member Executive Committee will continue their service for the coming year, providing both continuity and forward momentum. We congratulate and thank: Chair, Jack Pladdys; Vice Chair, Shauna Kaaria; and Members, Ted Lizotte, Justin Russell, and Tony Oxendine.

Their collective experience, steady leadership, and commitment to the future of square dancing are invaluable. We are grateful for the energy and direction they bring as CALLERLAB moves ahead into another exciting year.

CONVENTION STAFF

We wish to take this opportunity to thank everyone who assisted at this year's Convention! This includes all those who served as moderators or panelists; our Registration, packet pick-up, and Ways and Means volunteers; those who served as emcees, presenters, Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs; our exhibitors; the members of the Executive Committee and the Board of Governors; and especially, all of our attendees.

Shout out to our Home Office staff, Executive Director, **Teresa Berger**, and Office Assistants, **Nikki Moore & Paula Swift**, for their hard work behind the scenes leading up to and during the Convention.



Avery, Elisa, Frank, Teresa, Nikki, Peggy, Curt

Thank you as well to our wonderful volunteers onsite: **Frank and Elisa Berger, Avery Arnold, Ray Owens, and Curt and Peggy Braffet**. Your time, energy, and support helped create a welcoming and successful event.

To everyone who attended and helped out in any way, please accept our heartfelt thanks for your contributions to a great Convention!

VENDORS AT CONVENTION

Thanks to those who exhibited their products and services during this year's CALLERLAB Convention. They were:

- Art & Lily Hardin—76th NSDC
- Dave & Michele Vieira—77th NSDC
- Shauna Kaaria—Chic Recordings
- John Carlton—CTP
- Al Hipkins—ROUNDALAB/Hipster Productions
- Scott Bennett—Yak Stack Speakers
- Mark Garetz—Badges
- Nina Grigsby—USDA



CONVENTION VIDEOS

We want to remind you about the Members Only Section of the CALLERLAB website! If you haven't created your account yet, it's a great time to do so — especially because some videos from the 2026 Convention are now available at callerlab.org/videos! *(Please note: you must be logged in to view them.)*

To create your account:

1. Visit <https://callerlab.org/account-login/>
2. Click Register at the bottom of the login page.
3. Follow the prompts to create a username, enter your name and email, and choose a password.
4. After submitting the form, check your email for an activation link.
5. Once you verify your email, the Home Office will manually review your request and confirm your membership.

We'll notify you as soon as your access is approved — then you'll be able to explore all the Members Only content, including convention videos, resources, and more. Let us know if you have any trouble logging in. We're here to help!

HOME OFFICE REMARKS

By Teresa Berger, Executive Director



The 51st CALLERLAB Convention is officially in the books—and like every year, I find myself both exhausted and incredibly fulfilled. This week asks for everything we have, and yet somehow gives even more back in return. It continues to be the most challenging—and the most rewarding—time of the year.

We were grateful to gather in Reno, welcoming callers, partners, and dancers from across our community for several days of learning, connection, and shared purpose. From general sessions and committee meetings to a wide range of interest sessions, the week was filled with meaningful conversations, fresh ideas, and a renewed sense of direction for the future of square dancing. Just as important were the moments in between—the laughter in the hallways, the late-night conversations, the reunions with longtime friends, and the warm introductions to new faces joining our community.

One of the things I continue to appreciate most about Convention is the balance it brings—honoring tradition while embracing innovation. We saw thoughtful discussions around choreography, music, and teaching methods, alongside forward-looking conversations about outreach, technology, and how we continue to grow and sustain our activity for future generations.

There is an unmistakable energy that comes from being in a room with people who care deeply about this activity. Whether it was during a structured session, a committee meeting, or a casual exchange between tips, I saw ideas being shared, challenged, and strengthened. That kind of collaboration is what keeps CALLERLAB moving forward.

On a personal note, this year's Convention included a moment I will carry with me for a long time. Receiving the Chairman's Award from Ted was completely unexpected and deeply meaningful. Ted's encouragement and steady support during his time as Chair has meant more to me than I can fully express. To be recognized in that way, by someone I respect so much, was truly humbling.

I also want to extend my sincere thanks to our incredible Home Office volunteers. Their dedication behind the scenes is what allows everything to come together, and I am endlessly appreciative of their time, energy, and willingness to step in wherever needed. From preparing materials to troubleshooting on the fly, their contributions are essential to the success of this event.

To our leadership, planning teams, presenters, and volunteers—thank you. The hours of preparation, coordination, and care that go into Convention are significant, and it shows.

And to our members—thank you for showing up. Whether this was your first Convention or one of many, your presence matters. Your willingness to engage, to share your perspective, and to invest in the future of square dancing is what keeps this organization strong. It is inspiring to see both seasoned leaders and newer voices working side by side, learning from one another and shaping what comes next.

As we transition back into our daily routines and begin the inevitable “recovery” phase—catching up on sleep, emails, and everything that was temporarily set aside—I do so with a full heart and a deep sense of gratitude. Convention week is intense, but it is also incredibly affirming. It reminds me why we do what we do—and more importantly, who we do it for.

The work doesn't stop here. In many ways, Convention is just the beginning. The ideas shared, the connections made, and the momentum built over these few days will continue to carry us forward in the months ahead. I'm excited to see where that energy leads us.

Thank you for being part of it. Thank you for your passion, your dedication, and your belief in this community.

Here's to another meaningful year ahead.

Always cheering for you!

SQUARE DANCE TECH

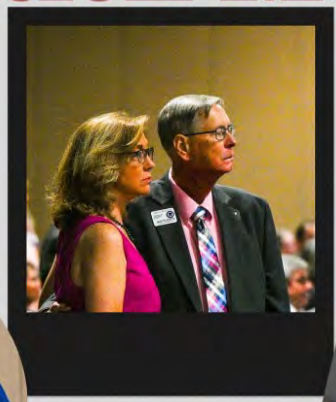
By Ray Owens

I was honored to be invited to the 2026 CALLERLAB Convention held in Reno, Nevada this year. It's always a very exhausting time with lots of running around and very little sleep. The reward, though, is getting to be part of an organization that cares as deeply as I do about square dancing. I'm always humbled by the devotion a caller puts into our hobby. The enormous expenditures of time and treasure . . . it can be for no other reason than the love of our art.

Check out Ray's montage of the Convention here:



Convention Memories





FROM THE CHAIR

By: Jack Pladdys

Hi Everyone,

In most organizations, transitions into leadership roles happen quickly—sometimes in just days or weeks. Even the President of the United States has only about 10 weeks to prepare after an election. Here in CALLERLAB, however, the Chairman-Elect is given a full year to observe, reflect, and prepare for the role. That’s a valuable opportunity—and now, that year has come to an end. Thank you for the confidence you’ve placed in me to serve as your Chairman.

Our first priority is clear: the successful implementation of the new program policy. The time for debate has passed. It was, at times, a spirited and passionate process, but in the end, a strong majority agreed on the direction forward. Now it’s time to put that vision into action. I encourage you to make full use of the Transitional Implementation Phase of the Program Policy (TIPPP) resources on our website. The Mainstream and Plus Committees have worked tirelessly to develop supporting materials, including lists and playbooks, to guide this transition. Let’s all do our part to ensure a smooth and successful rollout that supports the continued growth of our activity.

Another important goal is to restore a sense of camaraderie across our community, including among both members and non-member callers, who may have had differing views during the policy discussions. Conversations became heated at times, particularly on social media, but that reflects the deep passion we all share for this activity. Now is the time to channel that passion into a unified effort as we move forward together.

I’ll be sharing more about my long-term vision in the next issue of DIRECTION. There are many exciting developments ahead for CALLERLAB, and I look forward to engaging as many of you as possible in shaping our future.

Finally, please join me in congratulating Teresa and the Home Office team for delivering an outstanding convention in Reno. Their dedication and hard work made it a tremendous success. As you know, our Home Office is based in Indy, so I’m quite sure the office team is super pumped to make next year's convention in Indianapolis one of the best in their own hometown. I’m especially excited that my first convention as Chairman will take place just 90 minutes from my home next year. I hope you’ll make plans to join us.....it promises to be another exceptional event.

DANCE PROGRAM REVIEW PROCEDURES (QUADRENNIAL REVIEW)

Last year, the approval of the new Program Policy Statement and the current program restructure prompted a comprehensive update to the Dance Program Review Procedures—now informally referred to as the Quadrennial Review. These revised procedures outline how CALLERLAB will review and maintain the integrity of each dance program on a now four-year rotation, ensuring consistency and transparency in the process. The Mainstream Committee conducted their review in 2025 and the Plus Committee completed their review as part of the Transitional Implementation Phase of the Program Policy (TIPPP). No additional reviews are scheduled for 2026.

For those who would like to review the policy, you can access the full Quadrennial Review Procedures on the Members Only Section of the website here: [Dance Program Review Procedures](#).

COMMITTEE NEWS

PLUS COMMITTEE—(NEW) PLUS TEACHING ORDER

Tom Davis, Chair, & Hiroshi Nakagawa, Vice Chair

CALLERLAB is pleased to announce that the Plus Committee has approved two key updates that will guide future instruction for the Plus Program.

1. New Recommended Plus Teaching Order Adopted

Committee members voted to adopt an updated teaching order for the (new) Plus Program. This revised sequence is intended to support clearer, more consistent instruction for dancers and callers.

2. Minimum Instructional Time Established

The committee also approved a new recommendation that the Plus Program calls be taught in no less than 40 hours of instruction (20 two-hour classes or 27 ninety-minute classes).

Next Steps

The new Plus List will take effect September 1, 2026.

The committee will now begin work on a new Plus Instructional Guide/Playbook to support callers in applying these updates.

Additional information and progress updates will be posted at [CALLERLAB.org/tipp](https://callerlab.org/tipp).

CALLERLAB thanks the Plus Committee for its continued work to strengthen caller education and support the success of dancers worldwide.

Click here to download the Press Release: <https://callerlab.org/press-release-new-plus-program-teaching-order/>

Choreographic Applications Committee **Dottie Welch, Chair, & Doren McBroom, Vice Chair**

All calls in Advanced One Program have been added to the Online Teaching Resource (teaching.callerlab.org).

During the next few months changes will be in progress in the current Basic to Plus sections of the Teaching Resource. During this process we will add some additional headings so that we can archive pre-Proposal choreography examples.

Definitions Committee

Guy Steele, Chair & and Dottie Welch, Vice Chair

The Definitions Committee met at the 2026 CALLERLAB Convention to discuss past, present, and future activity.

During the past year, the Definitions Committee published two new documents, Formation Pictograms and Additional Details for Square Dance Definitions, as well as revisions of the Basic Challenge (C-1) Definitions and Extended Challenge (C-2) Definitions.

The most recently published document is Mainstream Dance Program Definitions, dated March 29, 2026, which describes all the calls in the (New) Mainstream Program that will become effective on September 1, 2026. This document complements the (New) Mainstream List and (New) Mainstream Teaching Order that have already been published by the Mainstream Committee. A (New) Mainstream Timing Chart will also be published soon.

The Definitions Committee is now working with the Plus Committee to produce a similarly updated (New) Plus Definitions document that will describe all the calls in the (New) Plus Program that will become effective on September 1, 2026. An early draft of this update was circulated at the time of the Convention so that it could be discussed at the Convention by both the Definitions Committee and the Plus Committee. A (New) Plus Timing Chart will also be prepared and reviewed.

During the next four months, the Definitions Committee expects to revise the Advanced Definitions document to reflect the fact that the (New) Plus Program will include several calls that until now were defined at A-1. Then the Formation Pictograms and Additional Details documents will be reviewed to see whether any updates are required.

During the next year, the Definitions Committee plans to continue its ongoing collaboration with the Challenge Committee to review and update the Basic Challenge (C-1) Definitions.

All published definitions documents are available at the CALLERLAB website callerlab.org under the menu item "Dance Programs".

International Advisory Committee

Tom Rainer, Chair

The International Advisory Committee (IAC) regularly meets every other month for a worldwide virtual call. We typically have members attending these calls from the United States, Japan, China, Canada, England, Australia, Sweden, Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Czech Republic, Austria, and Italy. At these meetings it is clear that committee members have embraced and are actively promoting the TIPPP in their local areas. One way that the TIPPP is being promoted is by ensuring translations of the official press releases are quickly made available in German, Japanese, Chinese and Italian for the CALLERLAB website. These efforts help expand the reach of CALLERLAB's work and strengthen our shared commitment to ensure the rollout of the Proposal is successful.

New Callers Committee

Vernon Jones, Chair & Denise Carbenell, Vice Chair

The New Callers Committee met Monday, March 30, 2026 at the 51st CALLERLAB convention in Reno Nevada. We announced that the Zoom New Caller Training seminars will begin again this year. We lost our Zoom host but the CALLERLAB Home Office will now be facilitating these Zoom seminars. We discussed the New Callers Committee Facebook page and how to look for it. Be looking for more information on that coming soon. The main focus of the meeting was looking for projects the committee can do in the coming year that would be of benefit to new callers and how to best attract and recruit new callers. Several good ideas were presented. The Chair, Vice Chair and our 3 Advisors will begin looking at these ideas and determine which has priority and start working on them. The New Callers Committee is designed to help new and newer callers travel the path that all new callers must travel on their calling journey. So, if you are a new caller, join the committee and help us help you!

Social Connections Committee

Mike Seastrom, Chair

The Social Connections Committee finished a great year with our Keynote Speaker, Kristina Riggs, who addressed the importance of the caller, caller partner, and dance leaders' roles in building community and social connections. Thank you to the Executive Committee for acting on the SCC's proposal to schedule a trained speaker to give callers practical ideas to foster stronger connections among dancers and their communities.

The SCC also released two convention handouts on a proven way to grow your club and dance group. They are titled "A Strategy for Growth, Visibility, and Social Connection" and a Checklist for accomplishing this growth. Don't miss these handouts included in the convention handouts as the 4th and 5th handouts in the "Why Don't People Join" session.

The Committee discussed action steps to further promote the "Welcoming Dance Environment" documents and reviewed additional information needed to complete the "How to Create a QR Code" document.

The committee plans to shorten its committee brief and will also finish and publish in the KnowledgeBase its collection of "Things That Can Be Said from the Microphone to Increase Social Connections."

The Social Connections Committee is always open to suggestions for new projects from the Executive Committee, the Board of Governors, and the CALLERLAB membership.

Partner Committee

Allynn Riggs, Chair, & Ri-Shea Schlitter, Vice Chair

The Partner Committee gathered on Monday afternoon for their annual in person committee meeting. We had 25 in attendance, including two callers and four cuers. We discussed and fielded questions about the new Partner Access Membership option that begins with this 2026/2027 membership year (the fiscal year for CALLERLAB is April 1 through March 31). If a Partner wishes to have direct access to the Members-Only section of the CALLERLAB website, check with your Caller and the

Home Office to verify payment and email signup for that option (\$50 annually) along with their renewal for the coming year.

We reminded everyone, especially the new members, to check the list of Committees that Partners are allowed to be members of – there are a lot of them! We confirmed that the cyclical review of the Partner Resource, which was approved in 2024, will be on a quadrennial review to match all other CALLERLAB committee document review cycles and will happen in 2028.

There was a request for a Partner Committee sponsored interest session on “How to Stay Together” at the next convention. A desire to set up a Partner event or activity outside of the Convention, preferably on Monday afternoon, was discussed. Some suggested options included bowling, a visit to a local museum or botanic gardens, etc.

Ri-Shea brought “Partner” bars for any who wanted to add them to their CALLERLAB badge and the door prize of a canvas bag with an embroidered square dancer design was won by Sarge Glidewell.

We encouraged all to attend the interest session on Solo Dancers with Ri-Shea Schlitter as the panelist. We thank her for her continued support and advocacy for solo dancers as Partners often find themselves being solo dancers while their callers are entertaining a floor full of dancers.

Thanks to all who came to the Convention and to those attending the Partner Committee Meeting. We look forward to seeing you in Indianapolis next year!

Women In Calling Committee

Juli Burr, Chair & Kris Jensen, Vice Chair

The convention in Reno gave us the chance to meet each other in person and talk about the projects we decided to take on last year and how far we have come. We had a full hall.



Some of the projects made steps in the right direction; others are still on our table to be fulfilled in the upcoming year.

The new flyer for Women in Calling Committee was completed and is now ready to be used by the Home Office to let every new member in CALLERLAB know who we are and what we do.

Additionally, we decided on a visual aid for our champions, for women in calling to wear instead of a tiara to show everybody we are not a minority anymore but a force to be reckoned with. We brought 50 buttons with us to the convention and in less than two days, they were all gone. Everybody wanted one and several people came and said, “Can you bring more next year?” This was a huge success.



The music survey we did this year was not as successful as we hoped for so we will do it again, but this time I will send the request out as an HO LOG so hopefully more people will join this project.

One of the projects that is bigger than we anticipated in the beginning is the overworking of our own document “The Stages.” We decided to keep working on it, and please, let me know if you have any

medical background because the big issue we are facing is not wanting to give medical advice and leave ourselves vulnerable. This project needs all our help and hopefully we can finish it in the year ahead of us.

The second document we want to work on “New World – New Challenges” is more a project for every caller in CALLERLAB. The idea is to collect situations and circumstances we are facing now in being on stage and teaching new dancers with handicaps we were not aware of a couple of years ago. For example, autism, ADHD, being a single parent, having to take care of the older generation in our family, etc. All this has an impact on our ability to call and on our students to learn. We want to collect information about all these challenges and think about possible solutions or ways to deal with them and collect as many ideas as we can think of in this new document.

And we will send a survey around to support a new series of articles for DIRECTION with the intention of letting people know, “Who are the female callers in CALLERLAB?”

A short document that will be created in the upcoming year is the history of women in calling. This is for making a written record of where it all started for us as women in calling.

The zoom seminars every other month are still a huge success. In the past year more callers from all over the world have joined our group, additional countries are Italy and Russia. The seminars for the next year have been agreed on during CALLERLAB this year. In average 20 people are joining every other month and a lot more are downloading the video and watching it at their leisure.

As you have read, we have a lot going on and a lot more to come. If you are interested in helping with any of the projects please let me know and I will be happy to have your support.

See you at the next convention or online in one of our zoom meetings.

MILESTONE NOMINATIONS

Nominations are currently being accepted by the Home Office. Milestone Nominations are accepted from May 1 to July 31 each year. The CALLERLAB Milestone Award is the highest award CALLERLAB can bestow on any individual.

The nominee is judged against rigid criteria in five separate categories. A nominee must meet the criteria in all five categories to receive the award.

- 1) The recipient must have worked in UNCHARTED FIELDS.
- 2) The individual’s contributions to the activity must have STOOD THE TEST OF TIME.
- 3) These Contributions must have been UNSELFISH.
- 4) In the course of making those contributions, the recipient must have displayed true LEADERSHIP AND PROFESSIONALISM.
- 5) Finally, the recipients’ work must have had a BROAD INFLUENCE on the activity.

Learn more about the criteria and how to nominate someone on the [Milestone Nomination Form](#).

BOARD OF GOVERNORS ELECTION

If you would like to be a candidate for the Board of Governors, petitions are available online or from the Home Office. Your valid petition, a brief biography of 200 words or less, and a current photo must be in the Home Office no later than July 1, 2026! Candidates must have been a full Member for no less than three years and must obtain the signatures of 25 Active (Voting) Members. Seven positions will be elected to three-year terms on the Board, beginning with the Board of Governors' meeting immediately following the 2027 Annual Meeting. 11 petitions have been received by the Home Office.

The petitions received so far are from: **Shawn Brown, Barry Clasper, Tom Davis, Shauna Kaaria, Hunter Keller, Ted Lizotte, Tony Oxendine, Charlie Petrea, Charlie Robertson, Justin Russell, and Dave Vieira.**

Please contact the Home Office if you have questions pertaining to completing or submitting a petition. <https://callerlab.org/download/bogpetition/>

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Thank you for renewing your CALLERLAB Membership! Members requiring proof of insurance or needing a certificate of additional insured naming a rental facility are reminded that the necessary certificates must be obtained directly from the insurance company. The certificates are available by calling Northwest Insurance Brokers at (208) 229-4358 or emailing kvidales@acrisure.com.

Identify yourself as a Member of CALLERLAB and they will issue the certificate after verifying your membership. Certificates are normally sent within 72 hours. This insurance program is only available to U.S. Members

Did you know you can renew online?

Thank you to the Members who have renewed their membership!

75th NATIONAL SQUARE DANCE CONVENTION—WACO, TX

Are you attending the 75th National Square Dance Convention? If so, please plan to wear your CALLERLAB badge and stop by the CALLERLAB booth to pick up a CALLERLAB ribbon to wear. Sign up to assist in the booth or just stop by and visit. We are always happy to see fellow Members during the Convention.



Friday, June 26th will be our “CALLERLAB Blue Shirt Day”. We ask all Members who have a CALLERLAB blue shirt to wear it proudly that day!

52ND CALLERLAB CONVENTION

Get ready to start your engines!

The 52nd CALLERLAB Convention rolls into Indianapolis, Indiana on March 21–24, 2027, at the Indianapolis Marriott East — and we’re coming in Fueled for the Future.

With a bold black, white, and red racing theme, this year’s convention leans into the energy of the track. The gas gauge isn’t hovering near empty — it’s pointed straight ahead. Together, we’ll explore what it means to accelerate ideas, fine-tune our skills, and drive square dancing confidently into the future.

Fueled for the Future

The 2027 Convention arrives at an exciting moment as TIPPP implementation continues to take shape. Indianapolis won’t just be a stop on the journey — it will be a pit stop for collaboration.

This is where we’ll:

- Share what’s working
- Learn from one another’s experiences
- Exchange tools and teaching strategies
- Refuel with fresh ideas
- And map out the road ahead

As we “drive” through this next phase together, Convention sessions, panels, and discussions will focus on practical application, thoughtful refinement, and forward momentum.

Special Pre-Convention Caller Clinic

We’re also planning a special Pre-Convention Caller Clinic on Saturday and Sunday prior to Convention.

This extended learning opportunity will give callers dedicated time to:

- Dive deeper into implementation strategies
- Strengthen teaching and presentation skills
- Collaborate in a focused, workshop-style environment
- Build confidence before Convention officially begins

Whether you’re looking to adjust your pace, tighten your timing, or explore new approaches, this clinic will help you tune your engine before race day.

From educational sessions and choreography reviews to dancing, networking, and committee work, the CALLERLAB Convention remains the place where leaders, teachers, and innovators gather to shape what’s next.

In racing, success isn’t about one fast lap — it’s about strategy, teamwork, and endurance.

In 2027, we’ll come together in Indianapolis — not just to keep up — but to lead the pack.

Mark your calendar: March 21–24, 2027.

The future is calling. Let’s fuel up and drive it forward — together.



FROM OUR MEMBERS

Opinions expressed in letters or articles from our Members are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect those of CALLERLAB, nor of the editor. The editor reserves the right to condense, omit or re-write all or any part of material sent to CALLERLAB for publication.

Recorded Material*

By: Barry Johnson



As we approach the implementation date for CALLERLAB's new Mainstream and Plus programs, one segment of our dancing community will have a difficult time adopting the new programs immediately: those that rely solely on pre-recorded material for teaching and dancing. The issue, of course, is that there will be very little in the way of prerecorded material available when the new dance programs are implemented in September.

While it IS an issue, this is not a new problem nor is it unique to this particular change in programs.

Decades ago, it wasn't unusual for dancers to set up recording devices (with the permission of the caller, of course), and record dances for their own personal use. They would then use those recordings in their homes, practicing both round and square dancing with their friends, in preparation for when the "big name" callers would come to town for an event. Up through the 1980's, there were also sources of dances published as long-playing 33 RPM records. The "Sets in Order" magazine sold many albums featuring famous callers, often publishing multiple albums per year.

Many of these recordings have been used and passed down for dozens of years, even as the dance lists slowly evolved over time. For example, "Curlicue" was a common call that was dropped in 1988, and calls like Fan the Top and Partner Hinge used to be on the Mainstream list. So the groups using recordings from those have to learn more calls than are on the current lists, which requires more work than groups using live callers.

This year's movement of calls from Mainstream to Plus won't help those using old tapes. But the music producers are already creating singing calls for the new list. Dancers can go back to recording live dances for their own use in workshops (after asking permission, of course). I've heard that some callers are planning to create recorded beginner lessons for the new list. And perhaps some producers will release series of dance tips that could be used following those lessons.

Groups that aren't able to use live callers won't immediately benefit from this change, just how they didn't immediately benefit from any of the changes in the past. But our libraries of recorded dances will grow over time and this will all iron out in the long run.

**Originally published in the American Square Dance Magazine*

Square Dance Party Dances

By: Mike Seastrom

A Strategy for Social Connection, Growth, and Visibility



Across our square dance community, club leaders are asking thoughtful questions about the future. Attendance patterns are shifting. Recruitment requires more intention. Communities are busier and more digitally connected, yet socially disconnected. That's where Square Dance Party Dances shine.

When approached strategically, Party Dances are not just “beginner nights.” They are powerful tools for club growth and social connection. They bring people face to face, hand to hand, and laughter to laughter. They create first impressions, build relationships, and boost public visibility, all while reminding us why we fell in love with square dancing in the first place.

Lowering the Barrier to Belonging

For someone who has never square danced, the idea of joining a structured lesson program can feel intimidating. They may worry about keeping up, committing to something unfamiliar, or about the time it takes to learn. Party Dances remove those fears.

A Party Dances is a single dance event geared to those who have seldom or never danced. It is a single fun dance with simple squares, circles, line dancing, contras, or any type of group dancing that the caller or callers feel comfortable presenting.

Party Dances emphasize immediate success rather than progression. Teaching is brief. Figures are simple and repetitive. The tone is relaxed and celebratory. Guests step onto the floor and begin moving within minutes. They laugh. They succeed. They leave feeling included. That first positive experience transforms square dancing from “something I might not be able to do” into “that was fun, I could do that again.”

From Guests to Friends

Clubs that experience steady growth rarely depend on just one annual open house. Instead, they host three to four Party Dances each year with a clear goal: fostering relationships.

Each Party Dance contributes to a growing “Friends of the (name of your club) List.” This is a key element to success because these are individuals who:

- Have attended at least one event.
- Have danced and socialized with your members.
- Have begun forming personal connections with them.
- Feel recognized and welcomed by your group.

For liability and insurance purposes, guests should sign in at each event. This also provides an opportunity to collect names, email addresses, and phone numbers for your “List.” Over time, this contact list becomes a living network of social connections that belong to your club. You can also incentivize gathering this information by running a raffle for a simple gift card or present.

These friends should continue receiving invitations to future Party Dances, New Dancer Programs, and open social activities of the club, such as potlucks, group dinners, theater outings, or museum visits.

People rarely commit to an activity solely because of advertising. They commit because they feel connected. Party Dances cultivate that connection long before any formal commitment is required.

Expanding Connection Through Community Partnerships

Social connection deepens when clubs look beyond their own membership. Party Dances become even more effective when held in collaboration with community organizations, such as:

- Service groups (Elks, Masons, and similar organizations)
- Church congregations
- Scout groups
- Civic or charitable associations

These partnerships extend the reach of your club's social connections and make your club more visible in your community. They introduce square dancing to individuals who may never have considered it. They position clubs as active contributors to community life.

These dance events may even support fundraising efforts for partner organizations. When square dance clubs are visible in community celebrations and service efforts, they become recognized as vibrant and welcoming. In a world where many activities are increasingly solitary, this matters.

Designing an Environment That Invites Conversation

Connection does not happen accidentally. It is facilitated by thoughtful planning. A large snack table with space on both sides encourages guests to gather naturally. Circular tables, when available, provide comfortable seating during breaks and allow small groups to converse easily. These round tables are especially effective because everyone can see one another.

Clearly printed name tags remove social hesitation. Providing "Hello, My Name Is" type stickers and bold markers ensures names are visible from across a circular table, making introductions effortless. These details convey a subtle yet powerful message: you belong here.

Your members act as "ambassadors of connection" for any social event your club is involved in. The greatest influence on a guest's experience is not the music, dancing, or choreography; it is the people. Your members set the tone through their behavior and can treat your guests as if they were guests in their own homes.

Members should:

- Greet newcomers warmly.
- Introduce guests to others.
- Invite different guests into their squares.
- Avoid clustering only with experienced dancers.
- Engage in genuine conversation during breaks.

Guests should feel as if they have entered a circle of friends, not an exclusive club. Leaders may want to remind members before each event that hospitality and inclusion are the main goals. Connection builds relationships, and our dance inherently requires cooperation. That fosters a spirit of fun and connection. Be careful with hugging your new dancers, as we often do with those close, longtime club friends. New dancers' "comfortable personal space" is usually bigger than ours.

The Caller as Catalyst

The caller plays a crucial role in sustaining energy and inclusion. Teaching should be short, upbeat, and encouraging. Complex choreography or lengthy explanations

can unintentionally create barriers. Instead, the emphasis should be on simplicity and repetition.

Dances may include easy squares, mixers that may rotate partners or not, line dances, and simple

contras. It's important for the caller to present dances he or she is comfortable with teaching. Music should be lively and recognizable. Even during breaks, soft background music helps maintain warmth and continuity.

Callers and their partners can further strengthen their connection by mingling during social time and greeting guests personally. The caller is not just a leading figure; they are shaping the atmosphere.

A Simple Structure for Social Success

Begin with a simple circle or line dance. Add mixers to encourage interaction. Use basic square formations with clear calls. Keep a steady tempo without over-explaining. Maintain energy throughout the evening and end with an upbeat, celebratory finale. Early successes build confidence, which leads to laughter, and laughter strengthens connections.

The Long-Term Impact of Social Investment

When clubs host Party Dances regularly and intentionally, the results extend beyond membership numbers.

They often see:

- Increased lesson enrollment.

- Expanded social networks.

- Stronger member morale.

- Greater community awareness.

- Enhanced public perception.

- More importantly, they strengthen the social fabric of their communities.

Square dancing is uniquely positioned to offer something many people crave: real-time human interaction. It brings people together physically, emotionally, and socially. Party Dances showcase that strength in its most accessible form, and they open a much wider door to our dance.

If clubs commit to hosting three to four Party Dances each year, focusing on hospitality, follow-up, and community partnership, the impact can be profound.

- Square dancing becomes visible

- It becomes welcoming.

- It becomes socially relevant.

- Most importantly, it becomes a place where people form genuine connections.

The invitation is simple:

- Make it welcoming.

- Make it intentional.

- Make it joyful.

- Make it about connection.

When we focus on social connection first, growth follows naturally.

**Originally published in the American Square Dance Magazine*

Square Dance Party Dance Checklist

A Practical Guide for Club Leaders

By the Social Connections Committee

1. Set Your Purpose & Plan the Event

- Know the goal: growth, visibility, and social connection
- Schedule **3–4 Party Dances per year** if possible
- Choose a date/time that is accessible to the public and works for your group
- Select a welcoming, easy-to-find venue (your normal venue if possible)
- Coordinate with your caller(s) early

2. Promote & Invite

- Clearly advertise as a **new dancer-friendly, no-experience-needed event**
- Emphasize: fun, simple, social (not lessons)
- Invite past attendees (“Friends of the Club” list)
- Encourage members to personally invite friends
- Promote through:
 - Social media, Community boards, Local organizations

3. Build Community Partnership

- Partner with local groups (churches, service clubs, scouts, etc.)
- Co-host or cross-promote events
- Explore fundraising opportunities with partners
- Position your club as a **community-centered activity**

4. Guest Registration & Follow-Up System

- Set up a **sign-in table** (required for liability)
- Collect:
 - Name, Email, Phone number
- Create/maintain your **“Friends of the Club” list** (continue to build and update)
- Offer a **raffle incentive** (gift card, small prize) that helps collect this information

5. Create a Welcoming Environment

- Provide **clearly printed (sticker) name tags** and markers to fill in names
- Arrange **circular tables** for easy conversation if possible
- Set up a **snack table accessible from both sides** if possible (hand sanitizer on table)
- Play soft background music during breaks
- Ensure the space encourages mingling and comfort

6. Prepare Your Members (Ambassadors)

- Brief members before the event:
 - Greet all newcomers warmly
 - Introduce guests to others
 - Invite guests into squares
 - Rotate partners and avoid cliques
 - Engage in conversation during breaks
- Remind members:
 - Focus on inclusion over dancing skill
 - Respect personal space (especially with new dancers)

7. Coordinate with the Caller

- Keep teaching **short, simple, and upbeat**
- Use: the caller sets the program at his or her comfort level
 - Easy squares, Mixers (rotating or not), Line dances, Simple contras
- Avoid complex choreography
- Use **lively, recognizable music**
- Encourage the caller to:
 - Mingle with guests
 - Help create a welcoming tone

This event should be no more than two hours. Leave attendees wanting more and uplifted

8. Structure the Dance Program

This is totally up to the caller(s)

- Start with a **simple circle or line dance**
- Progress to mixers for interaction
- Introduce basic square dancing
- Keep a steady pace—don't over-teach
- Maintain energy throughout
- End with a **fun, celebratory finale**

9. Encourage Social Connection

- Build in **break times for conversation**
- Encourage mixing between dancers and guests
- Create a relaxed, laughter-filled atmosphere
- Focus on **connection over perfection**

10. Post-Event Follow-Up

- Send thank-you messages to attendees
- Invite guests to:
 - Future Party Dances
 - Lessons/programs
 - Social events (potlucks, outings, etc.)
- Add attendees to the ongoing **"Friends of the Club"** list

11. Measure Long-Term Success

- Monitor:
 - Growth in club membership
 - Lesson enrollment
 - "Friends of the Club"** list
- Adjust future events based on feedback and experience

Guiding Principles (Keep Front and Center)

- Make it **welcoming**
- Make it **intentional**
- Make it **joyful**
- Make it about **connection first**

Use as many steps as your group is comfortable with. This checklist is only a guideline. Plan one event at a time and modify the points above to fit your group and to improve as you continue. This will help you grow and enhance your social connections in your community. Have fun!



THE FOUNDATION

For the Preservation and Promotion of Square Dancing

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Ronald Langley
Richard Manning
Masaru Wada
Kenneth Morris
Del Morton
Ryo Sasaki
Tony Simmons
Ellen Spoon
Sherrie Spychaj
Richard Stewart
Ed Trever
Ed Vieth
Jim Wass
Dottie Welch

Donations to CALLERLAB

Richard Berry
Ken Britton
Bob Brown
Rosie Caudle
Darrell Cevalasco
Buzz Chapman
Brad Christie
Patrick Cox
Charles Crockett
Clay Goss
Billy Grimsley
Harlan Kerr
Masaru Wada
Clint McLean
Monk Moore
Del Morton
Shozo Nishimura
Duane Olson
Jeff Palmer
Ben Purkett
Tom Rainer
Ryo Sasaki
Wayne Shoemaker
Dale Smith
Ellen Spoon
Sherrie Spychaj
Richard Stewart
Ed Trever
Jim Wass
Dottie Welch

CALLERLAB ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Minutes

Grand Sierra Resort

Reno, NV

April 1, 2026

Approved

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CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Ted Lizotte at 9:05 AM Wednesday, April 1, 2026.

PARLIAMENTARIAN

Chair Lizotte introduced the parliamentarian: Debbie Ceder.

SERGEANTS AT ARMS

Chair Lizotte introduced the Sergeants At Arms: Ray Brendzy, Patty Greene, Barry Johnson, and Vernon Jones.

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BOARD OF GOVERNORS ROLL CALL

A roll call of attending BOG Members was conducted. All Board members were in attendance except for Bear Miller.

ESTABLISHING A QUORUM

There are 576 voting members; 192 are required for a quorum. Chair Lizotte asked for a count of voting members in attendance. There were 98 voting members present. The Chair noted that a quorum was not present; therefore, only business published in the Call to Convention may be conducted. No resolutions were presented; therefore, no votes were taken.

OTHER ORGANIZATIONS REMARKS

Representatives from affiliated organizations shared invitations and updates regarding upcoming conventions, programs, and collaborative initiatives.

National Square Dance Convention – Louis & Angie McClure – Thanked CALLERLAB for its support and invited attendees to the 75th National Square Dance Convention in Waco, Texas.

International Association of Gay Square Dance Clubs (IAGSDC) – Allan Hurst – Invited attendees to the 2026 convention in Montreal, Quebec, and encouraged registration.

Gay Callers Association (GCA) – Harlan Kerr – Promoted membership, highlighted inclusivity, and encouraged participation in their caller school and organization.

2027 National Square Dance Convention – Art & Lilly Hardin – Invited attendees to Loveland, Colorado, and shared key details about the location and accessibility.

ARTS – Betsy Gotta – Encouraged support of The ARTS as a way to strengthen all dance organizations and the overall activity.

ROUNDALAB – Al Hipkins – Promoted its 50th anniversary convention and invited participation in round dance activities at the National Convention.

Canadian National Square & Round Dance Convention –Ray Brendzy – Invited attendees to the convention in Penticton, British Columbia, and promoted caller participation.

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77th National Square Dance Convention – Dave & Michele Vieira – Invited attendees to the Daytona Beach convention and encouraged attendance.

United Square Dancers of America (USDA) – Nina Grigsby – Emphasized the importance of collaboration among dancers, callers, and organizations to sustain and grow the activity.

European Callers and Teachers Association (ECTA) – Philipp Aff – Expressed appreciation and encouraged continued international participation and engagement.

GSI – Tony Oxendine – Highlighted the success and growth of caller training programs, including sold-out schools, and encouraged future participation.

Japan Square Dance Association (JSDA) – Hiroshi Nakagawa – Highlighted the success of the Japan Mini-Lab. Invited attendees to the 2026 Japan National Convention. Introduced Jake Shimada who is attending his first CALLERLAB Convention and invited folks to the Japan National Convention.

MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS

Teresa Berger, Executive Director, provided the following reports:

The 2025/2026 membership year ended March 31, 2026 with 1,353 members (up from 1,331).

This includes 1,076 U.S., 240 overseas, and 37 Canadian members.

CALLERLAB has 576 voting members.

Financial documents for fiscal year 2024 are pending and will be shared when finalized.

CONVENTION ATTENDANCE

There were 299 registrations for the 2026 CALLERLAB Convention.

There are 88 preregistered attendees for the 2027 Convention in Indianapolis, IN.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no Old Business.

NEW BUSINESS

The Chair introduced the members of the Board of Governors, including newly elected and

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reelected members. Outgoing Board Members Tom Davis and Buddy Weaver were recognized and thanked for their service. The Executive Director administered the oath of office to the Board.

Chair Ted Lizotte provided closing remarks as he concluded his term as Chair.

The 2026–2027 Executive Committee was introduced.

Chair Jack Pladdys invited Vice Chair Shauna Kaaria to read a brief welcoming statement on his behalf due to voice limitations. Following the statement, Shauna Kaaria presided over the remainder of the CALLERLAB business meeting

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Committee Chairs provided brief reports.

Ways & Means Committee – Mike Hogan – Reported on fundraising efforts, including exploring new ideas and grant opportunities, and plans to seek guidance on funding priorities from leadership and committees.

New Caller Committee – Vernon Jones – Shared that Zoom training sessions will continue with improved support and that several new project initiatives are planned for the coming year.

Plus Committee – Tom Davis – Reported that the new Plus program list and teaching order have been adopted, with work ongoing to finalize supporting materials ahead of implementation.

Advanced Committee – Ray Brendzy – Noted that no immediate changes will be made, with plans to revisit program updates during the next quadrennial review cycle.

Caller Training Committee – Betsy Gotta – Announced the launch of a Certified Square Dance Teacher program and invited interested members to apply.

Marketing Committee – Brian Freed – Outlined key initiatives including a marketing grant program, FAQ materials, a speakers bureau, and updates to the marketing manual.

ACC Committee – Shauna Kaaria – Reported that eight individuals are currently in the process of becoming accredited caller coaches, including the first participant from Japan.

Social Connections Committee – Mike Seastrom – Highlighted a new strategy document for club growth, use of QR codes for outreach, and resources for creating welcoming dance environments.

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Mainstream Committee – Harlan Kerr – Reported on development of the new mainstream program and playbook, with strong participation and focus on successful implementation.

Women in Calling Committee – Juli Burr – Shared ongoing projects including updated resources, increased outreach, expanded membership, and continued educational initiatives.

Public Relations Committee – John Harden – Discussed efforts to increase member engagement and modernize outreach materials.

Choreographic Applications Committee – Dottie Welch – Reported near completion of A1 teaching resources and plans to reorganize materials to align with recent program changes.

Partner Committee – Allynn Riggs – Highlighted new partner membership options and plans to develop partner-focused activities at future conventions.

KnowledgeBase Committee – Barry Clasper – Encouraged members to contribute ideas and experiences to support implementation of program changes through the “Winning Ways” section.

Definitions Committee – Guy Steele – Reported ongoing updates to definitions documents to align with new program changes, with multiple revised publications in progress.

Challenge Committee – Bill van Melle – Announced updated C1 and C2 definitions and ongoing discussions regarding concept refinements.

Committee for Community & Traditional Dance– Bob Riggs – Promoted available dance resources, announced an upcoming survey, and noted the return of the Community Dance Leaders Seminar.

Application Review Committee – Jeremy Butler – Reported updates to policies and procedures, including a new submission process and plans to review historical decisions.

CANDIDATES FOR BOARD OF GOVERNORS

The following candidates submitted petitions indicating intent to run for the Board:

Shawn Brown, Barry Clasper, Tom Davis, Shauna Kaaria, Hunter Keller, Ted Lizotte, Tony Oxendine, Charlie Petrea, Charlie Robertson, Justin Russell, Dave Vieira.

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Vice Chair Kaaria invited the candidates in attendance to speak.

MEMBER COMMENTS

Vice Chair Kaaria opened the floor for any additional New Business. Hearing none, she invited members to share items for the good of the order.

Roy Gotta (NJ) requested that anyone who had previously asked him for a copy of his record-keeping spreadsheet please reconnect with him. He also noted that ROUNDALAB has recently established a foundation and is seeking donations.

Debbie Ceder (CA) suggested that the term “playbook” may not best reflect the organization’s intent and encouraged consideration of an alternative term.

CLOSING REMARKS

Vice Chair Kaaria provided brief closing remarks which emphasized appreciation, collaboration, and future progress.

Members were invited to attend the 2027 CALLERLAB Convention in Indianapolis, IN.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Charlie Robertson and seconded by Patty Greene. The meeting adjourned at approximately 10:02 AM on Wednesday, April 1, 2026.

Respectfully submitted,

Teresa Berger

Executive Director

Transcribed from audio

Approve April 29, 2026 by BOG LOG 26-0423-001 (VOTE) (2026 Annual Meeting Minutes)

CALLERLAB

52nd CALLERLAB Convention

March 21-24, 2027

Indianapolis Marriott East, Indianapolis, IN

Save your spot. Save the date. Save your price.

Register Online!



*** List your name as you want it to appear on your convention badge. Please print. ***

Caller First & Last Name: _____

Partner First & Last Name (If attending): _____

Caller Email: _____ Partner Email: _____

Address _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Country _____

Phone: _____

Emergency Contact Name: _____ Emergency Contact Phone: _____

(who we should contact on your behalf in case of an emergency at convention)

Fees (early bird rates valid through September 1, 2026)

Callers (\$330.00 each)..... **\$300 before September 1, 2026** \$ _____

Partners (\$300.00 each)..... **\$270 before September 1, 2026** \$ _____

Dancers (\$300.00 each) **\$270 before Septemeber 1, 2026** \$ _____

Minimum deposit is \$100.00 per person.

Optional Items: (payment for optional items is due in full at time of registration)

Caller Clinic-March 20-21 (\$75 per caller) \$ _____

(pre-convention)

Convention Audio Recordings (\$40 per USB) \$ _____

Select Media Format USB—\$40 Dropbox—included \$0

(Office Use Only)	
Accounting	_____
Master	_____
MP3	_____

Discounts \$(_____)

Total Due \$ _____

Deposit \$ _____

Balance Due \$ _____

Payment in full due by February 19, 2027 to avoid a \$30 late fee per person.

Return to: CALLERLAB, 494 S. Emerson Ave, Suite H1, Greenwood, IN 46143-1953 or info@callerlab.org.

Any special needs (ex: dietary) _____

Payment Method: Check, Credit Card, or PayPal - info@callerlab.org.

Card # _____ Expiration Date _____ CID# _____

Signature: _____