



# The Stanford Quads Newsletter



Sunday, December 9, 2007

Edited by Bill van Melle

## Administrivia

We won't be dancing on December 23 or 30. That means next Sunday, the 16<sup>th</sup>, will be our last night dancing this year, which makes it a party night. Feel free to bring festive holiday treats.

We'll resume class on January 6. Of course, this means there will be a 3-week gap in your education, but don't worry. We expect to spend a lot of class time that night reviewing what you've learned so far.

## Some Square Dance Jargon

*Square dancers have almost as many jargon terms as people in a technical field. Here are a few that come to mind, so you don't feel left out. This list does not include the names of the calls themselves, just vocabulary used for talking about calls, formations, or square dancing in general. Don't worry if you don't comprehend them all right now—we don't expect you to. However, we do recommend you keep this list and read through it periodically; it should make more sense each time.*

**call** 1. A set of moves that you do when the caller calls its name. Most are made up of simpler calls. 2. A set of calls<sup>1</sup> that traditionally starts and ends with “bow to your partner, bow to your corner”.

**sequence** A series of calls<sup>1</sup> that begins and ends with the dancers at home.

**patter call** A call<sup>2</sup> that is spoken or chanted rather than sung, but is usually done to background music. Also called a **hash call**. You wind up with your original partner each time you promenade home.

**singing call** A call<sup>2</sup> that consists of a song (any song with a good beat will do, and it depends mostly on the caller's taste) with some of the lyrics replaced by square dance calls. The typical singing call has 7 sequences, in the pattern ABBABBA; at the end of the B sequences, you usually wind up with your (new) corner for the promenade home.

**zero** A call<sup>1</sup> that leaves you in the same place at the end of the call as you started. Examples: **Grand Square**, **Teacup Chain**, **Eight Chain Thru**. Callers also have a more complex concept, **technical zero**, used to refer to a call that, under the right conditions, can be inserted into a sequence without affecting its outcome (i.e., getting you back home).

**sight calling** Calling ad lib and then trying to untangle the square on the fly, rather like unscrambling a Rubik's cube.

**pilot square** The square a sight caller watches to see the effect of the calls. Also called **sight** square.

**cuing** Directions the caller sometimes gives after a call that he or she thinks some dancers may have trouble with, giving the definition of the call (“Right and Left Thru—Right Pull By, then a Courtesy Turn”) or filling in who does what, given your current formation (“Flutterwheel—Men are in the lead”). A careful caller will mumble, so you don't think this is another call.

**break down** What a square does when so few dancers know where they're supposed to be that everyone is hopelessly lost.

**tip** The time you spend dancing in one square without a break. At typical Mainstream/Plus clubs this usually consists of a patter call and a singing call. Origin obscure.

**level** or **program** A list of calls, including all the levels below it. The levels are: Basic, Mainstream, Plus, Advanced (A1–A2), and Challenge (C1–C4). The Quads club level is Plus.

**floor level** The level at which most or all of the tips of a dance are called.

**star tip** A tip at a more advanced level than the floor level. The name comes from the fact that these tips are marked with an asterisk at dances where there is a written list of tips.

**hoedown** A large gathering held to square dance.

**one-night stand** A party where people who are assumed to know nothing about square dancing learn just enough calls to dance for one night.

**workshop** A class for people to gain more skill at their current dancing level, e.g., by learning to do the calls from more unusual positions.

**angel** A dancer participating in a class who already knows how to dance the level being taught.

**tape group** An informal group that gathers to square dance to pre-recorded audio tapes, rather than a live caller. Many tape groups consist of a single square, dancing in someone's home. Tape groups are common in areas where the ‘live’ dance opportunities at the desired level are limited or non-existent, which is often the case in the Challenge community.

**hot hash** A special tip (usually at a hoedown) that is called at a very fast pace, with no extra time between calls to think or catch your breath. These were once popular, but now a rarity.

**dark** Not meeting. Said of a night that a club would ordinarily meet, but this time doesn't.

**book** To schedule a tip in which you are committed to dancing with a particular partner or particular couple(s).

When you book an entire square it is sometimes called **stacking**. Booking many tips in advance and stacking squares are generally frowned upon, although there are a few circumstances where it is approved, such as to help dancers brand new to the level.

**checkerboard** To arrange that alternating squares (in a checkerboard pattern) dance with the head and side designations reversed, so as to provide more effective dancing space in a crowded hall.

**couple** Two side-by-side dancers facing the same direction.

**beau** The left-side dancer of a couple.

**belle** The right-side dancer of a couple.

**gent** A dancer who is in the beau position when squared up, even if she happens to be female. Also called **man**, **gentleman** or **boy**.

**lady** A dancer who is in the belle position when squared up, even if he happens to be male. Also called **gal** or **girl**. Note that **beau** and **belle** designate the people in certain positions in a formation, and change from one call to the next, while the **gent** and **lady** designations are fixed for a whole tip, independent of the formation.

**normal couple** A couple with a gent standing to the left of a lady.

**half-sashayed couple** A couple with a lady standing to the left of a gent.

**tandem** Two dancers facing the same direction, one in front of the other.

**leader, trailer** In a 1x2 setup (a tandem, facing dancers, back-to-back dancers), the dancers facing out of the setup are *leaders*, those facing in are *trailers*.

**sex-linked call** A call that is performed differently by gents and ladies, regardless of position. There aren't nearly as many of these as some people think. Examples: **Allemande Left**, **Star Thru**, **Slide Thru**, **Swing Your Partner**.

**concept** A call that doesn't by itself specify any action to take, but modifies the action of another call. There are no concepts at Plus; the first one at Advanced is **As Couples Call**, which means to perform *Call* with each couple acting as one dancer.

**arky** 1. Dancing as a gent if you're female or a lady if you're male. Origin obscure. 2. A concept used at the Challenge level: all the beaus dance the specified call as if they were gents, while the belles dance as if they were ladies.

**1&3, 2&4** Alternative designation for **heads** and **sides**, respectively. The couples in a square are numbered from 1 to 4 in promenade direction around the square (i.e., counter-clockwise as viewed from above), with #1 being the couple with their backs to the caller.

**styling** Anything about the way you do a call that is not mentioned in the definition. Usually the definition tells you

how to get there, while styling tells you how to do it smoothly. Some calls have a standard styling that everyone has to know and is always correct, plus alternate stylings, or frills, that you can add for fun.

**frill** A fancy move that is added to or substituted for the standard way of doing a call that has the same effect but is more fun. Frills that involve other dancers usually have some built-in signal so that you only do it if both dancers are ready and both know the particular frill. John doesn't teach these, and we generally refrain from doing frills during at least the early stages of a class so that you can concentrate on the calls. But if you notice amusing frills during the Plus tips at the end of the evening that you'd like to learn, just ask someone (but please, don't use them on class members who haven't learned them).

**sound effect** Something the dancers yell back, ideally in unison, in response to a call. Examples: **Flutterwheel**—"Whoop, whoop!" **Pass the Ocean**—"Splash!" **Ferris Wheel**—"Wheel!" **Explode the Wave**—"Boom!" **Accey Deucey**—"Quack!"

**phantom** An imaginary dancer. They come in handy when you're desperate to dance and have fewer than 8 people, but they need a lot of help to execute the calls. At Challenge levels, callers deliberately add phantoms to the square to make things more interesting.

**APD** All Position Dancing. In many clubs, calls are only called from certain standard positions. For example, the caller keeps the gent on the lady's left most or all of the time. So if you are a man, you will always turn to your right during **Square Thru**, which means you don't have to think as hard about where to go next. Other calls also have standard positions, and so most people only learn how to do half (or less) of the call. Some people think this makes it easier to learn, though to others of us it means you're only learning a lot of special cases, and you're developing bad habits that will plague you if you ever choose to dance a level higher than Plus. With APD, a couple may have the lady on the gent's left, or may consist of two gents or two ladies; any arrangement of sexes is a legal starting position for a call (except for some sex-linked calls, of course). All Advanced and Challenge dancers are required to know APD, but it is optional at Mainstream and Plus—an option the Stanford Quads exercises.

**DBD** Dancing By Definition. This requires that dancers remember how each call is defined rather than what usually works. For example, **Swing Thru** is defined as Half by the Right if you can followed by Half by the Left if you can. In a non-DBD club, Swing Thru would probably be called only from a right-handed wave, and you could get away with thinking that you trade with the adjacent dancer, and then the centers trade. However, that is not the definition of the call, and it won't work from a left-handed wave. APD is a special case of DBD, but most people use the terms interchangeably. Some caller groups prefer to call DBD/APD usage **Extended Application**, its opposite being **Standard Application**.