

Australian Callers Federation



CallerLink

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Australian Callers' Federation

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ACF Chairman's Report.

Hi fellow callers.

Another Convention has come and gone. Queensland did themselves proud. The backdrop decorations about the Lion King were first class. Glenn Wilson had the non-envious task of drawing up the programme. I have discovered that no matter how good a job you do, there always seems to be room for some criticism. I guess that goes with the territory, just like any job that affects a large number of people. But I say "well done Glenn for a difficult job".

From the caller's point of view, the highlight was without doubt the 3 day Minilab at Coolangatta. This was attended by some 50 callers from all walks of life and differing experience in calling.

The main panel consisted of Jerry Reed, CEO of Callerlab; John Marshall, Chairman of Callerlab; Tim Mariner, Board Of Governors and member of Callerlab. They were assisted by some of our own callers in Howard Cockburn, Mike Davey, Peter Humphries, Steve Turner, Graham Elliott, Janice Alexander, David Smythe, Gary Carpenter, Jeff Garbutt and Nev McLachlan. Thanks to all those callers for their qualified contribution to a very successful seminar.

Topics ranged from items such as Timing, Definitions, Creative choreo, Programming, Digital music etc. Your local Coordinator will no doubt be anxious to share the information with you at the first opportunity.

At the Board meetings we put the final touches to the issue of split level callers' guidelines for programming at National Conventions. The changes voted for can be made available to anyone requesting them through our Secretary Nev McLachlan.

The issue the Board members will be debating this year will be guidelines for the admission of a caller on to the Board. At present a caller must be prepared to attend 2 out of 3 Conventions to be considered for admission as a Board member. More on this matter as the issue is resolved one way or another.

It was with a great deal of pleasure to present 7 callers with the Silver Microphone award. This award recognises 25 years of calling. They were Howard Cockburn, Wilma Flannery, David Cox, Ron Burrett, Ted Thomas, Cyril Edwards (accepted by Diane Austin) and John Casey. Congratulations to all those callers for reaching this milestone.

For your information, the current executive members on the Board are;
Chairman – Jeff Van Sambeeck, Vice Chairman – Steve Turner, Secretary – Nev McLachlan with Diane Austin assisting as minute secretary, Treasurer – Howard Cockburn, PR and Overseas liaison – Graham Elliott, Web master – Allen Kerr. We welcomed two new Board members in Alan Evans from Qld and Ted Thomas from NSW. Your State Coordinator also may have changed so check this out within your own Associations.

The next National Convention, as you no doubt are aware, will be the 50th in Perth in June 2009. This is a special occasion for square dancing and callers in Australia and worth the effort to be there and be part of the programme.

The ACF will be looking forward to your presence.

Cheers

Jeff Van Sambeeck
Chairman

CYRIL EDWARDS

Sadly, Cyril passed away in late July and our hearts go out to Nel & her supportive family & friends. Cyril was a mentor, a gentleman – many things to many people, but overall an amazing man. He will be sadly missed in our state.

Di Austen

Editor's Ramblings

Well the 49th is now behind us, and what a fantastic time we had. To me the sociability of renewing acquaintances and making new friends is what draws me to these functions. The addition of some great dancing and calling is a bonus. And the opportunity of travelling in an area that I have never really been to before is the icing on the cake of a successful convention.

We took our GPS navigator to guide us through the streets and it made the daily drives real easy, until it wouldn't start on us one day. Worried about how we would drive from Brisbane to Coolangatta I studied the street directory and plotted a course for the next part of the journey. We tested our skills locally to use the good old fashioned street directory and were quite proud of ourselves that we good old fashion proven technology to find our way on a drive through uncharted territory. On returning to our motel room I found it was working again. I suppose the lesson to this is that one should always be prepared to switch to a backup plan and have old fashioned technology on old just in case.

The minilab in Coolangatta was worth staying for. We had a good mix of Australian and USA panel members giving us a good balance of viewpoints and guidance. The unofficial sub-title of the minilab became "In My Opinion" which is a term that was frequently used in the minilab. And it is also a reflection of the democracy that Callerlab is. Callerlab is an advisory organisation that works for all square dancing. And it is the membership that makes recommendations that eventually become decisions through a democratic process through the advisory committees that we can all become members of. The processes involved may take time to bring changes into place, but they can happen. And we have a chance to help guide change to our advantage simply by becoming part. Instead of sitting back and criticising why "they" made a change – we can become "them" and actually drive changes.

The topic of using digital music at large functions was brought up at the national callers meeting and at this stage there was no real outcome for either allowing or disallowing it. Understandably many callers are nervous about the subject and the effect that laptops would have to the smooth operation of a large function. It just means that laptop callers now need to sell the concept a lot better – or maybe even adapt their procedures to better suit the operation of large functions. This has become an interesting topic that will undoubtedly come up again so stay tuned. I will publish some of my own thoughts in a future issue.

This issue will probably come to you a bit late and I am working in Kununurra during July and won't have time to finish it until August.

Jeff Garbutt

WANTED – NEXT CALLERLINK EDITOR

As advised in my annual report to the ACF: “This has been a great journey but I feel that I'm going stale. Membership should have someone who is fresh and will throw some renewed vigour into Callerlink. I truly think that the overall good of the newsletter would be better served with some new blood and I am therefore giving a year's notice.”

So we need a new editor to be appointed in June 2009. Could it be you?

Speaking from a personal perspective it is a fantastic journey to be on. You can learn a lot from this job just by preparing your own articles with the research you do! And you can learn a lot from the knowledge contributed by other caller's articles:

Requirements:

- ü Good computer skills.
- ü Ability to stretch one article into at least 2 issues.
- ü Become a general nuisance to state co-ordinators in order to ensure state reports are submitted.
- ü Make a general nuisance to potential article authors during lean times.

Not hard really.

To all Programmed Callers 49th Australian National Square Dance Convention

Thank you all,
Please accept my sincere gratitude for a job well done.

This Convention was a first, in that there were 3 square dance venues dancing at different levels, all day Saturday, Sunday and Monday.

Add to that, the fact, that the number of registered callers was approximately 25-30% less, than at previous Queensland National Conventions.

This means that some of you, particularly those accredited to call at the "A" Levels, were calling a lot more than at previous conventions.

While there were some anomalies within the programme, you all handled these issues with professionalism, understanding and good humour.

Feedback from dancers has been overwhelmingly positive. This was particularly evident in the number of dancers that stayed till the very last minute on the Monday theme night.

The experience of being programme manager is not one that I'll soon forget. I have a renewed respect for those that have done the job in the past.

For those who have volunteered for, or are contemplating volunteering for the job in the future, It is not an easy task but it is well worth it.

To Finish,

Thank you all, for your professionalism, your individual skills and for your understanding.

Best regards,
Glenn Wilson.
Programme Manager
49th Australian National Square Dance Convention

A Brief History of the A.C.F.

The Australian Callers Federation is now turning 30 years old and Jeff Seidel has been a board member since its inception in 1979. It is rather timely that Jeff has submitted the following article:

The **A.C.F.** was officially created back on the 23rd September 1979, in Adelaide. Going back a little further in time, Wally Cook, Jack Murphy & Jeff Seidel were on tour in North Queensland. Over the odd meat pies & liquid refreshment they discussed the topic of caller programming & ways & means on how things could be improved for the betterment of square dancing & dancers in Australia.

A list of callers was drawn up, noting what callers had been doing for the movement in their state & nationally, together with their ability to call. A short list of two callers from each state was chosen, except for Victoria, which at that time had two fractions. The two fractions had to be considered, in an effort to bring together the callers of that state, & consequently five callers from Victoria joined the A.C.F. board.

South Australia was to host the 21st National Convention in Adelaide in 1980. This was an opportune time to present this newly formed callers body to the rest of the callers & to the general dancers. So back to the 23rd September 1979, Jeff Seidel (also convenor of the 21st.) took this opportunity to send out invitations (in the same way Callerlab was formed) to a select group of Australian callers to join this new body.

The callers were as follows, including state & position held:

President: Jeff Seidel S.A. Vice President: Tom McGrath* N.S.W.

Secretary/Treasurer: Don Muldowney* S.A. (Not part of Board)

Ron Jones N.S.W. Eric Wendell* Qld. Graham Rigby Qld.

Les Johnson* W.A. Steve Turner W.A. Fred Burn* TAS

Graeme Whiteley TAS David Hooper Vic* Ron Whyte* Vic

Ron Mennie Vic Jack Murphy Vic Wally Cook* Vic

Allan Frost* S.A. (*deceased member)

All original members were made "Life Members" in 1990.

The name "Australian Callers Federation" or as known the A.C.F. was the suggestion of Ron Jones N.S.W. In its early years meetings were held twice a year, one at the National Convention & one about half way between the next. At this second meeting a fund raiser dance was also held. The A.C.F. also started its own newsletter, come note service, then called "News & Notes" & later being renamed "Caller Link", Steve Turner was our very first editor of this service.

The Australian Callers Federation is now turning 30 years old.

Jeff Seidel

What should be considered suitable "Square Dance Dress" now and into the future?

(Gary Carpenter)

Considering the heated discussions at the Minilab I'm hoping we could start a debate in Callerlink regarding Square Dance Dress.

Remember that though there were pockets of Square Dancing in Australia prior to the "Big Boom" I think we need to remember that what made Square Dancing really take off in Australia was a Public Relations exercise to promote the "In Fashion" for that year... I wasn't there at the time as it was about 1952-3 but according to my Mother women went to work wearing a full skirt with petticoats. Okay, I'm a Male but I can't imagine anything worse than wearing one of those enormous, scratchy, get in the way petticoats. It's bad enough having to wear Long Sleeved Shirts and Long Trousers during our Hot Summers...

Personally, at my club, I set the standard by always wearing Good Trousers, Long Sleeved Shirts and a Bolo Tie or Cravat and most of the long term dancers "Dress Up" to match.... But if it's a cold winter's night and the ladies decide to turn up in dress slacks am I going to turn them away. Not on your Nellie. I'd rather have them turn up and have a good time than get used to sitting at home in front of the TV. I've even heard that some of the local clubs are going "Casual".

Okay, so what is the current Standard. Here is my understanding of the current situation:

Formal Square Dance Attire:

Men:- Long Trousers (occasionally Dress Shorts with Long Dress Socks is accepted), Long Sleeved Shirt with suitable Neck Decoration (Bolo, Cravat, Bow Tie)

Ladies:- Full Circle Dress (or Skirt and Top) with Petticoat to match or, Broom Stick Skirt or, Prairie Skirt with a Suitably Modest Top.

Casual Square Dance Attire:

Men:- Dress Shirts (can be short sleeved) Dress Slacks, Jeans or Shorts

Ladies:- Dress Skirt, Slacks or Jeans. Suitably Modest Top.

Casual:

Men and Ladies: Clean Modest Clothing. NO Vulgar, Offensive or Revealing outfits.

So. What are the issues?

The biggest stumbling block for the Ladies I would guess is the circa 1952-3 Dress/Skirt. It's biggest asset is the number of ills it hides. A bonus for husbands/boyfriends everywhere. You know the question we hate. "Does my bum look big in this?" We can always say no, simply because we can't tell, well not until they do a lot of twirling. The list of problems goes on and on; scratchy petticoats, hot petticoats, gets in the way, takes up too much space, can't wear them to work then to a dance, out of fashion by 50 years, etc....

The Broomstick Skirt doesn't seem to have taken off in Australia, though I did note that some of the American and New Zealand dancers wearing them at the Convention in Brisbane. I didn't see any Prairie Skirts at Brisbane, though I have seen them elsewhere, so they haven't taken off either. I'm not sure why neither of these options are popular here. The Prairie Skirts look quite smart, though you need to have the right shape to wear one and the perhaps the Australian ladies can't quite come to terms with wearing a full length (Broomstick) skirt. Perhaps a shorter version of the Broomstick might be acceptable here. Any thoughts Ladies?

I have noticed that with the over 45ish new Lady dancers, the full skirt doesn't seem to be an issue. Within a few weeks any pre loved skirts and petticoats are being tossed around and tried on (quite often while I'm trying to get another bracket going). The younger dancers need a lot more convincing.

Another issue I see with the ladies is a generational thing. The majority of our dancers are in the "Seniors" category (over 50) and their idea on modesty differs greatly from their grand daughters. The older ladies have wrinkly/saggy arms and like sleeves and covered shoulders. Their grand daughters have smooth (sometimes) trim arms, shoulders etc. and don't see why they can't show them off. Some of them also like to show off the pretty jewellery dangling from their belly button, wear their skirts on their hips (rather than their waist) etc. As I said, a generational thing, I can remember wearing mismatched shirts and pants just to annoy my mother.. I sometimes still do, just not at a Square Dance.

Another generational issue I see is shirts/top with messages. This is not restricted to any gender. For the younger people, their closet is full of tee shirts, jackets etc. that have messages or logos across the back and front. It's part of their life and they think nothing about wearing a shirt with their favourite Band's logo, be it a skull or pentacle or whatever. Now I'm not advocating we should be allowing dancers with tops/shirts emblazoned with lyrics from an M&M rampage but I am suggesting that maybe we should broaden our minds.

Now for the Men's attire:-

I have no problem with Dress Trousers and Long Sleeved Shirts during the cooler months but I'm wondering if we should be looking at something more suitable for the warmer months. Now could be a good time to be discussing this as in a few years time our Convention will be in Darwin. Has any one looked at the average temperatures in Darwin? The temperature range doesn't change much, it's generally around the 30 deg mark, it's just that around June the humidity isn't quite as high as it is in December.

I've been lucky enough to be in Darwin during "The Dry" a couple of times and got sweaty enough in shorts and tee shirt. If we're lucky, the Convention Venue will be air conditioned but we'll still need to get from our accommodation to the venue. For me, 5 minutes in long attire in the Darwin climate would have me dripping with sweat before I even start dancing. Now I'm not advocating blue singlets, stubbies & thongs but some form of good quality clothing should be discussed.... Not only for Darwin but also for our Hot Summers.

Now, let's have some debate.

Regards

Gary Carpenter

As an aside, a comment I've had from a young person is that it's not just the dress, it's the vast number of OLD people in Square Dancing that stop younger people joining in...

Promoting Square Dancing

(Di Austen)

When is the best time to promote square dancing? I believe the time is right now. Do I have a crystal ball or a magic wand? I wish! I do know that things are changing. For example: it has been thought for a long time now that we are competing with television and computers- that people are not going out at night – that they are not looking for the type of activity that square dancing offers.

But look at the number of people attending football matches again – its making a comeback. I know a number of people who are doing a short course on something or another. Times are changing. With separations & divorces, new couples & singles are looking for a social outlet. The number of Australians on the road caravanning their way round our country increases daily. Children are tending to live at home for longer so when they do leave their parents are left looking for something to fill the void. Square Dancing could be the perfect activity for all these people. The 45 -65 age bracket, male or female. Bring your children, bring your grandchildren. What a wonderful family activity to be involved in. I hear you say that we need a mix of male & female but we tend to attract more single females. Excellent! A group of single females will eventually attract single males.

It seems fashionable to do 'a course'. A course on 'how to use a computer', how to speak French', 'how to cook Italian'. Seemingly people are after instant gratification by doing course after course. Maybe what some are really after is a sense of belonging. Give your club a quick 'health check' - are your beginners actively encouraged to join in club social activities? Are they encouraged to become a member of your club well before they can dance mainstream? When they miss a week or two are they pursued to see of all is OK to show we care about them?

Clubs around Australia are more than just dance clubs. I believe many, if not most, are social clubs that include square dancing as one of their main activities.

Now is the best time to promote our clubs. Now is the best time to encourage new dancers.

Di Austen

Callerlink is circulated every even numbered month. Articles for Callerlink are welcome and can be sent by:

- Post - typed or neatly handwritten to 1 Spinnaker Drive, Australind, WA 6233 – We don't have FAX
- E-mail – jefffracie3@westnet.com.au - in either WORD, PDF, Text or HTML but not PUBLISHER.
- Or submitted Through your ACF State Co-ordinator.

Please remember that articles from other publications are probably subject to copyright and we need to get permission to reproduce them. So if you find an article from somewhere else we need full details of the other organisation including who and how to contact them.

Closing date for articles is the 15th of each odd numbered month.

Recent Callerlinks are available at: <http://members.westnet.com.au/jefffracie/callerlinks.html>

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If you have anything you would like to advertise in the way of goods and services of value to other callers, please submit it to the editor.

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The next exciting issue of CallerLink comes out in Octobe 2008 !

If you have material you would like to be considered for publication, please submit it to the Editor or your state rep by 15th of September 2008 at the latest.
State co-ordinators – get your reports to the Chairman.
It's your newsletter – and you can make a difference.

Abbreviations and terminology used in Callerlink:

SS	Squared Set (or Static Square)
L1p	Zero Line (Heads Lead Right and Circle To A Line, historically named 1P2P)
B1c	Zero Box (Heads Square Thru, historically named BOX 1-4)
W1c	Zero Wave (Heads Square Thru and Make a Wave)
L1c	Corner Line (Heads Square Thru and Slide Thru with Sides)
B4c	Lead right box (Heads lead to the right and face the sides)
Normal	Dancers are arranged as normal couples. (Boy in left spot, girls in right spot)
½ Sashayed	Dancers are half-sashayed. (Girl in left spot, boys in right spot)
Mixed-sex	In a group of 4 dancers, 1 couple is normal, the other couple is ½ Sashayed
Same-sex	In a group of 4 dancers, there is one couple of boys and one couple of girls
TWC	Those who can

Squares 'round Australia

Western Australia

Let me start by passing on my sincere thanks and congratulations to all concerned with the organising and running of the 49th National Convention in Brisbane. A truly great weekend enjoyed by all that were fortunate enough to be able to attend and might I say, how nice it is to have our association attendees home, safe and well.

Reports from the MiniLab suggests that an enlightening and good time was had by all that attended and a short presentation about MiniLab at our most recent callers meeting was presented by our attending members suggests that the rekindled enthusiasm and real desire to see square dancing continue and grow was amongst other things very obvious and pleasing to see. One member in particular was so enthused by MiniLab that he has decided to continue his CallerLab Caller Coach Accreditation. "More Later."

On the local scene our next big (we hope) event will be our annual Callers Ball, to be held on Sunday August 10th. Our theme this year will be a day at the Olympics. It promises to be a fun afternoon and I'm pleased to say, the greater number of our members are sharing the load and getting involved in the organising and running of the event. As usual part proceeds will be going to charity and this year's nominated charity is The Royal Flying Doctor Service.

Cheers Kevin Kelly

Queensland

It was great to see so many of you at the National and the Mini-lab following. By all reports both were very well received by the Qld Callers. We have now turned our sights to the forthcoming caller training sessions in North Qld, the Wide Bay area and the Metropolitan Brisbane area. The QCA's Gala Dance, incorporating the Amateur Caller Contest, is on Sat afternoon 11th Oct followed by the Society's Sunshine State Round Up in the evening. We wish Alan Evans a speedy recovery from his broken right arm sustained in a fall at his home.

Victoria

Hi everyone, we have all returned from the National Convention and Minilab and from all reports were they all had a good week and a bit. Congratulations to Janet Cook who received her Small World Award from CALLERLAB. It was presented by John Marshall at the Minilab banquet. I was also presented the ACF Silver Microphone Award which is presented for 25 years of club calling.

This month the VCA will have its AGM and elect a new committee. Victoria is preparing for the 40th State Convention which will be held next year. This Convention will be held in Melbourne rather than one of our regional areas.

Not a great deal to report since returning from the National, hopefully there will be more next time

Howard Cockburn

Tasmania

Greetings from Tasmania

Tassie Twirlers will resume after a winter break on the 6th of August and the next Society Dance will be held at their hall in Kindred on the 30th of August. Graeme & Shirley Whitely have been roaming America during the recess of their club and we look forward to their return this week.

Casino City recently had visitors from USA to their club in Hobart for an enjoyable evening but generally attendance has been low with many dances having to be cancelled.

Kae Jenson's North West Coasters have also had interstate visitors plus some new dancers have just moved into the area & become members. Kae is currently holding down 2 beginner's classes. Well done Kae

Launceston Square Dance club has a square & a half of beginners & seem to be gaining valuable membership from their numbers. The enthusiasm of newcomers is contagious, boosting the atmosphere on club nights.

Tassie Hoedowners too were slow to get started this year but are now dancing every fortnight. Last time I spoke to Bill Mills he was very excited about the rest of the year for his club.

Bass Strait 8's have been in recess due to lack of numbers but Fred is hopeful that in September, after the next society dance, there will be renewed interest. His club will resume provided the numbers are there to support him.

Cygnets Swingers

With Cyril unable to attend the last Cygnets Swingers special dance, it was encouraging to see a good turn up of dancers & callers to their afternoon dance. It was at the end of this dance that Nel advised all who were present that Cyril was not well and had just been diagnosed with suspected bone cancer. Sadly, Cyril passed away just this week and our hearts go out to Nel & her supportive family & friends. Cyril was a mentor, a gentleman – many things to many people, but overall an amazing man. He will be sadly missed in our state.

Di Austen