CHOREOGRAPHIC GUIDELINES

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CHOREOGRAPHIC APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE
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The following table shows the changes made to this document since June 1996.

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Change Date	Change Made
07/03/04	***Page 36 - Removed reference to Quarterly Selections and added "Periodic Selections".***

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CHOREOGRAPHIC GUIDELINES
CHAPTER 1
PURPOSE

CALLERLAB established the Choreographic Applications Committee to review current programs from a choreographic standpoint. The committee was also tasked to evaluate and develop aids or guidelines to assist callers and dancers in deriving the greatest benefits from these programs. This committee was a consolidation of the former All Position Dancing (APD) and Teaching committees.

A major project for the committee was to develop a caller training aid containing choreographic guidelines. This manual would include information designed to help the caller develop and apply choreography which would provide a pleasant dance experience for the dancers. This book would also contain limited examples of good and bad choreography. The book you are reading is the result of that project.

The various chapters of this book are designed to provide information directly related to improving the dance experience for dancers. The original brainstorming for this book seemed to lean toward a collection of choreographic puzzle material, with many "Do's and Don'ts". However, as ideas were discussed and research intensified, it became apparent there was a vital need for material concerned with helping callers create a smooth flowing dance with just the right touch of excitement and challenge.

This book contains a considerable amount of information intended to help callers gain an appreciation for the factors which contribute to a smooth dance experience for the dancers. Also included is information on what dancers perceive as difficult and why they view certain choreography as difficult and other dance material as not difficult.

Many callers call the way they learned to dance. If they do not study the mechanics of smoothness and difficulty the result can be uncomfortable dancing which is both unsmooth and too difficult. Callers who began calling prior to the early 1970s learned to call during the time many of the moves used today were created. They had the opportunity to add moves to their repertoire slowly and were able to develop a feeling for the smoothness and flow of the material as they learned to use the new moves. Student callers learning to call today do not have this opportunity. The amount of information available to the modern caller which must be learned is staggering and the calling methods used today are very different from the calling methods of the early days.

It is part of every callers' job to provide an enjoyable dance experience to whatever group he/she is calling to. This includes Contra, Basic, Mainstream, Plus, Advanced, Challenge, or any other program. The dance material should include smooth flowing choreography spiced with just the right amount of challenge and 'puzzle solving'. It has been said that we can judge the success of our program by watching the dancers' feet. If they are coming in, we are doing well. If they are going out, we are not doing well. The information in this book is intended to help callers keep those feet coming in.

A considerable amount of the information in this book has been gathered from CALLERLAB documents and handouts and from technical papers prepared by various callers. As will be seen, a major portion of the information in this document concerns Smoothness, Body Flow, and Choreographic Difficulty. Much of the information on Smoothness came from work done by Jim Mayo and John Kaltenthaler. Most of the information on Tempo came from a tempo workshop conducted by Don Beck, Jim Mayo, John Hendron, Shawn Cuddy, and Everett Mackin with the assistance of dancers from their area. The chapters on difficulty include work done by Mike Jacobs, Bill Peters, and John Sybalsky. Committee Chairman Jerry Reed drafted, compiled, and edited all the information presented in this document. Special thanks are appropriate for the very fine editing assistance provided by Jay Klassen, John Kaltenthaler, Jim Mayo, and Kenny Farris.

Many members of the Choreographic Applications Committee have provided information for this document. A special thank you is appropriate for Elmer Claycomb (CAC Vice Chairman), John Kaltenthaler, Jay Klassen, Jim Mayo, Bill Peters, Kevin Robinson, and Jerry Reed (CAC Chairman).

CHOREOGRAPHIC GUIDELINES
CHAPTER 2
SMOOTH DANCING

INTRODUCTION
This document is one of very few which examines the subject of smooth dancing. Very little has been written on this subject, partly because the sensation of smooth dancing is dependent on many factors which are difficult to separate and consider independently. For the most part, each dancer experiences smoothness in his/her dancing independent of other dancers. There are factors which affect all dancers, but the net effect on each dancer will be different.

Smoothness is the comfortable blending of the dancers from one move to the next while moving in time with the music. There are two key conditions of smooth dancing. First, the movement must be physically comfortable allowing the dancers to move in natural ways. Second, the action should allow the dancers to match their steps to the beat of the music. It is generally agreed there is no such thing as perfectly smooth dancing, no matter what type dancing is being performed. There are stops, starts, and awkward movement in all forms of dancing.

From these two key conditions comes the definition of smooth dancing:

> "DANCE ACTION WHICH ALLOWS THE DANCERS TO MOVE COMFORTABLY, WITHOUT ABRUPT CHANGES OF DIRECTION OR EXCESSIVE STOPS, WITH STEPS THAT MATCH THE BEAT OF THE MUSIC."

It is not easy to define the actual feeling of smoothness. It is very subjective and can be different for different dancers at the same dance. It can even be different for the same dancer at different times and situations. One dancing experience may be considered smoother than another by one dancer while another dancer in the same square may perceive the experience to be less smooth. A major contributor to this difference is today's choreography. The development and application of the moves and formations used by modern callers have changed the feeling of the dance. In traditional square dancing the tendency was to fit the dance action to the phrase of the music. Since most dancers were familiar with the dance action and the timing of the music, they were able to adjust the flow of the action on an individual basis, thus producing a smooth flowing dance action.

One of the main goals of a caller is to bring as much smoothness as possible to the dancers. A caller's selection of music, dance material, and delivery of the moves should be directed toward providing a smooth dance experience. A big factor in the feeling of smoothness is the difficulty of the choreography. If we are trying to get the dancers through an especially difficult series of moves we are probably also providing extra helping words and extra time to help them succeed. Doing this will help them get through the material, but it will also significantly impact smoothness and timing. While it is not advisable to provide a continuous diet of this type choreography, there are circumstances when smooth dancing is purposely sacrificed for programming considerations. It should be noted that when callers sacrifice smooth dancing they should be aware they are doing so and consider the impact this decision will have on the dancers.

FACTORS AFFECTING SMOOTHNESS
There are seven principle factors which contribute to the feeling dancers describe as "smooth dancing." Because these factors are closely intertwined they are extremely hard to describe or demonstrate separately. In this document we will isolate and describe the way in which these factors contribute to the feeling of smoothness. Discussions here will certainly not provide all the information available nor which could be presented. We will merely provide a starting point for each caller's study of the subjects presented.

The principle factors affecting square dance smoothness are:

- TIMING
- TEMPO
- BODY POSITION
- HAND AVAILABILITY
- ANTICIPATION
- ACCURACY OF EXECUTION
  - FAMILIARITY OF MATERIAL
  - ADEQUACY OF TRAINING
  - SPACE AVAILABLE
- KINESIOLOGY
  - BODY MOVEMENT
  - BODY RELATIONSHIPS
  - CALL DESIGN

In addition to the factors listed above, there are other elements which have the potential to impact the perception of smoothness. Each dancer's general health, level of concentration, and mood will help determine whether he/she will perceive the choreography as either smooth or not smooth. These factors will also help determine if they perceive the choreography to be difficult. While the caller can't control these factors, he/she must be aware of them and be able to recognize when they are major factors affecting smooth dancing. Since these individual factors are beyond the caller's control they will be discussed only in very general terms.

The general health of each dancer can impact his/her perception of smooth choreography by slowing reaction time, making it hard to hear/understand the caller, or in other ways directly related to individual health. Stiffness or pain will certainly influence the feeling of smoothness.

Each dancer's level of concentration can be affected by outside factors including personal worries or preoccupation with other thoughts. Concentration, or lack of it, can impact smooth dancing by delaying reaction to calls or by causing them to not hear calls. The caller may be able to enhance the dancers' concentration by using various techniques designed to get their attention. These techniques include increasing clarity of delivery (diction), increasing volume of the voice, using lively music, calling shorter tips, or other vocal or programming tools to get the dancers' attention. If the caller is able to increase their attention, the increased concentration level can help offset the other factors affecting smoothness.

Each dancer's general mood can affect smooth dancing in the same manner as the factors listed above. Moods, like concentration, can be influenced by outside factors and can also help to offset the effects of the other factors. The same techniques used to increase concentration may also be employed to improve the mood of the dance.

The principle factors affecting smoothness over which the caller can exercise considerable control during any particular dance session include: Timing & Tempo, Body Position and Hand Availability. A discussion of these factors will be presented in this chapter. The factor of Anticipation will be discussed in Chapter 3. As will be seen, the caller's control over Anticipation during any particular dance session will be limited to implementation of already established dancer expectations. Information about Accuracy of Execution is included in Chapter 4. The subject of Selection of Moves, which brings together Body Position and Hand Availability, relates closely to another separate topic, Degree of Difficulty. Both of these topics will be discussed in separate chapters.

TIMING & TEMPO

The terms Timing and Tempo are used when discussing how we use music. They are closely related and both contribute significantly to the feeling of smoothness. Many callers confuse tempo with timing and often use the terms incorrectly. Timing is the relationship between key words of the square dance command and the dancing action, measured in beats of music. Tempo refers to the speed of the music and is expressed in the number of beats per minute (BPM).

TIMING - The goal of timing is to allow the dancers to start moving on the first beat of the musical phrase and then to move smoothly and without interruption until the dancing action has been completed. If callers "clip" their timing, the dancers are not allowed enough time to execute the moves with comfort. They will rush, lunge, or jump from one move to the next with little or no grace and style. The result will be rough dancing with the dancers merely performing a series of geometric patterns with little or no regard for the music or the rhythm of the dance. The time at which the caller delivers the command (move) should provide the dancer adequate thinking time in order to execute the move to the beat of the music.

In order to understand timing, the caller must have a general understanding of music and the structure of the musical phrases of the music being used. While this is obviously true for singing calls, it is equally important, albeit not as obvious, for patter calling. Understanding timing requires a great deal of discipline by the caller and in many instances will require a total rework of the currently used skills of many callers.

There are three parts to timing: COMMAND TIME, LEAD TIME, AND EXECUTION TIME.

COMMAND TIME: The amount of time required to give the command (move) to be executed, generally, should take no more than 2 beats. There are some exceptions to this two beat rule. For example, SPIN CHAIN AND EXCHANGE THE GEARS. A good exercise to help develop the ability to deliver moves in two beats is to practice saying just the commands (moves) with different music so the commands become automatic and never (seldom) take more than two beats to deliver. When performing this exercise the caller should merely concentrate on delivering the moves in not more than two beats and not be concerned with the choreography.

LEAD TIME: The amount of time the command (move) is given prior to the dancers beginning the execution of the move. Generally, this should be limited somewhere between 2 and 4 beats with 2 beats being the norm. This may also be thought of as 'reaction time', that is, the time it takes the dancers to react to the caller's instructions. One reason the caller may give more lead time is when using other than 'standard formations and arrangements.' Another reason for additional lead time is the use of moves which require more than two beats to deliver. For example, "SIDES FACE, GRAND SQUARE" should be delivered on beats 5, 6, 7, & 8 so the dancers can start the move on beat 1 of the next musical phrase. One difficulty for most callers learning to use timing in this way will be developing the ability to instinctively identify the 8 beats of the musical phrase.

EXECUTION TIME: The most precise of the three elements of timing, Execution Time is defined as the amount of time, measured in beats (steps) of music, required to dance the move comfortably. Timing values have been developed and documented through many hours of research and dancing. The research by CALLERLAB's Timing Committee included dancing the moves over and over until a consensus on how many steps were needed was reached for each of the moves on the various lists. Timing charts are available through the CALLERLAB Home Office.

When using a standard 8 beat phrased piece of music the anchor beats are 1 & 5 primary and 3 & 7 secondary. In this case the caller should strive to deliver most moves (2 beat Command Time and 2 beat Lead Time) on beats 7 & 8 so the dancers begin to move (dance) on the first beat of the musical phrase. Unfortunately, most callers take the 1st and 5th beat for themselves and let the dancers fend for themselves. When using singing calls, many callers will start the opener using this phrase calling technique but then revert to using the anchor beats, 7 and 8, for themselves. Many singing calls provide examples of callers doing this.

The entire concept of timing should be considered as part of the overall use of music. Other factors which should be included in the study of the use of music include a careful consideration of smooth dancing and proper body flow. These additional factors are discussed elsewhere in this document.

An additional consideration in the discussion of timing is the concept of "stacking calls." This is where the caller delivers more than one move before the dancers have had adequate time to complete the previous move. This requires the dancers to "stack" the moves and will lead to "clipped timing" with the dancers running to keep up. To the extent practical, "stacking" should be avoided.

One of the most pleasant dance experiences is the blending of moves in a pattern which allows the dancers to glide from one move to the next without having to stop and start, and without rushing through the dance action trying to 'catch up' to the caller. The music provides the rhythm (tempo) of the flow (one step to each beat of music). The timing (delivery) of the moves should allow the dancers time to execute each move comfortably, without rushing or stopping to wait for the next move. Most dancing today is done at a tempo between 124 and 130, (some are faster and few slower), therefore, the dancers are taking one step for each beat of music and that step takes about ½ second. The caller must control his/her delivery within that half second or the calling will be off by enough to cause the dancers to stagger and not dance smoothly.

There is a school of thought that ALL choreography should be preplanned and read from cue cards or recited from memory. When this is done, and if it is done with proper phrasing in mind, it is possible to give the dancers the first beat of the musical phrase throughout the entire dance sequence except where split phrasing must be taken into consideration. In today's choreography, however, there are many moves which are less than 8 beats and in some instances use less than an even number of beats to complete. When the caller uses these moves, some adjustments will have to be made in timing to make the dance routine smooth. For example, if we start in a static square and call "HEADS, SQUARE THRU FOUR," it should take 10 beats for the dancers to arrive at their corner with a right hand available. If we follow with "SWING THRU," it adds 6 beats to the sequence for a total of 16 or two musical phrases. If the caller gives the command to "SWING THRU" on beats 7 & 8 of the first phrase, the dancers are given the command too early and will tend to rush the move. This is "clipped timing" on the part of the caller. If the command to "SWING THRU" is given on beats 1 & 2 of the second phrase the caller is providing proper timing. If the next command is given on beats 7 & 8 of the second phrase, both the caller and dancers are back on phrase with the dancers getting the first beat of the third phrase for the next move.

If this sounds complex, confusing, and impossible, be aware that learning to apply proper timing is many things, including a lot of study and considerable effort, but it is not impossible to achieve. It is rare to find callers who are able to consistently deliver the commands on the proper beat to give the dancers the first beat of the musical phrase. Many callers are simply not aware of proper timing techniques. This is not to say that dancers won't have a good time dancing to these callers, it merely means that the dancers could enjoy the dancing experience even more if they were allowed to dance with proper timing. Can this be done? -YES! Is it easy? - NO!.

Consider your own experience when dancing to other callers. If their timing was good, you were unaware of the passage of time during the dance, it seemed to fly by and you were not physically tired but surprised when the caller announced the last tip. On other occasions, you may have tapped your watch to see if it had stopped because the dance was "dragging." In this case the caller was probably using bad timing by either being too late with the commands creating stop and go dancing; or too early, forcing you to rush to keep up. Which kind of caller are you? Which kind do you want to be? Watch the dancers when you are calling, do they seem to be waiting for you, are they running to keep up, or is their dancing smooth flowing?

Proper timing requires application of the three elements (Command, Lead, and Execution Time) so the dancers can flow from one move to the next without stopping to hear the next move and without rushing in order to keep up. Degree of Difficulty (discussed in another section of this book) must also be considered when dealing with the concept of timing. As noted above, when using difficult (extended) choreography, timing may suffer. Using bad timing will contribute to dancers feeling tired and, as discussed above, may also contribute to dancers leaving the dance early.

One measure of a caller's proficiency is the ability to bring dancers to the point they are dancing "difficult" material with proper timing. Breaks in proper timing are appropriate for teaching, workshopping, or when required by special programming techniques. However, the goal of each caller should be to deliver the moves in a manner which will allow the dancers to complete the choreography with proper timing.

<u>TEMPO</u> - The generally accepted tempo used in today's dancing is from 124-130 BPM with the average about 128 BPM. In a recording studio the tempo is controlled by the leader of the band. At a square dance, the tempo is controlled by the caller. Most square dance records are recorded in the range of 124-130 BPM. The caller is responsible for adjusting the tempo as required for any particular dance. This is accomplished by use of the variable speed mechanism on the turntable. If working with a live band the caller should have direct control of the tempo used by the musicians.

Several very significant aspects of tempo have been identified and confirmed through observations of experienced callers and workshops specifically designed and organized to study tempo. We will present some of the more important conclusions.

> When dancing to different callers who are all using the same record set at the same tempo, dancers report noticeable differences in "speed." These differences are attributed to delivery style and the use of filler words and small differences in timing.
>
> When dancers perform a long sequence of moves without any music, they settle on a tempo of about 120 BPM. When promenading to a tape with segments recorded at tempos ranging from 115 to 135 BPM, dancers report that 115 BPM feels "slow" and 135 BPM feels "too fast." A tempo of 120 to 130 BPM is reported as "comfortable."
>
> When dancing to different callers using the same record set at 124 BPM and each caller calling a segment of the record, the dancers again found noticeable differences in the sensation of "speed." As with our previous conclusion, these differences seemed to result from delivery style. That is, some callers used more filler words while others used an essentially prompting style with fewer filler words. One observation has been that those callers who use more filler words also tend to use slightly tighter timing. This increase in the sense of "speed" is also evident when the same caller uses a record set at the same tempo to call first with a prompt style then with added filler words. Dancers and observing callers agree the timing appears to be tightened slightly when extra words were added.

When dancing to the same caller using the same delivery style at two tempos (128 BPM and 132 BPM), the dancers report that 128 BPM was comfortable while 132 BPM is noticeably less comfortable. If the caller is also less comfortable at 132 BPM the calling will be affected making it less smooth (well timed) which will result in the dancers having to wait longer.

Dancers who move as a unit when dancing standard choreography at a tempo of 124 BPM seem to become noticeably more "ragged" and not move as a unit when less familiar (extended) choreography is used at the same tempo (124 BPM). Dancing is also ragged when standard choreography is used at faster tempos above 130 BPM. Dancers who normally step to the music begin to be "off beat" when the tempo becomes too fast (above 128 BPM).

Most dancers seem to be comfortable dancing at tempos in the range of 118 to 128 BPM. At tempos above 128 BPM, many dancers find the dancing to be too fast and most seem to agree that 128 BPM would be too fast for the entire dance, although they would enjoy it for a tip or two during the dance. Dancers report experiencing differences in "speed" during the course of a dance even with the caller using the same tempo for all music. This is due to tightened timing. The conclusion is that timing is at least as important as tempo in determining the sensation of "speed."

Even though tempo has a strong affect on the feeling of the dance, even more important is the interaction between tempo and timing. They are not the same, but together they determine whether the dance feels comfortable and smooth; or rushed and not smooth. Adjustments of timing can make slow music feel fast and fast music feel slower. This attribute of timing can be used to enhance the feeling of the dance by adding excitement without actually increasing the tempo of the music. Many experienced callers have become experts in the application of this calling skill.

BODY POSITION

All square dance action, when reduced to the most basic elements, is movement of one dancer in relation to another. The movement may be a passing action or a turning action with or without hand contact. The position of the dancers at the beginning of the action and the body flow established by the choreography are important (perhaps even critical) contributors to the sensation of smoothness. Because these two elements (body position and body flow) are so closely related and nearly inseparable in any discussion of smoothness, they will be treated as one subject.

In traditional square dancing body flow was not as big a concern as it is today. There were fewer moves, formations, and arrangements. Personal styling was more prominent than today and dancers were normally very familiar with the dance action. Because of this familiarity, dancers were able to adjust their action to make inherently awkward sequences relatively smooth.

The introduction and use of modern formations and moves has brought an increased possibility of introducing body flow problems into our choreography. Moves such as "SPIN CHAIN AND EXCHANGE THE GEARS" for instance, includes arm turns, turning stars, and passing actions all in one move. This complexity is also evident in other moves and becomes even more of a concern when dealing with sequences using moves with the same relative body flow. This situation leads to a condition known as "overflow."

In order to make dance action as smooth as possible the caller must choose material which allows the dancers to smoothly move from one move to the next. This means the dancers must be positioned at the completion of one move so the transition to the next can be accomplished without abrupt changes in direction. In attempting to meet this requirement the caller must consider both the space available for the move and the type movement, whether straight line or rotational.

Consider the following sequence: "Heads STAR THRU, SQUARE THRU 3/4, CENTERS IN, CAST OFF 3/4." At the end of the SQUARE THRU 3/4 the head men are offset from the side ladies a full body width to their left. In order to do the "CENTERS IN" action both must move sideways to their right, requiring considerable adjustment. An "ALLEMANDE LEFT" following the "SQUARE THRU 3/4" also requires an adjustment, but in this situation the adjustment is a right rotation to put left hands together, rather than a sideways sliding motion.

Within each move there is nothing we can do to affect smoothness. The point at which the action is important to us is the transition from one move to the next. It is this transition where we can influence smoothness. The best transition occurs when body position at the end of one action is exactly where the next action begins and if hands are used in both moves, the ending position of the first move does not make the first hand of the following action unavailable for either men or women.

A puzzling question which comes up in discussions about smoothness is the skill dancers have in making action look smooth even though the action "ought to be" awkward. Part of the explanation is found in the timing of the delivery or the skill of experienced dancers to anticipate the next action. More often the explanation is that our concept of what "ought to be" is too restrictive and does not include enough factors.

For example, consider the following which has been considered a "no-no" and includes same hand (shoulder) passing: "Heads SLIDE THRU, SQUARE THRU 3/4, DOSADO." In this example, the "SQUARE THRU 3/4" ends using the right hand and "DOSADO" is a right side to right side passing action. Our traditional concept says "right hand actions should not follow each other." In this situation, however, the hand is not used for the following action, the body position is in-line, and the sequence is, in fact, smooth and very comfortable.

Body flow and position are important elements of dancer enjoyment and we should strive to bring as much smoothness to the dancers as practical to improve the dancing experience. The fact is, however, it is not always possible to ensure body position will be perfect. One reason is that flow, position, and smoothness are not the only elements of enjoyable square dancing. The elements of variety, interest, and choreographic challenge are also very important. Sometimes a deliberate violation of smoothness rules provides excitement and variety which are of equal importance to the dancers. Unfortunately, this excuse is overused when explaining why dancing is not smooth. The rules of smoothness are complex and too few callers concern themselves with how to bring smoothness to the dancers.

Adjustments of body position by the dancers is one reason the elements of smoothness have been so difficult to identify. Good dancers do not stand still while waiting for the next action; they are in motion even when not executing a called action. Moving to accommodate the action of other dancers is part of being an experienced dancer. Experienced dancers have learned what is likely to follow what and rely on their ability to anticipate to help create smooth action.

This anticipation is one factor which makes sequences such as "SQUARE THRU 3/4, LEFT ALLEMANDE" feel smooth. At the end of the "SQUARE THRU 3/4" the active dancers are slightly offset to the left and out of position for the "LEFT ALLEMANDE." Dancers have come to anticipate the "LEFT ALLEMANDE" and most will adjust their body position to make this sequence smooth. The element of anticipation is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

There are times when callers disrupt this anticipation with deliberate surprises designed to "trick" the dancers. An example of this type choreography is: "SQUARE THRU 3/4, THERE'S YOUR CORNER, PASS THRU." When callers do this they should be aware why this programming technique is viewed not only as more difficult but unsmooth as well. Some dancers view this type gimmick calling as 'dirty pool' and feel the caller is deliberately fooling them. This type choreography is designed to catch the dancers off guard. If it succeeds, they will fumble somewhat, this will disrupt the flow of the dance and cause them to perceive the material as unsmooth.

KINESIOLOGY

Another factor affecting the feeling of smoothness is the way dancers move in completing the action of the move. The technical term for the study of this body movement is "Kinesiology." There are several factors which contribute to the study of how dancers move.

Body Movement

Smoothness requires that the dancers maintain their balance and manage their momentum while moving from one move to the next. When a sequence requires a change of direction, enough time (beats of music) and enough space must be allowed to permit the dancers to make that change without losing their balance.

Movement in square dancing is either turning or moving past another dancer. When moving past without a turning action the momentum is a concern only when stopping the forward motion. When turning, the momentum is controlled either by the interaction between dancers or by the individual dancer's shift of weight and turning forces on the feet. Very sharp changes (90 degrees or more in one or two steps) require strong turning forces and feel less smooth than more gradual direction changes.

Another aspect of body movement which is of concern is called "overflow." The callers' tendency to use sequences which are forward flowing sometimes leads to dancers turning too much. Whenever a sequence requires dancers to turn more than 3/4 or 270 degrees there is a risk they will become disoriented. Some sequences are smooth and comfortable for some dancers but involve extensive turning by others. Consider the following classic example: "Heads LEAD RIGHT, VEER LEFT, COUPLES CIRCULATE, WHEEL AND DEAL, VEER LEFT, COUPLES CIRCULATE." This requires a 540 degree rotation for the heads, after the LEAD RIGHT, while the side men are running to keep up.

Body Relationships

This aspect of kinesiology refers to the positioning of dancers and the interaction between dancers. This interaction has been referred to as "counter dancing." The most important facet of counter dancing is the need for dancers turning around each other to counter balance each other. The contact between dancers must provide firm pressure at the pivot point of the turn to allow dancers to counter act the centrifugal force which tends to pull them apart.

Another important aspect of counter dancing is the part inactive dancers play. To ensure smoothness, inactive dancers must be aware of the path of the active dancers and be ready to adjust their position to help them. An example of this is evident in the sequence "heads PASS THRU, SEPARATE AROUND ONE TO A LINE." To help the heads the sides will move forward as the heads separate, then move apart and back to make room for the Heads to come between them to form the lines of four. Properly done this is a circular motion that anticipates the forward motion that is likely for the new lines.

Call Design

The aspect of kinesiology about which very little can be done is the body movement difficulties built into some moves. The design of many moves is such that the positioning and movement of the dancers leads to awkward action. For the most part there is very little callers can do to counter the troublesome action of any specific move other than not use that particular move. Callers must, therefore, be aware of the potential problems built into these moves and be ready to help the dancers overcome these problems. This can be done by providing sufficient practice for the dancers to develop counter measures for the bad aspects of the move. Callers can also learn to use the move in a way to lessen the impact of the unsatisfactory features of the move.

An examination of SQUARE THRU will illustrate how the design of some moves can lead to awkward or unsmooth dancing. Most callers have been frustrated by the tendency of some men to do a COURTESY TURN or to turn to the left with the second hand of the SQUARE THRU. This tendency can be traced directly to the design of the move. The natural inclination of dancers is to balance a rotation in one direction with a rotation in the opposite direction. In SQUARE THRU from normal facing couples women are able to do that, a right rotation on the first hand then back to a left rotation on the second hand. The men, however, rotate to the right on the first hand then tend to turn to the left instead of the turn to the right as required for the second hand. When they complete the right turn after the right pull by they tend to counter this right turn with a turn to the left after the left pull by. This tendency is increased if they do not let go of the woman they are holding with a left. This will in many cases, if not noted and countered by the instructor, continue into a COURTESY TURN by the men. In many cases the men become so out of balance they need to hold onto the women for support.

HAND AVAILABILITY

Another element to be considered in our discussion of smoothness is hand availability. Square dance actions involving two dancers can include any of the following hand use requirements. Use of the same hand by both dancers, use of opposite hands, use of both hands, or no use of hands at all. When determining whether any sequence will be smooth, callers must consider hand availability for all dancers involved in the dance action. As will be demonstrated below, some of the previously established rules for determining hand usage have been reevaluated. As with so many other calling skills this element of smoothness can require a certain amount of study and work on the part of the caller. It will, however, be time well spent.

Historically callers were taught that the use of alternating hands (or shoulder passes) was required to assure smoothness in square dancing. There are, however, many sequences in common use today which violate this 'rule of alternating hands' and yet feel quite smooth and comfortable. Consider, for instance, the sequence "STAR THRU, RIGHT AND LEFT THRU." If use of alternating hands was required for comfort, this sequence could not feel smooth for the men, yet it does. WHY?

An explanation can be found in an interpretation of the rule, as follows: "The hand to be used next must be 'available' at the completion of the preceding action to feel smooth." If we consider this interpretation when looking at the above example, we see that at the end of the "STAR THRU" the man's right hand is in the correct position for the "RIGHT AND LEFT THRU" and is, therefore 'available'.

If we merely switch the sequence of these two moves, the sequence becomes very unsmooth. That is, if we call "RIGHT AND LEFT THRU, STAR THRU" the man's right hand has just been used to courtesy turn the lady and is therefore, not 'available'. In this case the sequence would be considered as unsmooth by the men.

Another sequence which violates the same hand (shoulder) rule is, (from eight chain thru formation) "PASS THRU, TRADE BY." In this sequence the dancers coming to the center after the "PASS THRU" must again pass right shoulders for the "TRADE BY." This sequence is used extensively and is smooth. WHY? This time the answer is in the body position of the dancers. After the "PASS THRU" they are slightly offset and in a position to "PASS THRU" using right shoulders in the center very comfortably.

One more example is (from an eight chain thru formation), "TOUCH 1/4, SCOOT BACK." This sequence requires those dancers coming into the center to use the right hand three times in a row. Again this sequence is used extensively and is very smooth, because of body position. After the "TOUCH 1/4," the in-facing dancers step forward, are slightly offset, and are in a position which allows a very smooth use of the right hand for the turn ½. To complete the SCOOT BACK the center dancers step forward, again offset from the outside dancers and join right hands again.

The move "WEAVE THE RING" requires alternating shoulder passes and is very smooth. When compared to the sequences above we see that in some instances alternating shoulder passes are comfortable and in other instances passing the same shoulder (or using the same hand) twice in a row is also comfortable. We must, therefore, conclude that more than just alternating hands or shoulders must be considered when studying why a sequence is, or is not, smooth.

There are some sequences which are not only unsmooth but also downright awkward. Included is the sequence (from an a eight chain thru formation) "PASS TO THE CENTER, CENTERS SLIDE THRU, SQUARE THRU FOUR, LEFT ALLEMANDE." In this sequence the left hand has just been used by the centers to 'pull by' and is not 'available' for the LEFT ALLEMANDE. The action in this sequence is such a classic that few, if any, callers actually use it.

CONCLUSIONS

As can be seen from the information presented here, smoothness is very subjective and difficult to define. It can be very different for different dancers at the same dance and even different for each dancer at different times during any particular dance. The factors influencing smoothness are varied but are also closely related. Any time spent in the study of these factors and how they effect the dancers will be time well spent. Mastering smoothness is only one of the factors required by today's callers. It can, however, greatly influence the enjoyment of the dancers if properly implemented.

CHOREOGRAPHIC GUIDELINES
CHAPTER 3
ANTICIPATION

INTRODUCTION
Callers have, for years, been telling dancers, "don't anticipate!" and dancers, for just as long, have been anticipating. Are they disregarding the advice from the caller? Or are the callers giving bad advice? The answer to both questions is the same; YES and NO. While it is true we do not want the dancers to anticipate every thing we call, it is just as true there are times we do indeed expect them to anticipate. There are times we even count on their anticipation to succeed with a particular programming technique or gimmick. Anticipation is one of many factors which can contribute significantly to the feeling of smoothness. There are times when the anticipation of experienced dancers is the single most important factor which makes a particular sequence feel smooth. The same sequence, if danced by inexperienced dancers, could feel awkward.

TYPES OF ANTICIPATION
In this chapter we will discuss three types of anticipation. Each contributes in its own way to the feeling of smoothness. Any time spent studying the way each can affect smoothness will be time well spent. The three are:

Encouraged Anticipation
Conditioned Anticipation
Instinctive Anticipation

ENCOURAGED ANTICIPATION is the anticipation which callers promote through the use of lead in, sometimes rhyming, words. These phrases are added to alert the dancers of what is coming next. The caller uses them, fully intending the dancers to anticipate and execute the next move. In many cases these prompting phrases are used to help the dancers through choreography which may be at or near the limit of some dancer's capability.

One problem with using these phrases is that some callers tend to use them so often the phrases become automatic. These callers habitually use the phrase(s) even if they do not intend for the dancers to actually do what is called.

An example of this is when callers overuse a phrase such as "RIGHT & LEFT GRAND, meet your girl a pretty little thing, SWING and PROMENADE." In this instance, the callers do not intend for the dancers to actually SWING every time they do a RIGHT & LEFT GRAND, but they have used the phrase so often that the delivery is automatic and they say the words every time they use RIGHT & LEFT GRAND. Some callers are even surprised that the dancers SWING each time.

If not overused, the element of encouraged anticipation can be used as an effective programming tool. The following are examples of encouraged anticipation:

"Forward up and back you reel, PASS THRU now _____" -
This lead in phrasing is designed specifically to warn the dancers to expect (anticipate) the next move, "WHEEL AND DEAL."

From any parallel two-faced lines -
"FERRIS What??"
In this example the dancers are being encouraged to shout "WHEEL" as they complete the FERRIS WHEEL. In fact, FERRIS WHEEL is called so often from two-faced lines, that many dancers will do a FERRIS WHEEL even if WHEEL AND DEAL is called.

"SQUARE THRU 3/4, there' s your corner___" -

The caller will not even have to say it, the dancers will do a LEFT ALLEMANDE. This example is such a classic that even if another move is called, at least some of the dancers will do a LEFT ALLEMANDE anyway. This particular phrase has been used for years to add excitement to the dance. Even with all the use it has had, it is still able to add excitement, primarily because of the anticipation of a successful conclusion of a sequence. This excitement is heightened if there was a perceived challenge to the sequence and the square succeeds. As with any gimmick, however, a little goes a long way. DON'T OVERDO IT!

"SWING THRU, without a stop ___" -

In this example, the expected move, of course, is SPIN THE TOP. The caller will generally say "SPIN THE TOP," and many dancers will most likely say it as well. Again this is such a classic that at least some of the dancers may do a SPIN THE TOP even if another move is called.

Callers need to be aware of the way Encouraged Anticipation can cause problems for the dancers. The primary problem is if the caller uses a phrase, leads the dancers into one action, and then calls a totally different action. Examples of this include:

"Forward up and back you reel, PASS THRU, BEND THE LINE" -

The dancers are expecting WHEEL AND DEAL, therefore, the BEND THE LINE will catch them off guard.

"SQUARE THRU 3/4, there' s your corner, PASS THRU" -

As noted above this is such a classic that many dancers will try to do a LEFT ALLEMANDE even if another move is called. Because LEFT ALLEMANDE is called so often after "there's your corner," the flow of the dance will be upset even if the dancers do not actually do a LEFT ALLEMANDE.

"SWING THRU, without a stop, SINGLE HINGE" -

As noted above, the dancers are expecting to hear "SPIN THE TOP." If any other move is called, many dancers will start to do a SPIN THE TOP. They may or may not complete the SPIN THE TOP, but in either case the smooth dance action will be destroyed.

Callers need to be aware not only of the effect of encouraged anticipation but also when they are using the phrases which lead the dancers to anticipate a subsequent move. To lead the dancers to one expectation and then to deliver another move not only causes jerky unsmooth dancing, it is also unfair to the dancers. An effective method to gain this awareness is to record a dance and review the tape, listening for those phrases.

<u>CONDITIONED ANTICIPATION</u> is closely linked to Encouraged Anticipation. Conditioned Anticipation is the anticipation callers have instilled in dancers through continued and consistent use of the same sequences, with or without rhymes. Experienced dancers have danced these sequences so often they are 'conditioned' to respond by executing the expected move. The main difference between Encouraged Anticipation and Conditioned Anticipation is that in the former the caller will actually say the rhyming words (phrases) while in the latter the caller will merely use the same sequence of moves over and over, with or without rhymes or phrases.

Because many dancers have been 'conditioned' to expect (anticipate) certain moves to always follow others in a specific sequence, they will find choreography which disrupts the anticipated sequence not only as unsmooth, but difficult as well. This is especially true if the caller does nothing to warn the dancers of the upcoming change. This 'conditioning' seems to be most obvious when dancers dance to only one caller and that caller nearly always uses the same sequences.

When dancers are caught off guard by a disruption of the expected sequence they consider the choreography to be awkward and clumsy even though it may be technically smooth and forward-flowing. In addition, experienced dancers may sense the caller has tricked them on purpose, especially if the caller has not provided any warning of the impending change from the expected sequence. This type choreography has been named 'gotcha' calling. There are times when 'gotcha' type choreography is used as a programming tool since many dancers find a limited amount of this type calling amusing or entertaining, provided it is not over used. A real danger, however, is that many dancers consider the use of 'gotcha' choreography as very offensive. As with any gimmick, however, it can easily be overdone. This type choreography almost always results in compromised timing and a feeling of unsmoothness. A valid question when using 'gotcha' type choreography is, "Is the gimmick value truly worth the loss of smooth dance action?"

Experienced callers have come to realize, perhaps only intuitively, that many callers tend to repeat certain sequences. The following are examples: "SWING THRU, BOYS RUN, BEND THE LINE"; "CENTERS IN, CAST OFF 3/4"; "TOUCH 1/4, FOLLOW YOUR NEIGHBOR, and SPREAD"; or "DOUBLE PASS THRU, TRACK II." What this means is that most experienced dancers have been conditioned, albeit inadvertently, to expect (anticipate) that some moves will almost always follow certain other moves. As with some traditional dancing this Conditioned Anticipation will lead to a familiarity with the choreography. On the surface this appears to indicate that although this type calling may be smooth, it may also tend to become boring. What this means to us during this discussion, is that when we do decide to change the anticipated sequence, we should not only allow additional lead time but we must also be aware of what the expected sequence is and where to provide positive helping words, as required.

Callers need to be aware that this 'conditioning' takes time; inexperienced dancers probably have not yet been 'conditioned' to the same degree as experienced dancers. Therefore, new dancers may not be able to react as smoothly as experienced dancers when the caller expects them to respond automatically with Conditioned Anticipation. This concern is even more important when calling to a group composed entirely of new dancers. Even when calling to a mixed group, the caller should take into account the fact that some of the dancers may not yet be 'conditioned.' This situation may require the caller to slightly adjust delivery techniques, timing, and phrases to provide a pleasant dance experience to most (if not all) the dancers.

If a caller decides to undo some of the 'conditioning' of a certain set of dancers, the best advice is to proceed very slowly and continue to use the anticipated sequences with decreasing frequency. As the dancers become more aware of other possible sequences, use of the anticipated sequences should be reduced, although not totally abandoned. A potential problem here is that the new sequences may merely replace the previous expectations. Because of this potential problem, the caller must be constantly aware of the sequences he/she is using and if these sequences are also becoming routine. One way to maintain this awareness is to occasionally tape a dance and listen to ourselves calling. This can help uncover any new problems with over-usage or repetition.

Conditioned Anticipation can also be used to great advantage as an aid to programming. By recognizing the dancers' desire to succeed and by using this anticipation, a caller can build excitement into a sequence which would otherwise be routine. Many successful callers have perfected this technique and can bring an extra thrill to the dance by ensuring all dancers succeed with a sequence, perhaps with a bit of challenge, and then employ a 'conditioned' response with a well known get-out.

The following are examples of sequences utilizing Conditioned Anticipation as a programming tool:

From #0 Double Pass Thru (#0P) -
"SQUARE THRU 3, Find your corner! LEFT ALLEMANDE!"

As noted in the section on Encouraged Anticipation, this is an overused and trite get-out, but, when used sparingly and at an appropriate time, can bring added excitement to the dance. As with many of the Conditioned Anticipation sequences, many dancers will start to do the Left Allemande, even if it is not called.

From a static square (SS) -
"Heads, SQUARE THRU _____"

The hoped for response is that the dancers not only SQUARE THRU FOUR but also shout "FOUR" as they execute the move.

From #0 Right Hand Ocean Waves (#0W) -
"SWING THRU, BOYS RUN, BEND THE ____"

Here the dancers are encouraged not only to BEND THE LINE, but also shout "LINE" as they do.

During a singing call -
"LEFT ALLEMANDE, WEAVE THE RING..."

The caller will then begin singing the chorus, expecting the dancers not only to SWING, but also to PROMENADE while he/she is singing. There are some callers who disagree with this use of Conditioned Anticipation, but the fact remains, it is being used this way quite extensively.

From #0 Right Hand Ocean Waves (#0W) -
"SWING THRU, BOYS 'R' 'U' 'N' (spell out 'RUN')"

This gimmick works because the dancers have been 'conditioned' to expect RUN to follow BOYS in this sequence. This 'spelling bee' gimmick can be expanded to include many other examples. As with any gimmick, though, it is a hit only if the dancers succeed and if it is not overused. So the advice here is, "take it easy, don't overdo, and make sure they make it."

Other examples of Conditioned Anticipation include:

From static square (SS) -
"Heads (sides) LEAD RIGHT, CIRCLE TO A LINE"

"CIRCLE TO A LINE" has become so routine that some dancers will actually circle to a line, even if some other move is called. There does seem to be a growing tendency, however, to call something other than "CIRCLE TO A LINE" after LEAD TO THE RIGHT. This is beginning to slightly diminish the Conditioned Anticipation in this example.

From #1 Right Hand Ocean Waves (#1W) -
"WALK & DODGE, PARTNER TRADE"

The PARTNER TRADE violates the smooth flow of the belle (right hand) dancer yet it has been called so often that dancers have been conditioned to expect the WALK & DODGE to be followed by PARTNER TRADE. Because of this anticipation, this technically uncomfortable sequence is in fact smooth when danced by experienced dancers. This is because they have been 'conditioned' to adjust their action to compensate for the bad flow of the move. Smoothness in this sequence depends on timing. Any delay in delivery of the PARTNER TRADE will destroy the CONDITIONED ANTICIPATION and the habit based smoothness. When danced by dancers who have not been 'conditioned' to expect the PARTNER TRADE this same sequence will most likely be considered awkward.

From completed double pass thru -
"CENTERS IN, CAST OFF 3/4"

Because the CAST OFF 3/4 flows very smoothly, callers have been using this sequence for years, in some cases to the exclusion of any other move after the CENTERS IN. As with CIRCLE TO A LINE, many dancers will start the CAST OFF as part of the CENTERS IN action. Because this action is so quick, the caller must provide quick, clear, and distinct direction if he/she wants anything other than "CAST OFF 3/4."

From allowable formations -
"REMAKE THE THAR, REMAKE THE THAR" or
"ALL 8 SPIN THE TOP, ALL 8 SPIN THE TOP" -

Both these moves are called twice in a row so often the caller must provide extra lead time before the dancers start the second move if he/she intends to call something other than a repeat of the move. Even with additional lead time there are some dancers who will actually do the move twice. This will surely lead to breakdown of the squares involved.

From #0 Eight Chain Thru (#0B) -
"MAKE A RIGHT HAND STAR, heads (sides) STAR LEFT"

Here the Conditioned Anticipation is the LEFT HAND STAR. This much used sequence is very smooth and therefore could also be considered as Encouraged Anticipation. This combination has been used so often that most callers would be hard pressed to come up with another move to follow the RIGHT HAND STAR. This is not necessarily bad; the combination is **VERY SMOOTH** and calling anything else will most assuredly cause at least some disruption of the flow of the dance.

From #1 RH Ocean Waves (#1W) -
"FOLLOW YOUR NEIGHBOR, and SPREAD"

As pointed out in the Plus Standard Applications book, SPREAD is called after FOLLOW YOUR NEIGHBOR so often that the caller may need to add, "don't SPREAD" if a SPREAD is not desired.

Conditioned Anticipation is such a powerful force that dancers can learn to compensate and adjust the action so that even technically unsmooth sequences can appear and feel smooth if danced often enough. It has been argued that callers should not call these technically bad sequences. The other side is that since we do call them and the dancers can learn to adjust, we should continue to call them. As with so many other aspects of calling, each caller needs to make an individual decision about these types of sequences.

INSTINCTIVE ANTICIPATION is the anticipation created by the dancer's momentum as they move from one move to the next. We expect a forward moving action as we move in any situation, whether that is walking, jogging, doing aerobics, or dancing. This is why we can stumble very easily when bumped from the side while walking. If another person unexpectedly comes through a door we are about to open, we are not only startled but can almost lose our balance because of the unexpected change of direction as we are forced to suddenly back up.

When applied to square dancing, this principle means that most dancers expect a forward-moving action to continue in a forward direction. The momentum of Instinctive Anticipation is why facing dancers usually anticipate the next move will require them to work with the dancers they face. Callers are well advised to learn how Instinctive Anticipation can affect smoothness and to know when their choreography includes sequences during which the dancers will experience this anticipation.

Consider the following examples:

From #0 Facing Lines (#0L) -
"PASS THRU, WHEEL AND DEAL"
is smoother than
"PASS THRU, U-TURN BACK."

From #0 Facing Lines (#0L) -
"STAR THRU, RIGHT AND LEFT THRU, VEER LEFT"
is smoother than
"RIGHT AND LEFT THRU, STAR THRU, VEER LEFT"
The VEER LEFT in this sequence requires the girls to make a drastic lunge and recovery change of direction.

From #0 Eight Chain Thru (#0B) -
"SWING THRU, SINGLE HINGE, SCOOT BACK"
is smoother than
"FLUTTER WHEEL, TOUCH 1/4"

From a static square (SS) -
"ALLEMANDE LEFT, DO SA DO, MEN STAR LEFT" or
"ALLEMANDE LEFT, DO SA DO, MEN PROMENADE"
is smoother than
"LEFT ALLEMANDE, DO SA DO, MEN STAR RIGHT"

From a static square (SS) -
"ALLEMANDE LEFT, BOX THE GNAT, LADIES PROMENADE"
is smoother than
"LEFT ALLEMANDE, DO SA DO, LADIES PROMENADE"

From a static square (SS) -
"Heads (sides) RIGHT AND LEFT THRU, FLUTTER WHEEL"
is smoother than
"Heads (sides) FLUTTER WHEEL"
If the same choreographic effect is desired, add "PROMENADE ½" before the RIGHT AND LEFT THRU in the first sequence.

From eight chain thru -
"PASS TO THE CENTER, RIGHT AND LEFT THRU, PASS THRU"
is smoother than
"PASS TO THE CENTER, PARTNER TRADE"

From #1/2 Eight Chain Thru (#1/2B) -
"STAR THRU, CALIFORNIA TWIRL"
is smoother than
"STAR THRU, ROLL HALF SASHAY, U-TURN BACK"

From #0 Facing Lines (#0L) -
"RIGHT AND LEFT THRU, PASS THRU, PARTNER TRADE, ROLL, RIGHT & LEFT GRAND"
is smoother than
"PASS THRU, PARTNER TRADE, RIGHT AND LEFT THRU, LEFT ALLEMANDE"
The anticipation in the second sequence is for the dancers to continue to work with those in front of them. This is fine for the end dancers, but is disastrous for the centers.

CONCLUSIONS

Several of the examples cited above can be put into more than one category. This is true partly because they flow very well and therefore, callers tend to use them frequently. In other words, we like to add excitement to the dance by encouraging the dancers to respond in a certain way (Encouraged Anticipation). We also tend to consistently use certain sequences because they are smooth and forward flowing (Conditioned Anticipation). The dancers tend to move along the forward motion established by the sequences (Instinctive Anticipation).

The time and effort spent in studying the anticipation factors discussed in this chapter will certainly be a worthwhile investment. This study will provide a firm base to work from while callers gain practical knowledge of these factors through experience. Because of the complexity of these factors, a firm base is extremely important. We as callers can benefit greatly if we establish a good foundation by becoming a good dancer with a lot of experience (floor time) dancing to different callers. Since we learn a considerable amount from other callers, we can gain a great deal by emulating the best qualities from each of these callers.

All three categories of anticipation are powerful and valuable tools the caller can use to great advantage. There is, however, not only a danger of overuse, but also a danger of trying to interrupt the anticipation to the detriment of the dance. Use of a move other than the anticipated one will not only contribute to a decline in smoothness but will also be viewed as more difficult. All callers would be well advised to study not only the effects of anticipation, but also how to employ each of the positive aspects. As has been pointed out anticipation can be a very effective programming tool to bring excitement and success to the dancers.

CHOREOGRAPHIC GUIDELINES
CHAPTER 4
ACCURACY OF EXECUTION

INTRODUCTION
In this chapter we will be presenting ideas concerning the dancers' ability to accurately execute choreography. The main emphasis, therefore, will be on the dancers' proficiency. This in no way relieves the caller from the responsibility to provide well timed smooth flowing dance material. This topic is directly related to and is a part of Smoothness and Body Flow.

Each dancers' ability to execute moves accurately will impact not only his/her perception of whether the dancing experience is smooth, but can also affect the other seven dancers in the square. Each dancers' ability will also affect his/her perception of the difficulty of the choreography. (Note: a discussion of difficulty is included in Chapter 6, Degree of Difficulty). If dancers are not familiar with the move, they will experience trouble executing the move within the timing of the move. The same thing happens if they are not familiar with the formation and/or arrangement from which the move is called. This will disrupt the timing and smooth flow of the choreography. In an attempt to help the dancers succeed with unfamiliar material, the caller may provide additional helping words or increased lead time. This will lead to stop and go dancing which will not be smooth.

> Note: While it is true the caller has very little control over the dancers' execution accuracy during any particular dance, he/she can contribute significantly to the dancer's training during classes, workshops, and regular club dances over a period of time.

The factors contributing to the dancers' ability to accurately execute the moves include: 1) Familiarity with Moves, 2) Adequacy of Training, and 3) Space Availability.

FAMILIARITY WITH MOVES
When dancers are very familiar with the action of the choreography being used, they will react instinctively and automatically. This familiarity must extend not only to the action of the moves, but also to the choreographic applications, i.e. 'formations and arrangements,' being used.

Two critical factors in determining smoothness are body position and timing. Both of these factors are directly related to the accuracy with which the dancers execute the choreography. If they are familiar with the moves they will complete the action in the correct position within the timing provided by the caller. Differences in the precision of movement and rate of execution are reasons why the sensation of smoothness may differ, at the same dance, from one dancer to another.

The caller can increase the dancers' familiarity with the moves during any single dance or workshop session by providing choreography which progresses from the familiar to the unfamiliar. Expanding familiarity takes time and practice. The caller's responsibility is to provide sufficient repetition so the dancers can experience error free practice until they are familiar with the moves and applications. The amount of practice required will, of course, differ from dancer to dancer. The dancer's responsibility is to attend club dances, workshops, or classes with enough regularity to benefit from the practice provided by the caller.

Certain moves seem to have the potential to cause more problems than do others. For instance, from a ½ Right Hand Column, the move BOYS RUN will result in an off set eight chain thru formation if the girls do not step (slide) into the position vacated by the boys. In this example, even though the dancers are considerably out of position, most dancers will be able to execute the next move and adjust to the proper position.

Another instance where RUN can cause a problem is evident in the following: From 0 (or ½) out Facing Lines; "boys (girls) RUN." There is, in this situation, a tendency for many non-running dancers to turn around instead of sliding into the position vacated by the dancer doing the RUN. When this happens, they will be facing the wrong direction, the square will be in the wrong formation (lines of four instead of ocean waves), and the dancers will not be able to do the next move. With help from the caller, such as helping words or delayed timing, or help from more proficient dancers in the square, most squares will survive this situation; the timing of the dance, however, will suffer. Again, the caller must make a decision as to the most appropriate course of action.

Some other moves can create more serious problems if the dancers do not execute them properly. For instance, in the move "SPIN THE TOP," if the ends do not move up to meet the centers, the dancers will be so far out of position that no recognizable formation will exist. The caller now has two choices; 1) ignore the dancers who are out of position or 2) cue "Ends (Boys or Girls) MOVE UP." In the first case the square(s) with the out of position dancers will almost certainly breakdown. If the cue is not given as part of the command in the second case, the timing of the sequence will be destroyed, impacting the entire floor. This is another situation where the caller must make a decision 'on-the-fly' as to the best (least bad) choice.

Another example which seems to be getting more common is evident when dancers do a FERRIS WHEEL instead of a WHEEL AND DEAL (or vice versa) from parallel two faced lines. Again the caller has the choice of whether to ignore the squares with the dancers out of position or take the time to get the centers into the correct position. Ignoring the incorrect squares will surely lead to breakdown of those squares. Correcting the centers, however, will impact every square on the floor by destroying the timing of the dance. As in the example above, the caller must decide whether to sacrifice some or all of the squares. This problem can be reduced if the caller provides a clue to the center dancers to "face The outside couple" or a similar clue. As a note of interest, this problem is so common that it is possible every square will make the same mistake. If this happens, many experienced extemporaneous callers will simply continue to call, picking up the choreography at the mistaken position.

Other common examples of improper execution are certainly possible. Our purpose is to provide a starting point for callers to explore factors affecting Accuracy Of Execution. A good exercise is to very closely observe dancers while another caller is calling. Watch for these and other moves which cause problems. This will help develop an awareness of the possible problem areas and will help prepare the caller to deal with these problems when he/she encounters them while calling.

ADEQUACY OF TRAINING

Most experienced callers agree that teaching new dancers is one of the most important tasks of any caller. Unfortunately, this very important job is sometimes left in the hands of our newest, most inexperienced callers. Many times the advice is given: "If you want to learn to call, get a square together and teach them to dance." Many of today's talented and successful callers started this way. However, this method of learning to call is not recommended due to the complex nature of the skills required to learn today's calling skills. A better way to learn to call is under the guidance of an experienced and competent caller. A proficient caller should not only understand the theories, mechanics, and techniques of today's calling methods, but be able to teach them as well.

If new dancers are not provided adequate training, their ability to accurately execute the moves will be severely diminished. The effects of poor training are not only far reaching but long lasting as well. If a certain set of dancers have been poorly taught, they will more likely experience difficulty when exposed to new concepts or an expansion of the moves they have previously learned. An often quoted saying is "Practice makes perfect." More correct statements are "Practice makes permanent" or "Perfect practice makes perfect." Therefore, it is understandable how incorrect practice (repetition) can make poorly trained dancers. Because of this, poor training can lead to dancers not only executing the moves improperly but can also lead to unsmooth dancing.

Most experienced callers agree that the time and effort required to re-learn (re-teach) an improperly learned (taught) move is considerably more than the original learning time. This is true primarily because dancers learn to execute moves through repetition and then execute them more or less automatically. Learning to undo this automatic reaction and replace it with the correct action is not only very difficult, but also very time consuming.

An example of this problem is evident when dancers have been taught "When you SLIDE THRU it is just like a STAR THRU, except you don't use hands, you will end facing the dancer beside you." This explanation is true, of course, only from zero (normal) BG facing couples, but is not true from any of the other possible starting formations & arrangements (i.e. #1/2 Facing Lines of Four, #1/2 Eight Chain Thru and formations with two men or two women looking at each other).

For instance, from a #1/2 Eight Chain Thru (#1/2B), the call to "SLIDE THRU" will result in lines of four facing out. Inadequately trained dancers will tend to attempt to "fix" the square, even though it is not broken. This generally means they will try to adjust to form #0 Facing Lines (#0L).

Another, less obvious, example of this situation is seen when dancers have not been taught the proper way to do an EIGHT CHAIN THRU (FOUR). If the outside couple has not been taught to Courtesy Turn, the formation quickly turns into an elongated circle with the dancers doing a reverse RIGHT AND LEFT GRAND type maneuver rather than the EIGHT CHAIN THRU. While it is true this may not cause significant problems in the execution of the choreography, it is a question of whether the goal is merely to 'solve the puzzle' or to 'dance' the material being called. If the next action requires facing couples, the chance of failure is high. Our goal is to help the caller develop the mastery needed to provide 'dance' material and not just 'puzzle solving' skills. Callers need to be aware of where problems in training can occur and to ensure the dancers receive proper instruction.

The best remedy for inadequate training is, of course, to ensure dancers are trained by competent teachers. This is much easier said than done. Many callers are simply not trained in proper teaching techniques. Professional instructors usually spend a considerable amount of time learning not only what they are to teach and how to teach it, but also how people learn what they are being taught. Teachers should be keenly aware of the various ways their students learn and be prepared to employ assorted teaching techniques as required to fit a certain set of students. This extremely important skill is, unfortunately, one facet of calling which is often ignored by many experienced as well as new callers.

Most callers have not received formal training in how to teach others to learn. Most who have acquired this type training have received it outside their caller training experience. This can be training as school teachers, business instructors, or some other situation requiring teaching skills as part of regular job skills. There have been several projects to collect and present information to help callers learn how to teach. The challenge is two-fold; 1) to get the callers interested (motivated) to study the material, and 2) for the callers to find the time to undertake this study. Because of the extremely important nature of this vital calling skill, all callers would be well advised to commit to a study of how to teach people to dance.

SPACE AVAILABILITY

The dancers must be provided enough space to smoothly execute the moves. If they are not provided the required space a situation known as "squeezing" will occur. This squeezing occurs when the dance action is crowded into a tight area. When this happens the dancers will experience interference from adjacent dancers and they will not be able to move smoothly. This will not only disrupt the smooth flow of the dance, but can very easily cause some confusion and impact the dancers' ability to accurately execute the moves.

For example, from a double pass thru formation, the moves LADIES CHAIN or FLUTTER WHEEL result in very tight action and the center dancers experience squeezing. This same situation occurs, although to a lesser extent, when RIGHT AND LEFT THRU, LADIES CHAIN or FLUTTER WHEEL are called from an eight chain thru formation.

If the floor is crowded or the hall is small, squeezing will occur in tidal waves or tidal two-faced lines as well. Generally, it is a good idea to avoid use of moves and formations which lead to squeezing.

CONCLUSIONS

There are many factors which affect the dancer's ability to accurately execute the moves. Most of these factors evolve over a long period of time during the dancers' training. These long term factors include their familiarity with the moves and the training they receive. Most of the problems which dancers experience with execution can be traced directly to how well they were trained. The caller can control one of the factors (Space Availability) to some extent by avoiding moves and formations which lead to "squeezing." The caller can also strive to use familiar moves from familiar formations and arrangements, this will also help to increase the accuracy with which the dancers execute the moves.

CHOREOGRAPHIC GUIDELINES
CHAPTER 5
CHOREOGRAPHIC MANAGEMENT

INTRODUCTION

In the early days, square dances were made up of complete "set-piece" dances. In a typical tip, a caller was expected to call the same routine four times in a row - twice for the heads and then twice for the sides. Most callers in those days memorized everything they called. The amount of variety in those early dances was quite limited when compared to today's choreography.

The basic dance actions (arm turns, stars, wheels, pull-bys, etc.) have changed little over the years. Even so, the amount of choreographic variety available today using these actions has increased tremendously. Dancers today have little appreciation for a program in which every tip consists of a single routine called four times through. Therefore, today's callers include more choreographic diversity than was once required. Much of the success of a modern caller is the ability to deliver choreography which is varied, unpredictable, and interesting with just the right amount of challenge. The purpose of this chapter is to help callers develop and improve their ability to create this type of choreography.

Creating interesting and smooth flowing square dance material requires an understanding of the flow of choreography. This understanding is an aspect of Choreographic Management. Developing this understanding into a working knowledge with the ability to apply this skill while calling requires many hours of study and 'on-mike' practice. The task of understanding the flow of modern square dance choreography may well seem overwhelming. This chapter includes information pertaining to this very important skill.

The dance material we create can be quite varied in its structure and purpose. It may be smooth flowing and designed to provide a relaxing break in the dance. It may be a series of "HOT-HASH" sequences intended to provide some fast-paced dance action. It may even be a sequence designed to teach or provide practice for a specific move. There are so many varied uses for our choreographic sequences that it would be impractical to try to list all of them here. Suffice to say that the skills required to create square dance choreography are the same, regardless of the purpose. While it is true that a much more detailed study of the factors presented here may be required for certain applications, every caller needs to develop these skills to the degree required for his/her calling style.

The requirement for an understanding of the mechanics of square dance choreography has been with us as long as callers have been creating square dance material. Over the years there have been volumes of choreography written. Before the advent of extemporaneous calling methods, this written material provided the raw data for both memory callers and callers who actually read the material they called. Even the use of modules drew heavily on this written material.

A significant advantage of memorizing or reading whole sequences, and to a lesser extent using modules, is that the author can analyze his/her choreography after it is written and before calling it. This provides the opportunity to review and modify or expand the choreography before delivering it to the dancers. The development, growth, and use of extemporaneous calling methods, such as sight or mental image, has reduced the opportunity to analyze choreography before it is called. The extemporaneous caller must make micro-decisions about his/her choreography while actually calling. To do this successfully requires a thorough understanding of the factors involved in the management of choreography.

Extemporaneous callers are not relieved of the requirement to study and understand the factors involved with the mechanics of choreography. Quite the contrary, they must develop the ability to manage the flow of choreography while actually calling. This requires both an understanding of what CAN be called and an appreciation for what SHOULD be called. The former relates to what is 'legal', or appropriate, while the latter relates to smoothness and difficulty.

Part of the effort in mastering extemporaneous calling techniques includes a considerable amount of memory work. This memory work is different from that which is required of "memory" callers, but it is memory work just the same.

Our purpose in this chapter is to provide a starting point for a study of the factors required to create modern square dance choreography. We will concern ourselves with the skills required to create smooth flowing and enjoyable dance material. Another related subject is that of RESOLUTION. This is the process employed to bring the square to a correct Left Allemande, Right and Left Grand, or return to home.

The resolution process is extremely important and must be studied and practiced to acquire a working knowledge of how to resolve the square correctly. A mistake in the resolution process is usually more evident to the dancers than a mistake in the material prior to resolution. Consequently, many callers devote an inordinate amount of time to the resolution process. This can lead to a reduction of the time spent learning the process to create enjoyable, smooth flowing, and challenging dance material. The information presented in this chapter is designed to introduce the tools required to create the "good-stuff" which comes before the resolution process and the "Left Allemande."

DEFINITIONS

Some confusion can exist because of the incorrect use of some of the terms associated with the mechanics of choreography. An example of this confusion is evident when the term "position" is used when referring to "formation." To help alleviate this confusion CALLERLAB established definitions and usage of certain terms used when discussing choreography.

These definitions include:

FASR - The four elements required to identify a SET-UP at any instant. The four are: Formation, Arrangement, Sequence, and Relationship.

ARRANGEMENT - A description of how the boys and girls are positioned within a particular formation. There are six (and only six) possible Arrangements within any symmetric formation.

ARRANGEMENT AWARENESS - The study and understanding of an established library of Arrangements. Each caller will select those Arrangements within the capability and desire of the dancers. The caller must have an understanding of the dynamics of each Arrangement including its limitations.

CHOREOGRAPHIC MANAGEMENT - The ability to create variety in square dance choreography by moving dancers fluidly through various formations and arrangements. Creating smooth flowing choreography with just the right amount of challenge.

FORMATION - The geometric shape of the square combined with the dancer's facing direction. Typical formations include: facing lines, eight chain thru, trade by, right hand ocean waves, diamonds, hourglass and others.

FORMATION AWARENESS - The study and understanding of an established library of formations. Each caller will select those formations within the capability and desire of the dancers. The caller must have an understanding of the dynamics of each formation including its limitations.

POSITION - The position of the dancers within a formation. Typical positions include: ends, centers, leaders, trailers, beaus, belles, outsides, insides, points, in-facers, out-facers, very centers, and others.

RELATIONSHIP - A description of how each man and woman is paired or "related" to another opposite gender dancer within a particular SET-UP. Each dancer can be paired with one of four opposite gender dancers; original partner, opposite, right hand dancer, or left hand dancer.

SEQUENCE - A description of how the boys and girls are positioned numerically within a particular SET-UP. The boys and girls can be either in a Counter Clock-Wise (CCW) direction or a Clock-Wise (CW) direction. When positioned in a CCW direction, they are said to be "IN" sequence. When positioned in a CW direction, they are said to be "OUT" of sequence.

SET-UP - A specific configuration of the square at a snapshot in time. To be complete a SET-UP must include all four FASR elements. The following are examples of SET-UPs which have been assigned CALLERLAB approved names. The approved names are:

ZERO BOX - the FASR which exists after either the heads or sides Square Thru.

ZERO LINE - the FASR which exists after either the heads or sides Lead to the Right and Circle to a Line.

LEAD TO THE RIGHT BOX - the FASR that exists after either the heads or sides Lead to the Right.

ACROSS THE STREET BOX - the FASR which exists after either the heads or sides do a ½ Square Thru.

STANDARD APPLICATIONS - The most commonly used formations and arrangements. The standard positions are those from which a move may be called with nearly 100% success at an open dance or festival. (Note - see the "STANDARD APPLICATIONS" books, available from the CALLERLAB Home Office, for a listing of these formations and arrangements).

SYMMETRIC CHOREOGRAPHY

In a square that is symmetric there will ALWAYS be exactly four dancers (two boys and two girls) in any half of the square. The other half of the square will contain only the "opposite" of these four and a line drawn from any dancer through the flagpole center of the square will intersect that dancer's opposite, or "mirror-image counterpart." Opposites are: #1 man/#3 man, #2 man/#4 man, #1 lady/#3 lady, and #2 lady/#4 lady. Each group of four dancers will be positioned in EXACTLY the same way as their opposite. Any square which lacks this balance of dancers and position is unsymmetric. Any symmetric move or sequence of moves will always direct opposites to do corresponding and equal maneuvers. Even though almost all of today's choreography is symmetric, it is important that callers be able to recognize whenever squares become unsymmetric; whether deliberately or accidentally.

As part of our discussion of Choreographic Management it is appropriate to examine certain limitations to using the FASR terms to describe the state of a square. The first, and major, limitation is that FASR designations can only be used only for describing symmetric SET-UPs. However, since the overwhelming majority of today's choreography is symmetric, this limitation is mostly academic.

The other limitation is a practical application of the FASR definition for all possible SET-UPs. There are numerous SET-UPs used today which have not been officially identified or named. This means that although these SET-UPs can theoretically be defined by use of the FASR terms, from a practical standpoint it has not been done, nor does it need to be at this time.

DEFINITION OF FASR

FORMATION - this is the backbone of square dance choreography. Of the four elements (FASR) which define the SET-UP of a square, formation is the most obvious. CALLERLAB has identified and named over 75 formations. Each formation has two distinctive characteristics; geometry and facing direction.

The geometry of a formation is what defines the shape of the square. Examples of geometric shapes include: static square, general lines, stars, diamonds, and hourglass; just to name a few. Several popular formations form a 2x4 rectangular shape. These include lines of four, parallel ocean waves, columns, and eight chain thru. Other formations such as tidal waves and tidal two faced lines are in a 1x8 geometric shape.

The characteristic of facing direction is critical to determination of formation. Many different formations are possible from a 2x4 geometric shape merely by changing Facing Direction. For instance, the formations "ocean waves" or "columns" can be created from facing lines merely by having specific dancers turn to the appropriate Facing Direction. Similarly, from parallel right hand ocean waves the command "those facing out, U-Turn Back" changes the formation to facing lines. From here the command, "everybody turn 1/4 to the left" changes the facing lines to a right hand column. It is important to note that most right hand formations have a corresponding Left Hand counterpart.

Several popular formations have been given letter designators including:

- L = Facing lines
- B = Eight chain thru
- W = Right hand parallel ocean waves
- T = Trade by
- F = Right hand 2-faced lines
- P = Double pass thru
- M = Completed double pass thru
- C = Right hand column
- D = Right hand diamonds
- Q = Right hand 1/4 tag
- R = Right hand 3/4 tag

Formation is the most important and most obvious element in determining which moves can legitimately be used next in any sequence. Equally important is what can not be used next, based on the formation which exists at the end of any particular move.

ARRANGEMENT - a description of how the boys and girls are positioned within a particular formation. There are six (and only six) possible boy-girl placement positions within any symmetric formation. The six possible symmetric Arrangements for facing lines are shown in table 5.1.

ARRANGEMENT # (CALLERLAB)	BOY/GIRL ARRANGEMENT	DESCRIPTION
0	BGBG	All couples 'normal', girls on the right of the boys
½	GBGB	All couples ½ sashayed
1	BBGG	Left side couples two boys, right side couples two girls
2	GGBB	Left side couples two girls, right side couples two boys
3	BGGB	Left side couples normal, right side couples ½ sashayed
4	GBBG	Left side couples ½ sashayed, right side couples normal

Table 5.1

Understanding and recognizing different arrangements is important because arrangement is a major factor in determining difficulty and to some degree, the appropriateness of which moves may be called from a particular formation. For example, the move "Star Thru" may only be called from arrangements where opposite gender dancers are facing each other. From facing lines, for instance, "Star Thru" can only be called from the following arrangements: "0L", "1/2L", "1L", and "2L." It can not be called from the other two, "3L" and "4L" because in these two arrangements same gender dancers are facing each other. Even more restrictive, is the move Right and Left Thru in the Mainstream Program. Here the only arrangement of facing lines from which a "Right and Left Thru" may legitimately be called is "0L."

The six arrangements for ten formations have been identified and are presented in the *Names & Pictograms of Selected Formation Arrangements* chart developed by CALLERLAB. An understanding of the correlation between arrangement and formation is critical in the development of choreography. This correlation is a major factor in determining the difficulty of most choreography and is, therefore, the single most important element when considering how difficult a particular sequence will be. As discussed in Chapter 8, Success With Difficult Choreography, the determination of difficulty is critical in our quest for material which will not only keep the dancers challenged but will keep them dancing as well.

The correlation between arrangements and formations and a listing of the most common starting positions have been documented in a series of caller aides called STANDARD APPLICATIONS books. The concept and definition of standard applications and the information in the books is based on the fact that for each move there are certain formations and arrangements which are used much more frequently than others. These most frequently used applications have been listed in the books. These valuable manuals were compiled by the Choreographic Applications Committee and are available from the CALLERLAB Home Office.

The ability to recognize and to move into and out of various formations and arrangements is absolutely required to create smooth flowing, interesting, and challenging material. While it is helpful to know the arrangement designations, it is much more important to be able to set them up and to get out of them whenever desired. Knowing the designations will help when discussing specific choreographic applications. Few callers actually commit the designations to memory. Many do, however, keep a copy of the *Names & Pictograms of Selected Formation Arrangement* chart handy. If a caller is using an extemporaneous method of choreographic management, this means having a working knowledge of the information presented here and the ability to apply that information while actually calling.

SEQUENCE and RELATIONSHIP

The final two elements of FASR, Sequence and Relationship, come into consideration only during the resolution phase of any choreographic sequence. Since a discussion of resolution is beyond the scope of our presentation here, we will provide only a brief discussion of these terms.

SEQUENCE

"Sequence" is used to designate how the boys and girls are positioned numerically within a SET-UP. Sequence exists any time a square is frozen in a particular formation and arrangement and encompasses the sequence of both the boys and girls.

When using symmetric choreography, there are only four Sequence possibilities. The boys can be positioned in two ways; Counter Clock-Wise (CCW) (1,2,3,4) or Clock-Wise (CW) (4,3,2,1). The same is true for the girls. When dancers are positioned CCW, they are considered to be "in sequence." When they are CW, they are considered to be "out of sequence." With the possibility of the boys being either in or out of sequence and the ladies being either in or out, a total of four Sequence possibilities can be identified.

Sequence is very difficult to identify while actually calling. However, since this element is considered only during the process of resolving the square, it is of no great concern to the extemporaneous caller while actually calling.

Again - SEQUENCE IS CRITICAL ONLY FOR RESOLUTION!

RELATIONSHIP

The final term of the FASR definition is "Relationship." We use this term to identify the relationship of specific dancers with other specific dancers in the square. For instance, all with original partners, all with original opposites, heads with original partners and sides with original opposites, and so forth.

As with Sequence, Relationship is very difficult to recognize while actually calling. There are, however, often clues to help the caller establish Relationship, including similarity in dress. Even though this clue usually only provides an indication of pairing with original partner it does help to make recognizing Relationship slightly easier than determining Sequence.

Using symmetric choreography, there are only four possible Relationships for each dancer; with original partner, with original opposite, with original right hand dancer, or with original left hand dancer. When the head men are with their partners, the side men must be paired with either their partner or their opposite. When the head men are with their corners, the side men must be paired with either their corner or their right hand lady.

As with Sequence, extemporaneous callers need not be concerned with Relationship until they are ready to resolve the square.

Again - RELATIONSHIP IS CRITICAL ONLY FOR RESOLUTION!

SUMMARY OF FASR

The four elements of FASR form the fundamental building block upon which square dance choreography is built. The FASR designation system is primarily a communications tool. The symbols used to designate FASR are useful in enhancing communications between callers. Familiarity with the four elements of square dance SET-UPs improves choreographic understanding and analysis by any caller. The important skill of formation and arrangement management depends on a working knowledge of the correlation of the elements of FASR with each other. The critical skill for an extemporaneous caller is the ability to set-up and get-out of a wide variety of SET-UPs using a variety of interesting choreographic sequences with just the right mix of smoothness and difficulty.

SUMMARY OF CHOREOGRAPHIC MANAGEMENT

The essence of Choreographic Management is the ability to recognize and utilize the dynamic nature of the square as we are creating our choreography. The ability to do this is divided into two general subjects: Formation Awareness and Arrangement Awareness. The purpose is to create interesting and smooth flowing choreography. Regardless of the choreographic control method a caller chooses to use, he/she must learn how to set-up and get-out of a variety of formations and arrangements.

One of the first steps in a study of Choreographic Management is developing full knowledge of the choreographic consequences of the moves being used. This knowledge must include starting formation, definition, hand usage, and ending formation. This information is available through various sources including CALLERLAB approved definitions. When compared to the task of learning the other factors required for Choreographic Management, this task is mechanically easier, since it merely entails memorizing the approved definitions for the moves the caller intends to use.

The next step, which will require a great deal more study, is to determine which moves CAN be used after a particular move. Of equal importance is to learn which moves CAN NOT be called after a particular move. Good ways to acquire this skill include watching live dancers, using a shorthand method to diagram choreography, using a set of "dolls" to practice choreography, and using one of the many computer based calling aides. The best way to practice this skill is by actually calling to live dancers under the guidance of an experienced caller.

The final and most difficult step is understanding the factors affecting the smoothness and difficulty of the choreography we are creating. These factors are related to the determination of which moves SHOULD be used. They are not only the least obvious but possibly the least understood and hardest to master of all the factors involved with creating square dance choreography. Smoothness and difficulty are discussed in other chapters of this document.

When calling extemporaneously, callers must make decisions of what to call "on-the-fly." They must be prepared to call a move before the dancers actually complete the previous move. Not doing so results in "stop and go" dancing where the caller waits for the dancers to complete a move, then determines what can/should be called next. A method used by many extemporaneous callers is to develop and commit to memory certain "mini-routines" or "modules" which they know accomplish a specific choreographic objective and fit their calling style and repertoire. They must be able to recognize when the dancers are in an appropriate formation and/or arrangement and must know the choreographic consequences of the mini-routine at the time it is used. Examples of common mini-routines are presented in Table 5.2.

STARTING FORMATION	MINI-ROUTINE	ENDING FORMATION
Eight chain thru or parallel ocean waves	SWING THRU, BOYS RUN, BEND THE LINE	Facing lines
Eight chain thru	TOUCH 1/4, WALK & DODGE, PARTNER TRADE	Facing lines
Eight chain thru	TOUCH 1/4, SCOOT BACK, BOYS RUN	Facing lines
Facing lines	PASS THRU, WHEEL & DEAL	Starting DPT
Starting DPT	DPT, CENTERS IN, CAST OFF 3/4	Facing lines
Facing lines	PT, BEND LINE, RLT, FLUTTER WHEEL	Facing lines
Facing lines	TOUCH 1/4, SINGLE FILE CIRCULATE, TRADE, AND ROLL	Facing lines

Table 5.2

A danger in using mini-routines is that unless the caller purposely alters or limits their use, the dancers will develop a condition known as Conditioned Anticipation. When this happens, the dancers will anticipate the sequence and may in fact execute the routine even if the caller does not call it. (Note - see Chapter 3 for a discussion of how this anticipation can affect the dancers). Another danger is that the caller may not recognize when the dancers are in a "not-normal" arrangement. One of the most common mistakes extemporaneous callers make is the failure to recognize when the dancers are half sashayed or in one of the other four "not-normal" arrangements. One of the consequences of this is that they may call choreography which is not only difficult but may even be inappropriate, such as STAR THRU from #3 or #4 Facing Lines. Calling some mini-routines can, in this case, lead to very awkward, difficult, or even inappropriate choreography. Although not as common, failure to recognize the formation can very easily result in the caller using a move which cannot be done. The mini-routines in Table 5.3 illustrate this point.

STARTING FORMATION	ARRANGEMENT	ROUTINE	COMMENT
Facing lines	BGGB BGGB	Touch 1/4, Single file C8, Boys run, * Star thru	(Start in 3L) * "Star thru" is not possible
Facing lines	GBGB GBGB	PT, Bend line, * RLT, Flutter wheel	(Start in 4L) * RLT is a Gimmick
Eight chain thru	BBGG GGBB	Touch 1/4, Scoot back, * Boys run	(Start in 3B) * Boys run is not possible
Eight chain thru	GGBB BBGG	Swing thru, Boys run, * Bend line	(Start in 4B) * Very awkward for boys

Table 5.3

FORMATION AWARENESS
Regardless of the choreographic control method a caller chooses to use, he/she must learn how to set-up and get-out of a variety of formations. The ability to do this is called Formation Awareness. The purpose is to create interesting and smooth flowing choreography. Mastering Formation Awareness requires both a comprehensive knowledge of the definition of the moves in the caller's repertoire and the ability to use each of these moves in a variety of ways to get into and out of various SET-UPS.

ARRANGEMENT AWARENESS
Callers must also learn how to set-up and get-out of a variety of arrangements. This skill is called Arrangement Awareness and is similar to Formation Awareness. The purpose is the same as Formation Awareness and mastering it requires the same type study and understanding.

Callers who strive to call extemporaneously must realize that any of the six possible boy/girl arrangements can occur within the formations they are using while calling symmetric choreography. They must also learn to move into and out of each arrangement within the formations they use. Recognition of formation is equally (if not more) important to the successful extemporaneous caller. Generally speaking, it is easier to recognize formation than it is to recognize arrangement. Failing to recognize arrangement will, most likely, result in an increase in difficulty while failure to recognize formation will likely result in not only increased difficulty but also in the use of inappropriate moves. For example, "Trade By" from a double pass thru formation, "Coordinate" from a completed double pass thru, or "Cloverleaf" from a column.

CONCLUSIONS
Extemporaneous callers must develop a working knowledge of how each of the moves, formations, and arrangements he/she uses will affect the difficulty of his/her choreography. Consideration must also be made for the smoothness of the choreography being called. These callers also need to be able to quickly and easily set-up and get-out of a variety of formations and arrangements using the moves in their repertoire. An essential skill is the ability to instantly recognize when "not-normal" arrangements exist and the ability to quickly "normalize" the square.

Table 5.4 provides examples of common "normalizers."

START SET-UP	NORMALIZING ROUTINE	END SET-UP
1/2L	PASS THRU, TAG THE LINE, FACE IN	0L
1L	STAR THRU	0P
2L	STAR THRU	0M
3L	PASS THRU, TAG THE LINE, FACE LEFT	*
4L	PASS THRU, TAG THE LINE, FACE RIGHT	0F
1/2B	TOUCH 1/4, BOYS RUN	0L
1B	STAR THRU	*
2B	STAR THRU	0F
3B	TOUCH 1/4, CENTERS TRADE, BOYS RUN	0L
4B	TOUCH 1/4, CENTERS TRADE, GIRLS U-TURN	0L

* = Unnamed F/A - ("normal" left hand 2-faced lines)

Table 5.4

Developing a comprehensive understanding and working knowledge of the factors affecting smoothness and difficulty is an essential skill each successful caller must acquire. These factors include an appreciation and full knowledge of the choreographic consequences of each move a caller uses. It makes no difference which choreographic management method a caller chooses to use, knowledge of both Formation Awareness and Arrangement Awareness is critical.

The successful extemporaneous caller has the ability to create interesting, smooth flowing choreography which is not beyond the abilities of the dancers. Learning this choreographic management method does not relieve the caller from a considerable amount of study and memory work. The extemporaneous caller must have a very keen awareness of the choreographic consequences of each move he/she uses because this calling method requires the caller to implement all these skills at will and "on-the-fly" while actually calling.

CHOREOGRAPHIC GUIDELINES
CHAPTER 6
DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY

INTRODUCTION

In the chapter on smoothness we discovered there are many factors which influence smooth dancing. Another factor which the caller can control and which can significantly impact smoothness is the degree of difficulty of the material he/she uses. As will be seen during our discussion of difficulty, there are many components to be considered when determining whether a certain sequence will be perceived as difficult by the dancers.

As we have previously discussed, dancers respond instinctively and automatically to choreography with which they are familiar. Most experienced callers, when using less familiar (extended) material, will provide additional lead time or helping words to assist the dancers. This will severely impact the feeling of smoothness. Since the dancers will not be able to respond automatically, they will perceive the choreography not only as unsmooth, but difficult as well.

The ability to generate patter choreography in which the difficulty is exactly suited to the experience, ability, and desire of the dancers has become one of the most important skills of a modern caller. This is never an easy task and most times can be impossible to achieve. Callers must be able to correctly assess the skills and preference of the dancers at a particular dance. This task is complicated because the same group of dancers will have a different mix of skill and preference on different occasions. It is the caller's responsibility to provide dancers with a patter program which combines smooth flowing choreography with just the right amount of intellectual challenge. Doing this requires a considerable amount of sophisticated decision making. This process is so important that many caller-coaches today feel lack of this skill is responsible for more caller failure than any other single cause. It has been said also that the lack of this skill on the part of callers has caused many dancers to leave the activity.

In this chapter we will be using the terms "difficult choreography," "degree of difficulty," and "choreographic difficulty." These terms as used here should be interpreted to mean "difficulty of the choreography as perceived by the dancers." Most dancers will describe difficult choreography as "hard." As discussed in other chapters of this document, smooth choreography is a result of many interrelated factors, one of which can be choreographic difficulty. In this chapter our discussion of choreographic difficulty will not distinguish between smooth and not smooth, instead we will concern ourselves primarily with difficult and not difficult choreography.

The ability to create smooth flowing patter choreography with just the right amount of challenge depends on many things: (1) understanding the mechanics of body flow, (2) understanding the dynamics of comfortable timing, (3) the ability to closely match dance actions with musical phrasing, and (4) understanding exactly what makes one series of moves seem harder than another.

The dancers' perception of choreographic difficulty is directly related to both the nature of the body's physical reflexes and the nature (limits) of human memory. When dancers are able to respond to a caller's directions instantly and automatically they tend to think of the choreography as "easy" or "not difficult." If, on the other hand, they are not able to respond automatically they tend to feel uneasy and stressed; this is when they perceive the choreography to be "hard" or "difficult." When they encounter difficult choreography, dancers either "make it" or they don't. In either event, one of three end results is usually present:

> First, they complete the sequence successfully, and because it was "hard" it was also stimulating and fun to accomplish. These dancers enjoy a certain amount of stress when accompanied by a successful end result. A subset of these dancers also tend to accept a higher amount of breakdown, if there are also challenging successes.

A second possibility is that the dancers successfully complete the sequence but find it was too hard to be enjoyable. For these dancers the stress caused by the choreography far outweighs the pleasure of "making it." These dancers tend to stay away from extended, stress producing choreography.

Finally, there are dancers who do not complete the sequence successfully and the square breaks down. When this occurs the dancers find the choreography not only hard, but also impossible. This type choreography is rarely, if ever, pleasant or enjoyable for the average dancer. If dancers are subjected to it without compensating successes, they will surely leave the activity.

It should be pointed out that during any particular dance each dancer can experience all of the above situations at different times during the dance. It is also possible to experience all three situations in the same tip. It is the caller's responsibility to ensure failures which do occur are compensated for, if practical, by sufficient successes. If dancers can't find an acceptable balance of challenge and success they will leave the activity.

The first result described above is something each caller strives for. A caller who can evoke this kind of dancer response on purpose and whenever he/she wants to, is a true master of the art of square dance calling. The truth is, however, no caller can achieve this degree of dancer satisfaction 100% of the time. Therefore, we will limit our discussion to the last two situations. A thorough understanding of why the last two situations occur should help increase the frequency of a caller's accomplishment of the first. While it is true most callers encounter the last two situations regularly, it is also true that few know why. In other words, few callers truly understand the nature of choreographic difficulty nor why dancers perceive choreography to be difficult or "hard." Critical questions to ask of any patter presentation are, "How hard is OK?" and "How hard is too hard?" The answer to these questions is of course important, but of equal value is an understanding of WHY!

Every caller should be able to judge with reasonable accuracy how dancers at a particular dance will rate the difficulty of his/her choreography. This is a sophisticated and highly judgmental calling skill which takes time, experience, and hard work to develop. Most successful callers will sooner or later need to acquire this skill. One of the first steps in this process is to learn exactly what dancers perceive as difficult, what they sense is easy, and why.

When dancers respond to a caller smoothly, automatically, and with no errors they think of the choreography as "easy." At times this type choreography can even seem boring. On the other hand, choreography is thought of as difficult when it causes them to worry or to doubt their ability to successfully complete the sequence, thus causing stress or anxiety. This stress is significantly increased if they feel they are the one who will cause the square to breakdown. Callers need to understand how his/her choreography can create these feelings; successful callers need to learn how to provide a proper mixture of stress and success for maximum dancing pleasure.

CHOREOGRAPHIC DIFFICULTY

There are ten commonly encountered stress producing elements of modern square dance choreography. Most experienced callers will find the first two fairly obvious. The others, on the other hand, are much less obvious but still quite important and able to impact choreographic difficulty. The ten elements are:

1. Unknown moves
2. Known moves infrequently used (unfamiliar moves)
3. Known move from an unfamiliar formation
4. Known move from an unfamiliar arrangement
5. Dancers must remember too much
6. Dancers must keep track of too much
7. Anticipation

8. Smoothness or lack of it
9. Dancers sense of "What is right?"
10. Compounding difficulty by combining difficulty elements

Each of these stress producing elements will be discussed below. These elements are grouped together by cause and effect. Some general conclusions will also be presented:

UNKNOWN OR UNFAMILIAR MOVES (Elements 1 and 2)
People learn to dance through repetition. With moves they hear and practice frequently they develop a kind of conditioned reflex which allows them to respond more or less automatically. This automatic reaction can be developed even for complex, multi-decision moves such as RELAY THE DEUCEY. If they have never heard and are never given a chance to practice a move, this will be an "unknown" move. They will not be able to respond to unknown moves at all. For other moves which they are taught but practice infrequently, their reflexes are not yet automatic. These moves are, therefore, "unfamiliar." Dancers generally respond to these moves in an unsure, cautious, and hesitant manner. They will regard choreography in which unknown or unfamiliar moves are used as difficult. The more these type moves are used, the harder the choreography will appear to be.

Using Unknown Moves (Element 1)
While very few callers use such moves on purpose, they are called quite often. When this happens it is generally inadvertent or due to unfamiliarity with the dancers' knowledge. When a caller calls regularly for a club or workshop group he/she will be very familiar with what they know and what they don't know. In this situation use of an unknown move, is usually an inadvertent slip. The second situation, unfamiliarity with their knowledge, occurs most frequently when a caller is calling for a group he/she does not see regularly, i.e. out of town dates, festivals, conventions, or similar events.

Callers not familiar with the group's knowledge must ask "Can they dance this particular move or can't they?." While it is rare to actually verbalize or even consciously think about an answer, it is a decision which must be made each time a caller uses a particular move. For the most part the answer for each move is obvious based on the advertised program for the dance, i.e., we don't call PLUS moves at a Mainstream dance.

The advent and acceptance of CALLERLAB programs has, for the most part, made the decision of which moves to use at a particular dance much easier. The CALLERLAB programs were intended to create a situation where callers could plan a program for a dance advertised for a specific program with the knowledge that certain moves were allowed and others were not. This system was also intended to provide the dancers with an understanding of the moves which would be used at a specific dance. A common problem now is that although a certain move is allowable, it is not always true that the dancers will be able to dance it.

Even with CALLERLAB programs and standard applications there will always be situations which place the caller "in the hot seat" when it comes to choreographic decisions. One such situation is when dancers attend a dance for which they are not prepared. This happens most commonly when beginners who have not yet graduated show up at a "club" dance. A similar situation exists when dancers who are expecting standard formations and arrangements attend a dance where extended formations and arrangements are used frequently with little or no help from the caller. In both situations the caller is faced with a difficult decision.

Does he/she play it safe and call a dance which is too easy and risk boring the majority or does he/she call to the majority knowing the less experienced dancers will most probably not succeed. If a philosophy of "acceptable" losses is employed, at what point do the losses become not acceptable? These are very difficult decisions which all callers must face each and every time they pick up a microphone. The information presented here is intended to help callers make this decision.

Using a current Periodic Selection or other unknown move can present the caller with this same situation. The best advice in this case is to follow CALLERLAB guidelines for Periodic Selections or other unknown moves. That is, do not use a Periodic Selection or unknown move without at least a walk thru of the move. This would not apply, of course when calling for a group known to have learned the move.

Using Unfamiliar Moves (Element 2)

On any program list there are certain moves which are used much more frequently than others. Because dancers learn to respond automatically through repetition, the moves heard and practiced less often will be less familiar. This is another situation in which the caller must decide which moves are safe and which pose a problem. Every caller needs to develop the skill to successfully adjust choreographic difficulty according to an estimate of what the dancers can or cannot dance. As with unknown moves, this happens most frequently when calling for a group the caller does not see regularly.

Generally, making this decision is much more difficult than deciding which moves they don't know at all. This is true primarily because of the acceptance and use of CALLERLAB program lists for advertising and calling dances. For example, at a dance labeled "MAINSTREAM" the caller would not be expected to use PLUS moves. However, at that same dance he/she could in fact use moves on the MAINSTREAM Program which at least some of the dancers are not familiar with.

Current examples of moves which can be identified as "unfamiliar" for the purpose of this discussion include: FAN THE TOP, HALF SASHAY, and CROSS FOLD from the MAINSTREAM Program and PEEL OFF and CROSSFIRE from the PLUS Program. Because these moves are generally used less frequently than others, the average dancer gets less floor time with them and is therefore, less familiar with them. Because of this reduced practice, dancers perceive choreography containing these moves to be difficult. The more these calls are used, the harder the choreography will appear.

CONCLUSIONS

Unknown and unfamiliar moves are obviously related since both deal with a caller's perception of which moves the dancers know well, which they know less well, and which they know not at all. Because the problems are similar, so are the solutions.

There are times when a caller purposely and with full knowledge of the impact, calls a dance containing choreography which is difficult or even impossible for at least some of the dancers. In this situation the caller must be aware of the impact this can have on the dancers who will perceive the choreography to be too hard. They will be frustrated and unhappy. They may, if subjected to this type choreography for too much of their dancing experience, leave the activity with a very negative attitude toward square dancing. Other dancers at the dance will, most likely, feel some frustration and may also have an uncomfortable dance experience. This is a high price to pay and each caller must be aware of the consequences. An unpleasant dance experience can also result from a caller using only "safe" moves from very predicable positions. This type choreography creates a dance which many average dancers may find boring.

Most callers will not go to the extremes described above. In most cases, callers adjust their choreography to meet a particular situation. For instance, a caller may be able to put together an entertaining, interesting, and fun dance using only "safe" moves by spicing up the program with choreographic gimmicks or showmanship. A caller may also try to equalize a floor by teaching something new or by teaching a contra for the first time. Another strategy might be to use only known moves but to add a touch of spice by showing the dancers some of the variations (extended) these moves are capable of producing. This will undoubtedly be perceived as difficult by at least some of the dancers, but if presented slowly and in an easy to learn manner, most dancers will succeed and enjoy the challenge.

Few, if any, callers can completely avoid making choreography seem difficult by using moves the dancers are not familiar with. Even though there is no perfect solution, each caller should continuously strive to provide the degree of choreographic difficulty which will keep the dancers challenged, happy, and dancing. Each caller should also be aware of which choreography will break down the floor and which choreography will be perceived as boring by the majority. All three situations are appropriate at different times and in different circumstances. It should be the goal of every caller to provide more choreography of the first type than the last two.

UNFAMILIAR FORMATIONS OR ARRANGEMENTS (Elements 3 and 4)
Although these factors are not exactly the same, they are so closely related they should be considered together when discussing choreographic difficulty. "Formation" is the term used to describe the shape of the square and the facing direction of the dancers (facing lines, right hand ocean waves, 2-faced lines, stars, diamonds, hourglass, and others). "Arrangement" is the term used to describe how the men and women are arranged within the formation.

Formations have been labeled with letter designations, such as:

L = Lines of four	T = Trade by
Q = Quarter tag	F = 2 faced line
C = Column	P = Double pass thru
D = Diamond	M = Completed double pass thru
B = Eight chain thru	R = 3/4 tag
W = R-H ocean wave	

Arrangements have been labeled with number designations (0, ½, 1, 2, 3, and 4). For any particular formation, using symmetric choreography, there are six, and only six, possible arrangements:

BGBG
GBGB
BBGG
GGBB
BGGB
GBBG

Many formations used in today's choreography have been identified and named. The six possible arrangements for many of these formations have also been identified. Pictograms of the named formations and identified arrangements are available from the CALLERLAB Home Office. Because of the difficulty in identifying specific arrangements, the pictograms must be used to study the relationship between formations and arrangements.

When considering how formations and arrangements affect choreographic difficulty we need to realize that for almost all moves there are formations and arrangements which are used much more frequently than others. The most frequently used formations and arrangements for all MAINSTREAM and PLUS moves have been documented and identified as the "Standard" applications for these programs. For example, while it is permissible to call SCOOT BACK from all six arrangements of parallel right hand and left hand ocean waves, the highest percentage of success occurs when same genders are facing in Right Hand Ocean Waves (#1W and #2W).

Using Unfamiliar Formations (Element 3)

Even though the definition of most moves allows them to be called from more than one starting formation, the fact is most dancers are not able to dance most moves from every possible starting formation. In fact, it is probably true to say that no one can dance every move from every possible starting formation.

There are moves which experienced dancers can dance from all starting formations. FERRIS WHEEL, for instance, is allowable from both right hand and left hand 2-faced lines. Even though dancers may realize the left hand version is called much less frequently, most dancers will execute FERRIS WHEEL with little difficulty from either formation.

There are other moves which dancers can dance from some, but not all, possible starting formations. For example, most dancers can easily WHEEL AND DEAL from right hand and left hand 2-faced lines or from lines of four facing out. It is a very different story, however, when WHEEL AND DEAL is called from lines of four facing in!

Finally, there are several moves dancers can dance from only one allowable formation. A ZOOM causes no problem when called from a starting double pass thru formation, but if called from a completed double pass thru or any other allowable formation considerable breakdown can be expected. The same is true of PEEL THE TOP. When called from a "Z" (formed from a ½ right hand ocean wave plus the call, "girls FOLD"), nearly 100% success can be expected. When called from any other allowable formation nearly all the squares will breakdown.

When a caller uses a known move from an unfamiliar formation the dancers perceive the choreography to be difficult. Sometimes they consider this even more difficult than trying to dance a move they have never heard before. If they have been taught and allowed to practice a move from only one allowable formation, they will view starting from any other formation as a violation of their understanding of the move. They will think of this as contradictory, confusing, and not only difficult, but unfair as well.

It should be noted that most dancers regard choreography which ends in unfamiliar formations as difficult also. Choreographic applications which end in normal or zero lines, waves, etc. will be perceived as less difficult than choreography with the same moves ending in 3x1 lines, left hand ocean waves, "funny" diamonds, or similar unfamiliar formations.

Generally, most dancers perceive left hand choreography as more difficult than right hand choreography.

Using Unfamiliar Arrangements (Element 4)

As discussed above, there are six possible arrangements for each formation, when using symmetric choreography. Dancers rarely, if ever, are able to dance even the simplest move from all six possible arrangements. They will SCOOT BACK with no problem when same gender dancers are facing in, but there will be considerable confusion when opposite gender dancers are facing in. Similar examples for nearly all moves can be given.

There are many moves which are 'safe' from only one arrangement. Most notable: DIXIE STYLE TO OCEAN WAVE, RELAY THE DEUCEY, SPIN CHAIN THE GEARS, and SPIN CHAIN AND EXCHANGE THE GEARS, to name a few. In fact, very few PLUS moves can be safely called from more than one arrangement.

Dancers perceive choreography to be difficult whenever the caller uses moves from an arrangement in which they have received little or no practice. It is probably true that most callers, during a class, will introduce a move from SEVERAL, if not all, possible arrangements. It is equally true that no caller uses all possible arrangements for the moves he/she calls. It would be rare indeed, if any caller used even one third to one half of all possible arrangements.

CONCLUSIONS

Since callers do not use all allowable starting formations and arrangements with the same frequency, certain formations and arrangements have become more common than others. These common formations and arrangements have been labeled "standard" and have been identified in the Standard Applications books.

This means in addition to knowing which moves the dancers are able to dance, a caller also needs to know if they can dance these moves from all, some, or only one allowable formation and arrangement. Using both formation and arrangement variations makes it possible to create a wide range of choreographic situations. They can be used to 'stretch' the dancers by adding a bit more challenge to a caller's patter presentation. They can, however, greatly increase difficulty. Therefore, it is important for every caller to realize such variety is effective only if dancers are able to dance it. Dancers need to experience enough successes to compensate for inevitable breakdown. Each caller needs to know not only that "standard formations and arrangements" exist, but also to recognize when he/she is using extended choreography.

This information is not intended to imply use of unfamiliar formations and arrangements is bad. IT IS NOT!! In fact, in appropriate situations, the difficulty achieved by such use can provide a stimulating and enjoyable dance experience. Callers need to be aware of the dancers' capabilities and keenly sensitive to how far he/she can stretch them before they begin to breakdown. This is a true calling art!

With acceptance of the concept of standard applications, adequate labeling of dances, and education of callers and dancers, the decision of what to call will be easier.

DANCERS MUST REMEMBER TOO MUCH OR KEEP TRACK OF TOO MUCH (Elements 5 and 6)

This section deals with the realistic limits of human memory and how this affects choreographic difficulty. Studies of the way we learn the things we know indicate there are limits to both how much we can remember and how many things we can 'track' simultaneously.

When we are dancing, certain parts of our body work as a team; ears hear the moves as the caller calls them, brain decides what to do, and feet and arms do the moving. There are limits to what each part can do. It is also true that these limits are different for different people and even for the same person under different circumstances. If the music is too fast, the feet can't keep up. The same thing applies to the brain. If the moves are called too quickly the brain can become 'overloaded' and will not be able to process the incoming information fast enough to provide instructions to the feet and arms. When this happens, the dancers perceive the choreography to be very difficult (or even impossible), it becomes impossible to dance, and the square breaks down

The brain runs with three basic limits:

HOW MUCH IT CAN 'TRACK' AT THE SAME TIME -

This is known as "Short Term Memory." It is where we keep things like the words in the move the caller just called, which way we are supposed to move next, and what direction we are told to turn at the end of the move.

HOW FAST IT CAN GET THINGS FROM MEMORY -
The better we know a move, the faster we can remember what to do. Unfamiliar moves can take a second or two. Moves with names which sound like other moves can take longer. Moves with similar action and feel can also take longer. Obviously, if we have never heard the move we will never remember what to do.

HOW FAST IT CAN PROCESS INCOMING INFORMATION -
It takes a certain amount of time to process all the information coming into it, from the caller. If it is very busy, it may completely miss what the caller is saying, since it is trying to process the information it already has received. Therefore the importance of LEAD TIME (see TIMING in Chapter 2) becomes critical when considering moves which require the dancers to remember too much or keep track of too much.

Because of these limits, there are choreographic sequences which can overload the dancers' ability to execute the moves successfully. This type choreography simply requires too many decisions or keeping track of too many things at the same time.

Sequences which involve constantly changing dancer identity (ends, centers, very centers, in-facers, out-facers, those who can, those who did, etc.) while progressing through a series of unusual formations and/or arrangements, tend to require dancers to keep track of too much at the same time. This can cause the dancers to lose track of who they are at any given point, and also where they are and where they are going. Other sequences require the dancers to make too many decisions at once, such as how far is half-way, how much is 1/4 more, where is once & ½, and similar decisions.

The brain tries to simplify things and make life easier by a process known as "chunking." This process involves grouping things together into one "chunk." For instance Right and Left Thru becomes one memory unit to remember and execute rather than a separate series of dance actions (step forward, take right hand, pull by, let go, reach with left hand, and courtesy turn). Chunking this series into one memory unit saves short term memory, since each chunk takes only one spot. It also saves brain cycles because the one chunk controls body actions without further brainwork. It is this process which allows the dancers to respond automatically to those moves which have been "chunked" into one memory unit. Even complex moves such as Relay the Deucey can be chunked into one unit. This process has led to the majority of dancers learning and responding to Standard Applications more or less automatically and why they experience more trouble (perceive the choreography to be more difficult) from extended applications.

Even with the advantage of chunking there are choreographic sequences which are difficult because the dancers must keep track of too many things at the same time. This causes them to lose their place in the sequence. For example the sequence "Scoot Back three times but do a Double Swing Thru after each one." This type sequence even through it contains only Standard positions and moves which are very familiar, it also requires the dancers to keep track of too many things at the same time. This will no doubt cause serious problems and will be viewed as difficult.

All this can be related to a juggler. It is easy to keep two or three objects in the air at one time. Add a fourth, however, and it begins to get more difficult. Add a fifth and sixth and the difficulty increases even more; keep adding objects and eventually the difficulty is too great. This is also true of square dance choreography, as a caller asks the dancers to keep track of (keep in the air) more and more decisions (objects), the choreography becomes more and more difficult. The successful caller must be aware of this and adjust the difficulty of his/her choreography to stay within the limits set by the dancers at any particular dance.

While calling we can easily "overload" the dancers by saying more than they are able to hear. For example, try calling the following sequence fast: "Spin Chain the Gears, but turn the star ½, very Centers Trade, head men U-Turn Back side men 1/4 right and roll." By the time they get to the end, if indeed they do get to the end at all, the men will more than likely not be facing the correct direction.

We see this situation of "dancer overload" most often when we say the next move while they are just beginning or are in the middle of an especially difficult or complex move. They either get lost or don't hear you at all. Consider the following "SPIN CHAIN AND EXCHANGE THE GEARS, RECYCLE, PASS THRU" all delivered at once with no break in the wording. Overload will prevent them from hearing "Pass Thru" and quite possibly "Recycle" as well. Add to this the increased difficulty of unfamiliar starting formation and/or arrangement and you have a sure-fire disaster on your hands. Combinations of moves require the dancers to "stack" moves and is discussed further in the section on TIMING in Chapter 2.

ANTICIPATION (Element 7)

Most dancers have been conditioned to anticipate that certain moves will follow certain other moves. If, for example, the caller calls "DOUBLE PASS THRU, CENTERS IN..." the dancers will expect "CAST OFF THREE QUARTERS" because that is what has been called most frequently. Similarly the series "HALF TAG, TRADE, AND ... SCOOT BACK" will very often surprise them and be viewed as more difficult because they have come to anticipate "HALF TAG, TRADE, AND ROLL."

These changes from what is anticipated have been labeled as "gotchas." When subjected to too much of this type calling many dancers feel frustrated or confused as to why they are unable to execute the series smoothly and automatically. Some dancers recognize "gotcha" type calling and feel betrayed since they were not allowed to complete the series in the way they viewed as correct. Whether they are unaware of why they feel frustrated or if they recognize the "gotcha" aspect of the choreography, they tend to view this type calling as difficult because they have trouble dancing the material.

This does not mean "gotcha" calling is always bad. There certainly are times when it is appropriate as an effective programming tool. However, as with any "gimmick" type choreography, a little goes a long way. Limited use of "gotcha" combinations can be an effective part of a caller's patter program, provided he/she recognizes them as "gimmicks" and does not overdo them. Callers who use "gotcha" type choreography, knowingly or not, add a certain amount of difficulty. There are dancers who take great exception to a steady diet of this type calling. These dancers feel they have been treated unfairly by having been led toward one anticipated action only to be rudely surprised by a totally different action. Sadly, there are callers who consistently and deliberately exploit the dancers' tendency to anticipate the next move. These callers seem to delight in the confusion and bewilderment such "gotcha" combinations can create. The dancers' frustration and resentment is increased if their square breaks down or they think the caller is laughing at their confusion.

At times callers make a deliberate decision to exploit the difficulty factor of this type choreography. When doing so, callers should be aware of what dancers expect, when they expect it, and why they view "gotcha" choreography as difficult. Callers can, of course, reduce the difficulty by workshopping (teaching) the new sequence. This will, however, also reduce the surprise element. Even with workshopping, there will be some dancers who continue to anticipate the expected move while actually dancing these combinations, because of their automatic reaction to the moves. With proper timing (extra lead time), the dancers will be able to process the new information and react to the changed sequence. This will affect the smoothness of the dancing, which must also be considered when using this type choreography.

How many times have you heard "don't anticipate!"? Even though we say this ourselves, there are times when we do want dancers to anticipate and respond positively. Anticipation is what allows us to build excitement into our calling in sequences such as "PASS TO THE CENTER, SQUARE THRU 3, LEFT ALLEMANDE!" It also comes into play in singing call figures during a RIGHT AND LEFT GRAND, or WEAVE THE RING and the caller is singing the words from the original song expecting the dancers to SWING and PROMENADE. Anticipation is also a major factor in the success of gimmick techniques such as "SWING THRU, BOYS RUN, BEND THE ....." The hoped for result is that the dancers will not only complete the BEND THE LINE, but also to shout "LINE!" while doing it.

SMOOTHNESS OR LACK OF IT (Element 8)

Smooth flowing choreography tends to be forward moving combinations which blend smoothly from one move to the next. Additional information on smoothness is presented in Chapter 2 of this book, therefore, only a limited discussion of smoothness as it relates to choreographic difficulty will be presented here.

Smooth choreography can make difficult sequences easier to dance. However, a caller can frustrate dancers by calling combinations in which the body flow is clumsy or awkward. This type calling can be perceived as difficult, even if the dancers are able to execute the moves and clearly understand what the caller wants them to do. In many cases dancers will not know why they are annoyed, they only know they are annoyed and, therefore, tend to think of this type choreography as difficult.

It is interesting to note that unsmooth choreography does not have to be difficult in order to seem so to the dancers. For example, from parallel right hand ocean waves, the combination 'ENDS RUN, BEND THE LINE" is not difficult at all, and most dancers will undoubtedly execute the sequence accurately. The combination is unsmooth, however, and many dancers might therefore think of it as difficult as well.

DANCER'S SENSE OF "WHAT IS RIGHT" (Element 9)

Most experienced dancers have a strong sense of what is "right" when they are dancing. They are accustomed to facing other dancers in recognizable formations and in 'normal' boy/girl arrangements. If they end in other positions, they feel something is wrong, they become uncomfortable, and they will want to correct it.

Many times dancers execute the moves correctly, end in the correct position, and end facing the correct direction, yet because the final result does not feel "right" they try to fix the square. If a series of moves leaves them facing out for a long time, especially if other dancers are in action, they will tend to turn around or trade to end facing in. They assume they have made a mistake and will try to correct their 'error'. Similarly, if the choreography leaves them half-sashayed for too long, many dancers will try to re-sashay into a more 'normal' or 'right' arrangement.

Their reflective efforts to correct what they concluded to be a dancing error on their part has been called "patching." Virtually every dancer, at some point, has "patched" a perceived mistake, which in fact was not a mistake at all. Most times after "patching" the square will eventually breakdown because of the patch. In these cases two things can happen. First, the dancers doing the patching realize their mistake, then feel embarrassed, but also view the choreography as difficult. Another possibility is that the "patching" dancer does not realize his/her mistake, the square breaks down, and the choreography is viewed as difficult, or even impossible.

Callers can learn to recognize the places in their calling where dancers tend to become uncomfortable with their position or facing direction. After becoming familiar with these spots and knowing the dancers' tendency to fix things, the caller can decrease the degree of difficulty (and increase success) by providing reassurance such as "in your boy boy, girl girl ocean wave," outside two don't get nervous," "check your left hand column," "with same gender, touch 1/4," or similar helping words. While it is true these helping words will most likely destroy timing and smoothness, they will just as surely help decrease the degree of difficulty and increase the degree of success.

COMPOUNDING ELEMENTS OF DIFFICULTY (Element 10)

Just as a juggler can keep 3 or 4 objects in the air at the same time, dancers can handle 3 or 4 difficulty factors. Add a fourth, fifth, or more, however, and the difficulty can increase so much that the choreography becomes impossible and the square breaks down. In other words, the more elements of difficulty a series of moves contains, the harder it is perceived to be by the dancers. If they consider a sequence of moves to be difficult because it contains a move they do not dance often, the series will seem even harder if it also contains unfamiliar formations and arrangements. If the choreography surrounding these moves also contains unsmooth body flow, the series will seem harder still.

CALLER MODIFIES THE DEFINITION OF THE MOVE

The tendency to modify the definition of moves has been growing. Such modifications bring into play several factors previously discussed. Most notable would be for the dancers to keep track of too many decisions. Even though it is often necessary for callers to teach these modifications before they can safely call them, dancers find such applications to be more difficult than doing them "straight."

Fractionalizing calls such as in the series: "LOAD THE BOAT, BUT CENTERS STOP IN A WAVE"; "SPLIT CIRCULATE, ONCE AND A HALF"; and "SPIN CHAIN AND EXCHANGE THE GEARS, BUT TRAILING MEN TURN THRU AND STEP TO END OF WAVE", are all examples of modifying moves. Other examples would be "AS COUPLES," "IN TANDEM," "ON THE THIRD HAND," and "ONE NOW, ONE LATER."

Modifications of moves requires dancers to decide if they are part of the modification and if they are, how the modification affects them; "Am I a center?," or "How far is once and a half?." They must make these decisions while also keeping track of how far they are into the execution of the move. The difficulty of this is increased because most dancers execute most moves automatically by retrieving that single memory "chunk" containing the information needed to execute the move. Modification of the move requires them to interrupt their automatic reaction, determine if the modification applies to them, decide what the modification requires them to do, and possibly, what part of the original move they are to continue.

This type choreography will be perceived as difficult by dancers and therefore requires extra clear and properly timed delivery. Most callers recognize this type calling as more difficult, but few know exactly why. Recognizing that dancers are having to make multiple and nearly simultaneous decisions will help callers realize the importance of proper delivery to help improve dancer success.

CONCLUSIONS

Other elements of difficulty could no doubt be found, but those presented here are the ones most often encountered by today's dancers. These elements are those over which the caller can maintain considerable control. They have also been a major influence in determining the kinds of choreography dancers have been conditioned to accept.

The way callers have applied these elements of difficulty has been a major determining factor in why some applications have become standard while others have not. It must be noted, however, that difficult choreography remains difficult only as long as dancers think that it is. As has been demonstrated, even the most complex, multi-decision choreography becomes easy if it is danced often enough. New moves or unfamiliar formations and arrangements are also perceived as difficult when first introduced, but, become "easy," if danced enough. Even multi-component moves appear less complex with repetition. In addition, dance sequences with unusual fractions, unfamiliar concepts, or special modifications are accomplished routinely by dancers who have had an opportunity to dance them frequently.

As can be seen, any of a move's allowable applications can become standard simply by providing enough training, practice, and repetition. Why is it then that some applications are used more often than others and other applications are not used at all? There would seem to be two reasons: first is a matter of time limits (How much time is available for dancer training?); second is a matter of dancer enjoyment (How much difficulty is too much?).

It has been estimated that it would take a minimum of 200 hours to fully train point-zero dancers to become proficient in ALL applications (including extended) for the MAINSTREAM Program. This equates to two full years of weekly two-hour lessons. Add the PLUS Program and the time requirement could easily take as long as three years, or more. Few callers are willing to spend that much time training dancers. Another consideration, even more restricting, is the probability that few, if any, dancers want to be in training that long.

It is not possible for callers to provide an ongoing club program which includes regular and consistent floor time (repetition) in ALL allowable applications, including ALL extended applications, of the moves within any program. There simply is not enough time.

It has been said that part of the fun in square dancing is the exploration of the unfamiliar material. If nothing is unfamiliar where would the fun be?

Many dancers seem to prefer to learn more new moves rather than learn all possible variations of the same moves. Other dancers prefer to dance and enjoy the moves they know with very little challenge and only occasional exposure to difficult (extended) choreography. Finally, there are dancers who enjoy the constant challenge of dancing to increasingly difficult choreography. All dancers progress through the various programs searching for the point where the balance between challenge and dance is satisfactory. The goal of any caller should be to provide the correct mixture of challenge and enjoyable dance experience to ensure the dancers have reached the point where they are happy and dancing. The goal of any caller organization should be to create programs where this is possible. It should also be the goal of caller organizations to provide training to its members to obtain this goal. Accomplishing these goals is never easy and will require considerable work on the part of callers and organizations.

CHOREOGRAPHIC GUIDELINES
CHAPTER 7
SELECTION OF MOVES

INTRODUCTION
The art of combining moves into logical, smooth flowing patterns is what makes the difference between dancing, or just performing a group of moves. The selection of moves is what provides the flow of the dance. There are combinations which most experienced callers avoid simply because they have become known as "bad flow." A concern with this logic is that many callers rely on what they are told is bad flow, without investigating for themselves and not truly understanding what contributes to bad flow. Most callers who do not study the mechanics of smoothness call the way they learned to dance.

Callers who began calling prior to the early 1970s learned to call during the time many of the moves used today were created. They had the opportunity to add moves to their repertoire slowly and were able to develop a feeling for the smoothness and flow of the material as they learned to use the new moves. Anyone learning to call today does not have this opportunity. The amount of dance material available to the modern caller is staggering. The amount of time and effort required to develop an understanding of the factors contributing to smoothness, acceptable degree of difficulty and use of music is tremendous. When added to the challenge of learning a choreographic management system, including resolution of the square, the task becomes unmanageable for many people.

Something has to fall by the wayside. Unfortunately, many times that which is discarded is a comprehensive study and understanding of the mechanics of smoothness. What is retained is simply learning the starting and ending positions of the moves available on the various lists and to resolve the square to a correct corner and partner. These two subjects can be difficult to master, therefore, little, if any effort is devoted to actually studying why some routines are smooth and others are not. Since the dancers are most aware of a mistake during the resolution process, or if they are asked to do a move which is impossible from the position they are in (i.e. "RIGHT AND LEFT THRU" from lines of four facing out), it is understandable that callers concentrate primarily on these aspects of calling. Unfortunately, this can lead to an unpleasant dance experience. Most dancers do not know why it is unpleasant; they simply accept the situation until they tire of the experience and leave the activity.

Another calling skill neglected by many callers is a comprehensive study and understanding of the mechanics of difficulty. This study must include an understanding of why certain sequences are considered difficult and others are not. A lack of this skill can result in callers creating complex choreography which has an exciting element of challenge but is so difficult the dancers can not succeed.

ELEMENTS AFFECTING SELECTION OF MOVES
There are several elements which must be considered when selecting the combinations to call.

<u>Available Space</u>
If dancers are 'squeezed' into a tight area, they cannot dance smoothly. Moves involving two couples in the center of the set can be either smooth or not smooth depending on the combination of moves.

For example: from a starting double pass thru formation, "CENTERS SWING THRU" feels smooth. From the same formation, however, 'CENTERS PASS THE OCEAN, SWING THRU" could be quite congested and uncomfortable, even on an uncrowded floor.

Another example, again from a starting double pass thru formation, if we call "FLUTTERWHEEL" or "LADIES CHAIN" the action is very tight and 'squeezing' occurs.

It is also true that when the floor is crowded, some combinations which are normally smooth and comfortable become almost impossible in certain formations. For instance, it is quite smooth to "PASS THE OCEAN, GRAND SWING THRU" from an eight chain thru formation until the hall becomes overcrowded. Because of this overcrowding, it is generally best to avoid tidal ocean wave and tidal two-faced line formations on a crowded floor.

Momentum (Anticipation)

Momentum is the tendency of the dancers to continue to move in an established, usually forward, direction. Sequences which enhance this forward motion are usually more comfortable and smoother than those which disrupt this momentum.

The following combination is an example:

From static square -

"HEADS STAR THRU, DOUBLE PASS THRU, CENTERS IN, BEND THE LINE"

Comment - The command to "BEND THE LINE" is the point at which the combination becomes unsmooth. This is due to two factors: first, the anticipation of the dancers that "CAST OFF 3/4" will be called next; and second, because of the forward motion (momentum) of the center dancers following the "CENTERS IN." This is one of the best known examples of 'bad choreography'. There are, of course, many others, some of which are not so obvious. Combinations which disrupt forward motion and produce unsmooth dancing should be avoided.

Consider the flow differences in the following examples:

From facing lines (#0L) -

(1) "RIGHT AND LEFT THRU, REVERSE FLUTTERWHEEL" and
(2) "PASS THRU, PARTNER TRADE, REVERSE FLUTTERWHEEL"

Comment - In the first sequence, the Courtesy Turn requires the boys to back up, and the REVERSE FLUTTERWHEEL requires them to immediately change to a forward direction. In the second sequence, the PARTNER TRADE establishes a forward flow (momentum) and the boys smoothly move into the REVERSE FLUTTERWHEEL.

Another, even more graphic example is:

From a right hand ocean wave -

"SWING THRU, CENTERS SLIDE NOSE TO NOSE WITH EACH OTHER"

Comment - In this example, the centers will be required to come to a complete stop moving forward and to their right then slide to the left; this is a total change of body flow.

OVERFLOW:

Even though some combinations have good body flow and seem to have all the elements of 'good choreography' they create 'OVERFLOW'. Using the combination "SPIN THE TOP, FAN THE TOP" creates flow in the same direction for both the centers and ends without a pause or change of direction, this can cause a total collapse in orientation. Callers should be aware of combinations that require the dancers to repeat the same patterns over and over. These combinations may be quite comfortable and flowing, but without some change, can become very tedious.

An example can be found in combinations such as:

From a static square (SS) -

"HEADS SQUARE THRU, SWING THRU, BOYS RUN, WHEEL AND DEAL, SWEEP 1/4, PASS THE OCEAN, RECYCLE, SWEEP 1/4, SLIDE THRU"

Comment - This sequence, while appearing to be smooth, is actually 'too smooth'. That is, it contains overflow which leads the dancers to feel like they have been dancing in circles, which in fact, they have.

BALANCE

If you want to establish a new direction or momentum, balances can be a very useful tool, as can "FORWARD & BACK." Of considerable importance here is that we provide enough time for the dancers to execute the move and not rush them with clipped timing. Balances can also be used to eliminate overflow. The earlier example of "SPIN THE TOP, FAN THE TOP" can be helped by adding a balance between the moves. This momentary break in flow gives the dancers a chance to realize the end of one move and the beginning of the next.

NOTE: Use of "BALANCE" as a separate move has all but disappeared from modern choreography. One exception would be BALANCE from an alamo ring formation.

BODY FLOW

Body flow does not occur in a vacuum. In any series of moves body flow is established by the previous and the following moves. Good flow will consist of smooth transitions from one move to the next without overflow. Use of certain combinations of moves can provide these smooth transitions while others create jerky, unsmooth, and uncomfortable transitions. Selecting sequences with smooth transitions is the essence of creating smooth flowing choreography.

An analysis of body flow should include a look at the timing of the delivery of each move. For instance, if the caller is going to call "WALK & DODGE, PARTNER TRADE" he/she should deliver both moves almost as one move so the belle dancer can lunge right and recover to the left for the PARTNER TRADE. This adjustment by the belle dancer, girls in the standard application of this sequence, by experienced dancers illustrates an important capability by the dancers to adjust body flow based on Conditioned Anticipation. This adjustment can make technically unsmooth combinations appear and feel smooth.

All callers need to develop an awareness of the body flow implications for all dancers in the set. A common complaint is that many male callers sometimes use sequences which are smooth for the boys but have bad flow for the girls. The combination "STAR THRU, VEER LEFT" illustrates this point very well. Even with this in mind, if callers deliver the moves with adequate lead time, experienced dancers have developed the ability to adjust body movement to make some marginal combinations appear smooth.

To illustrate this point, try calling "STAR THRU, VEER RIGHT." This combination creates the same relative flow for the boys as was experienced by the girls in the "STAR THRU, VEER LEFT." However, since this combination is rarely, if ever used, it will be very jerky, awkward, and unsmooth for the boys. It will also disrupt the Conditioned Anticipation of the girls.

The examples below provide principles which can be applied to other situations unique to each caller.

Example # 1 - (Use of FAN THE TOP)

From static square (SS) -

(1) "Heads (sides) SQUARE THRU FOUR, TOUCH 1/4, SCOOT BACK, SINGLE HINGE, FAN THE TOP, ..."

(2) "Heads (sides) SQUARE THRU FOUR, SWING THRU, SCOOT BACK, FAN THE TOP, RIGHT AND LEFT THRU, ..."

Comment - FAN THE TOP is one of the moves which has been declining in popularity for several years. Even so, the first sequence above does increase the chance of success by bringing the girls into the center with a left hand available for the FAN THE TOP following the SINGLE HINGE. This sequence also illustrates smooth flow. The second sequence also provides a smooth transition and good flow to the FAN THE TOP. However, it is considerably more difficult because of the SCOOT BACK from the extended SET-UP of the #1/2W.

Example # 2 -

From #0L -

"RIGHT AND LEFT THRU, DIXIE STYLE TO A WAVE, BOYS TRADE, LEFT SWING THRU"

Comment - The RIGHT AND LEFT THRU creates the flow for the GIRLS to lead into the DIXIE STYLE; the BOYS TRADE helps establish the left hand wave and to setup a forward flow for the boys into the LEFT SWING THRU. This sequence illustrates smooth flow and how to lead the dancers toward success by using choreography which creates a natural flow into the next move.

Example # 3

From #0L

(1) "TOUCH 1/4, COORDINATE, CROSSFIRE"

(2) "TOUCH 1/4, COORDINATE, COUPLES CIRCULATE, CROSSFIRE"

Comment - In the first sequence all the girls turn a full 360 degrees in a continuous motion. The COUPLES CIRCULATE in the second sequence provides a break in the turning motion of the girl in the #3 column position. The girl in the #1 column position, however, is still turning more than 360 degrees from the start of the COORDINATE until she finishes the CROSSFIRE. (See Example # 4 BELOW).

Example # 4 -

From #0L -

"TOUCH 1/4, COORDINATE, FERRIS WHEEL, CENTERS PASS THRU, RIGHT AND LEFT THRU, VEER LEFT, CROSSFIRE"

Comment - This sequence eliminates the turning problem noted in Example # 3 by interrupting the turning motion of all the girls.

Example # 5 -

From #0L -

(1) "RIGHT AND LEFT THRU, STAR THRU, DIVE THRU"

(2) "RIGHT AND LEFT THRU, SLIDE THRU, DIVE THRU"

(3) "PASS THRU, PARTNER TRADE, SLIDE THRU, PASS TO THE CENTER"

Comment - In all of these sequences the dancers move from facing lines to a starting double pass thru formation. In the first sequence the STAR THRU following the RIGHT AND LEFT THRU is awkward for the Boys because the right hand is not 'available' for the STAR THRU.

Replacing the STAR THRU with a SLIDE THRU in the second sequence helps this problem but an even bigger problem is encountered after the SLIDE THRU because of the momentum of the boys to their left and the need for them to completely stop moving left and recover to move to the right to do the DIVE THRU. Because of this jerky movement from left to right this sequence is not only unsmooth, but would be considered difficult, if not impossible.

The final sequence eliminates the hand availability problem caused by the STAR THRU and the PASS TO THE CENTER takes advantage of the momentum of the Boys to the left and allows them to smoothly execute the combination. In this sequence either SLIDE THRU or STAR THRU would provide a smooth transition.

Example # 6 -

From any eight chain thru formation -

(1) "PASS THRU, TRADE BY, VEER LEFT"
(2) "PASS THRU, TRADE BY, RIGHT AND LEFT THRU, VEER LEFT"

Comment - First the caller must realize the only standard applications for TRADE BY are: #0T or #3T (TRADE BY). Calling the move from any other arrangement will increase difficulty and decrease smoothness.

Since TRADE BY does not require the use of hands, some dancers in the first sequence may not realize the VEER LEFT applies to couples and may very easily individually VEER LEFT to produce ocean waves instead of the two-faced lines the caller expected.

Adding the RIGHT AND LEFT THRU in the second sequence establishes the couple relationship and eliminates the potential problem. The combination RIGHT AND LEFT THRU, VEER LEFT is very smooth for all dancers except from facing lines, in this case the factor of Space Availability reduces the smoothness.

Example # 7 -

From #0B - (In singing call)

(1) "DO SA DO, EIGHT CHAIN FOUR, SWING"
(2) "DO SA DO, EIGHT CHAIN FIVE, LEFT ALLEMANDE, SWING"

Comment - The first sequence is a commonly used application of EIGHT CHAIN FOUR in singing calls. The problem is evident for the boys on the outside. The turning action makes it awkward for them to SWING the corner. This problem can be eliminated by using the second sequence.

Example # 8 -

From #0B -

"TOUCH 1/4, WALK & DODGE, PARTNER TRADE"

Comment - In this sequence the girls are sliding to the right for the WALK & DODGE, then abruptly stopping and turning to the left for the PARTNER TRADE. This lunge & recover motion is technically unsmooth which should make this sequence feel awkward. Experienced dancers, however, can develop a Conditioned Anticipation to expect that PARTNER TRADE will follow WALK & DODGE in the sequence. If the dancers have developed this Conditioned Anticipation AND the caller provides proper timing, this combination can be danced with relative smoothness.

It should be noted that if called from any other arrangement this combination will not only be considered unsmooth but difficult as well.

Example # 9 -

From #0B -

"TOUCH 1/4, WALK & DODGE, CHASE RIGHT, SINGLE HINGE, ACEY DEUCEY"

Comment - This sequence solves the problem of bad flow for the right side dancer in Example 8 above. The flow created by the WALK & DODGE leads smoothly into the CHASE RIGHT. The SINGLE HINGE establishes a #0W (zero Right Hand Ocean Wave) and the ACEY DEUCEY continues the smooth flow for both the ends and centers.

Example # 10 -

From #0P -

(1) "DOUBLE PASS THRU, CENTERS IN, BEND THE LINE"

Comment - The flow established by the CENTERS IN is a forward motion for the centers. The call to BEND THE LINE requires an abrupt total reversal of flow by the centers. Included are two factors which contribute to make the flow in this sequence VERY BAD. First is the Instinctive Anticipation because of the forward motion of the centers. Second, there is a Conditioned Anticipation that CAST OFF 3/4 will follow the CENTERS IN.

The obvious choice for smooth flow is, of course, CAST OFF 3/4 instead of BEND THE LINE. Other choices which provide a different feel to the sequence without a loss of smoothness include CENTERS FOLD and CENTERS TRADE (less smooth).

CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter we have provided a variety of examples depicting various smoothness concerns and solutions. It is the intent of this section to provide information on the importance of choosing and calling smooth flowing combinations. It is hoped that callers will begin to take a close look at what they are calling and how their choreography is affecting the feel of the dance.

One way for callers to judge their choreography is to record a dance, get a square together and actually dance to his/her own calling. Unfortunately most callers do not have the time nor the inclination to try this experiment. Another possibility is to ask a trusted dancer (or partner) to provide an honest appraisal of our calling. The danger here of course is that we may not like what we hear.

The caller's judgement is the most critical element in deciding which combinations to call and which to avoid.

Choreographic flow should be like a river - always moving in the same direction, doing what it can to create paths of least resistance. Also like a river, the flow is not in a straight line. It twists and turns and gathers character from the rocks, logs, and other objects of resistance to its momentum. Good choreography should establish enough momentum to carry the dancers from one move to the next and enough resistance to that flow to give our dance character and definition.

CHOREOGRAPHIC GUIDELINES
CHAPTER 8
SUCCESS WITH DIFFICULT CHOREOGRAPHY

INTRODUCTION

Recognizing and dealing effectively with difficult (hard) choreography is a challenging task for most callers. One factor which makes this task troublesome is the problem of determining exactly what "difficult choreography" actually is. Difficulty is subjective, different for each dancer, and very hard to define. There are several factors which contribute to difficulty, a discussion of each is provided in Chapter 5, Degree of Difficulty. During any particular sequence dancers can be placed in one of three general groups based on how they will dance the sequence.

These groups are:

- Those who will make it without any help
- Those who will make it only with help
- Those who will not make it, no matter how much help they get

Dancers can easily move from one group to another during a dance or even within a single tip. This movement is based on their ability to cope with each of the factors influencing the difficulty of the choreography. It is up to the caller to determine how much (or how little) help is appropriate.

CREATING DIFFICULT CHOREOGRAPHY

As was discussed in the chapter on Degree of Difficulty, there are ten elements which contribute to the determination of difficulty. A comprehensive understanding of the information in that chapter is important to the understanding and application of the information here. Common ways in which difficulty is added to square dance choreography is through the use of unfamiliar moves, unfamiliar formations/arrangements, unusual use of the rules, or a combination of these elements.

Some callers unknowingly add difficulty by using any or all these elements. Although this happens more often than it should, our discussion is based on the assumption that the caller intends to add difficulty and will be in control of that difficulty. The information presented here is intended to help the caller succeed when using difficult, i.e. extended, choreography.

Adding difficulty to our choreography will add additional stress for the dancers. If they are successful, however, the pleasure of "making it" can be quite exhilarating for them. The purpose behind deliberately using difficult or extended choreography should be to increase the pleasure of the dancers not the caller. As has been discussed earlier in this document, the goal of each caller should be to provide smooth flowing, interesting dance material with just the right amount of difficulty. Any caller who is able to consistently provide this perfect, or even near perfect, mix is a true artist. It can be done, but it is not easy.

One programming technique used by many successful callers is to bring the dancers to the very edge of disaster, then lead them away from the edge to a successful resolution. The success of this technique depends entirely on the caller's ability to judge where that edge is and to successfully guide the dancers away from the edge and get them to a correct resolution. Because of the special challenge in this type dancing, success will bring a special pleasure to the dancers and will be a victory for the caller. Conversely, failure will not only be disastrous for the dancers, but could be equally disastrous for the caller. The advice is to obtain full knowledge of these techniques and to proceed slowly.

Success with this programming technique requires a sophistication, understanding, appreciation, and knowledge of the other calling skills only gained through experience. Any caller contemplating using the techniques discussed in this chapter is well advised to obtain a comprehensive understanding of smoothness, formation awareness, and difficulty and to apply that understanding while calling. It should be noted that this technique is not for the new or novice caller. The information presented here will, however, benefit all callers.

The sequences used to implement this programming technique can include complex choreography, unusual or unfamiliar starting formations, unusual or unfamiliar arrangements, surprise get-outs, modifications of the definition of moves, unusual use of the rules, and other factors which will increase the difficulty of the choreography.

Stretching the dancers to the limits of their ability is not hard. Keeping them from going beyond their ability and on to disaster is what this technique is all about. Generally it is not a good idea to leave the dancers at their limit for more than four or five moves at the most before bringing them back to familiar positions. Depending on the group, it is usually better to leave them at their limits no more than two or three moves. Doing otherwise increases the stress the dancers feel which in turn geometrically increases the chances of failure. The success of this technique lies in the ability to avoid failure.

GUIDELINES FOR SUCCESS
There is a higher potential for success when the following guidelines are followed:

- The difficult choreography leads directly to a correct resolution (Quick Resolution).
- The dancers are not left in unfamiliar formations or arrangements for more than two or three moves.
- The caller builds from the known to the unknown.
- The caller provides help (helping words or extra time).

QUICK RESOLUTION
There are two primary advantages to providing a correct resolution immediately following difficult choreography. First, the dancers' stress is released immediately thus heightening the pleasure of 'making it'. Second, and perhaps more important, the chances for success are increased.

The dancer's pleasure is increased because of the sudden and unexpected release of stress immediately following the high level of concentration required to execute the choreography. The chances of success are greater because there is a tendency on the part of some dancers to relax a little when they realize the 'hard part' is over. This can lead to a drop in concentration which can, in turn, lead to mistakes. Callers need to be aware of this potential for mistakes and adjust delivery of all moves in a way that will retain the attention of the dancers.

QUICKLY RETURN TO FAMILIAR FORMATION & ARRANGEMENT
The essence of difficulty is putting the dancers into unusual situations. In most cases this will entail the use of unusual or unfamiliar formations and arrangements.

Most experienced dancers have developed a sense of what feels right. Therefore, when they are put in a situation which does not feel right they tend to try to 'fix it', even if it is not broken. The longer they are in the unusual situation, the stronger their desire to 'make it feel right' will be. This tendency to fix it will increase geometrically if they are also inactive. Their inclination to 'fix it' is even greater if the formation AND the arrangement are both unfamiliar.

The goal of the caller is to overcome this desire to fix it and to bring them to a successful conclusion. One way to help increase the chances of success is to quickly re-establish familiar formation and arrangement. Another way to help increase success is to assure the dancers that they are indeed supposed to be in the unusual situation and to caution them not to fix it. This assurance can be in the form of 'clues' such as "in your BOY/BOY GIRL/GIRL line", "in your FACING DIAMONDS," and others.

In most cases, the caller should not leave the dancers in the unusual position more than a few moves. This will allow them to experience the stress of the difficult choreography then to experience the relief of getting back to familiar territory.

BUILDING FROM THE KNOWN TO THE UNKNOWN
If our goal is to introduce or use a new application of a known move it is best to provide at least some practice from familiar SET-UPs. This will help reenforce the rules and feel of the move.

When expanding applications to the unknown it is best to first use the move from a formation and arrangement which has at least some of the dancers in a familiar starting position. This will allow those dancers in the familiar position to 'help' the others.

For instance, to expand the use of RECYCLE, it is a good idea to call it from the 'standard formation and arrangement' (#0W) this gets them in the traffic pattern of the move. A logical next step would be to set up #3W (BBGG) or #4W (GGBB). These SET-UPs provide the Standard feel of the RECYCLE to the end boys and the center girls. A caution that one of them will 'feel comfortable' and the other will not will alert them to the fact that they are getting into the unknown. When they are doing the RECYCLE the dancer in the familiar position can then help the other dancer. The clue "boys (girls) are on the inside looking out toward the girls (boys)" should also help raise the success. They should also be provided practice from all positions.

The next logical progression would be to set up a #1/2W where they are all in an unfamiliar position.

When introducing RECYCLE from left hand ocean waves it is best to set up the wave with the girls on the ends. This will allow the ending arrangement of the eight chain thru formation to be 'normal' and end in a #0B.

CALLER PROVIDES HELP
The help a caller can provide is divided into two general categories including providing helping words and providing extra time. The helping words alert the dancers to the correct action or to expect something different. Extra time allows them more time to react to unfamiliar situations.

USE OF HELPING WORDS -
Helping words can include directions or hints to assist the dancers identify the formation, arrangement, their position, who they are working with, facing directions, how far to turn, and other factors. Helping words can also include part or all of the definition of the moves. These two methods are identified as "clueing" or "cueing."

CLUEING -
"Clueing" is providing clues or hints to the dancers. Clues help the dancers find the correct formation, arrangement, facing direction, hands to be used, where dancers should be, Position, and other considerations. Clues normally DO NOT include part of the definition.

Typical clues include:
"In your left hand wave"
"Look at your facing diamond"
"Boys come to the center with a left hand"
"Girls end facing in"
"Check your lines, boys center, girls on the ends"

CUEING -
"Cueing" is when the caller provides directions which include part or all of the definition of the move.

Typical cues include:
"DIXIE GRAND, go right, left, right"
"DO PA SO, partner left, corner by the right..."
"RIGHT AND LEFT THRU, turn the girl"
"SCOOT BACK, boys (girls) turn thru"
"FAN THE TOP, girls turn left 3/4, boys move up"
"REMAKE THE THAR, turn 1/4, 1/2, 3/4"

Most successful callers provide a combination of both clueing and cueing. Primary concerns of the overuse of cueing are:

- Some dancers may never learn the moves; they simply listen for the cues and depend on the caller to tell them what to do.

- Dancers who do know the moves may interpret the cue as new directions rather than part of the previous move; they may than start an additional move.

Typically callers provide cues to help dancers through unfamiliar moves. This is usually valid only while the dancers are initially learning the move. The amount of cues and the frequency with which they are used should be reduced as the dancers become familiar with the move. Cues are often used when callers use unfamiliar (extended) choreography. Some callers use cueing as a timing tool. A problem with this is that the use of cues may become automatic; the caller will say the cue even if it is neither required nor intended.

Timing of delivery of cues is absolutely critical because of most dancers' tendency to listen for direction and then react to those directions. If the timing of the cue is delayed there will be at least some dancers who will misinterpret the cue as new directions.

Because of the problems associated with cueing many callers feel it is better to provide clues rather than cues. Clues help the dancers identify where they are, where they should be, which hand to use, which dancers are together, etc. without including potentially confusing directions.

Use of both cues and clues can help dancers succeed with difficult choreography. It must be remembered that it is easy to provide too much help, especially when it comes to cueing. Neither cueing nor clueing should become so automatic that the dancers develop a Conditioned Anticipation and rely totally on the helping words. Dancers should be encouraged to apply their knowledge of the moves to unfamiliar situations.

USE OF EXTRA TIME
The caller can provide additional lead time by delaying the delivery of the moves. This will provide more time for the dancers to react to the moves. This delayed timing can disrupt the normal delivery of the moves and very easily result in a certain amount of stop and go dancing. The extra reaction time will provide time to act on the helping words or to apply what they know to the new situation created by the difficult choreography.

Depending on the complexity of the helping words and the difficulty of the material, the timing can be such that little, if any, compromise of smoothness is required. The goal should be to retain as much smoothness as is practical for the situation.

The following are examples of how to help the dancers succeed with difficult or unusual choreography:

Quickly return to familiar formation:

From a static square (SS) -
"HEADS STAR THRU, AND, PASS THE OCEAN,
SIDES WORKING DOWN THE WAVE WITH EACH OTHER,
DO A RIGHT AND LEFT THRU"
**

Comment - In this example the move RIGHT AND LEFT THRU is very familiar, however, by placing the square in this odd formation a certain amount of stress will be felt by the sides. The objective in this example is to leave them in this unfamiliar formation a very short time and quickly return to a familiar one. Usually no more than two or three moves should be used before getting to a familiar formation. For instance, continuing from the ** in the above example:

**
"SIDES DO ANOTHER RIGHT AND LEFT THRU, CENTERS SINGLE HINGE, CENTER BOYS RUN
(This produces a # 0B)

The same principle is true if, at a Plus dance, we set up a #0C and call the following:

"SINGLE FILE CIRCULATE ONCE AND A HALF,
CENTER SIX TRADE,
AND THE GIRLS SLIDE APART FROM EACH OTHER"

This creates an hourglass formation which will be strange for many Plus dancers. We could then have the boys identify the diamond they are in and have them circulate in the diamond. We could then have the boys FLIP THE DIAMOND to create twin diamonds and have everyone "check your diamond." The success of this sequence will depend entirely on the ability of the boys to first identify their diamond, to circulate in that diamond, and then to FLIP THE DIAMOND correctly. This sequence is loaded with possibilities for fatal error. Success can be improved by using FLIP THE DIAMOND from twin diamonds with the boys as points prior to the hourglass situation.

Some sequences can provide a quick resolution. Consider the following example:

From static square (SS) -
"HEADS LEAD RIGHT, RIGHT AND LEFT THRU, VEER LEFT, GIRLS CAST RIGHT 3/4, ALL DIAMOND CIRCULATE, IN THAT SAME DIAMOND.... EVERYONE BACK UP TWO STEPS, GO RIGHT & LEFT GRAND"

Comment - After the command to DIAMOND CIRCULATE each man's original partner is directly behind him in the diamond. In this sequence the dancers begin to feel stress on the command "EVERYONE BACK UP TWO STEPS." Most dancers are seldom, if ever, asked to "back up"; this creates confusion as they try to figure out exactly what the caller has in mind. They will, however, usually begin to cautiously back up. As they do so, the stress they feel will grow more intense. When the stress is at the high point, the caller says "GO RIGHT & LEFT GRAND." As they back up they will find their partner and flow quickly and smoothly into the RIGHT & LEFT GRAND.

One way to add difficulty is to progress from the known to the unknown.

For instance if we want to progress from using FLIP THE DIAMOND in the standard application of twin diamonds to using FLIP THE DIAMOND with the boys as points from point to point diamonds, we may proceed as follows:

From #0B -
"RIGHT AND LEFT THRU, VEER LEFT, GIRLS HINGE, DIAMOND CIRCULATE, FLIP THE DIAMOND, GIRLS TRADE, GIRLS RUN, BOYS HINGE, DIAMOND CIRCULATE"

(this creates diamonds with boys as points, if we FLIP THE DIAMOND the boys will end in the center of the wave, so we can continue by providing the following clues):

"CAREFUL, FLIP THE DIAMOND,
(boys in the center of the wave),
BOYS TRADE, BOYS RUN, BEND THE LINE"

Comment - this sequence has moved the dancers from the known (standard application of FLIP THE DIAMOND with the girls as the points) to the unknown (DIAMONDS with the boys as the points). After they are familiar with the action from this SET-UP, the next step is to establish point-to-point diamonds.

The following is an example of how we can proceed:

From #0B -
"PASS THE OCEAN, GRAND SWING THRU, BOYS RUN, GIRLS HINGE"
**

(** at this point they are in point to point diamonds - girls are centers and boys are points. Call "DIAMOND CIRCULATE"; this moves the boys to the centers and also lets them see the diamond they are in. Call another "DIAMOND CIRCULATE," this moves the boys back to the points. At this point if we FLIP THE DIAMOND the boys will end in the center of each wave and the square will be in a tidal wave. We can continue by providing the following clues to let them know the boys will flip into the center of the ocean wave and the formation will be a tidal wave instead of parallel ocean waves).

Continue with:

**
"FLIP THE DIAMOND, CHECK YOUR TIDAL WAVE"

This process has brought the dancers from the known to the unknown by employing a systematic progression. A similar process can be used for any move.

Consider the following to quickly return to normal arrangement:

"HEADS PASS THE OCEAN, SWING THRU, EXTEND, SWING THRU, CENTERS RUN, COUPLES CIRCULATE, FERRIS WHEEL
**

At this point the centers are in normal (#0) couples and the outside couples are half sashayed. If the outside couples are left standing too long (more than 4 - 5 moves), some will tend to re-sashay to 'fix it'. One way to quickly return to a familiar arrangement is:

**
"CENTERS RIGHT AND LEFT THRU, ZOOM, NEW CENTERS U-TURN BACK, LEFT ALLEMANDE

This is only one of many possibilities. It does, however, not only quickly return to a familiar arrangement, but also provides an immediate correct resolution.

CONCLUSIONS

Callers must realize when their choreography is becoming too difficult for the group they are calling for. This requires a certain amount of experience and a sensitivity to the feelings of the group. If choreography contains too much 'puzzle solving' without a sufficient amount of success, the quality of the dance experience can suffer. When this happens, everyone loses. To help increase success, the caller can and should provide as much (or as little) help as is required by the group he/she is calling for at any particular time.

The help the caller provides while calling can be in the form of extra time and/or extra helping words. Providing either may impact timing and therefore the smoothness of the dance. Because of the negative impact on timing, the caller needs to make a conscious decision that the programming value of the difficult choreography outweighs the negative consequences of the loss of smoothness.

NOTES