

BOB RUFF

Perhaps some of you folks heard the voice of Bob Ruff on "Monitor" over NBC when he was calling at the Ak-sar-ben Stadium for the annual Omaha, Nebraska, festival not long ago.

Bob has done a great deal to promote square dancing in the proper spirit, not only in his own home town of Whittier, California, but in many parts of the country where he has been asked to call.

Bob's work in education and in recreation led him into his first assignment on the Sets in Order square dance institute faculty.

Bob and Babs have become regular favorites with the kids and under the Ruff's supervision the youngsters have found real pleasure during these past few summers. In addition to being on the staff of Sets in Order's Summer Asilomar session, Bob and Babs will also be on the faculty of the Totemland Square Dance Institute in Vancouver, B.C., and in the Alberta Square Dance Institute to be held at Banff in the beautiful Canadian Rockies. (Os)

THIS I BELIEVE

"TEACHING (SQUARE DANCING) CAN BE FUN"

With a (limited) background of touring throughout the country, plus numerous talks with callers from far and near, it appears to me that the square dance movement has just scratched the surface in terms of people actively participating in the program. One big limiting factor in keeping literally thousands from dancing is the need for trained and qualified teacher-callers. A few are doing the work for the many. In many towns, one or two persons are responsible for the instruction of the majority of dancers. Sometimes this person doesn't exist and folks just learn by struggling through printed instructions and records with calls. The classic example that I have heard about concerns a couple in British Columbia who received a copy of Windsor's "Johnson's Jumbles" from a friend in California. With three other couples they started to learn to dance at 8:00 P.M. By 1:30 A.M. they had mastered the introduction and the first inch of the record was worn paper thin. This is one way to learn square dancing. Some folks have learned to dance in the basement or on patios with Jonesy or Johnson or someone else being their only teacher.

Along with the development of Western Style Square Dancing throughout the country, the list of names in the national directory of callers has shown tremendous growth. This surge of interest in calling has not been accompanied with an equal interest in learning to teach. The beginner caller, finding success in his first appearances pursues a program of learning more complicated patterns, the latest singing calls and tricky breaks, all of which he hopes will distinguish him from others and gain status in the eyes of the more experienced dancers. Learning to teach becomes a barrier that is more insurmountable than learning to call. Besides, (they think), it doesn't have the glamour. Those who have the desire to incorporate teaching with their calling, in many instances, have to learn it by osmosis. The opportunities for learning how to teach are few and far between. Callers' associations, recognizing this problem, hold clinics and workshops devoting more time to the instructional program.

To all of those who have ever had a yen to start a beginners' class or to those who would just like to teach as the need arises, I say to you, "Teaching Can Be Fun!!" You as a caller-teacher can become the greatest salesman in the world. The path to becoming a good teacher isn't what many would consider a "fun-route" but once one has sold himself on the importance of teaching the beginner and has acquired the necessary tools (personal qualities, teaching techniques, and mastery of subject matter) he is on the road to happiness and success known only to those who have devoted themselves to this type of work.

Babs and I enjoy teaching beginner square dance classes from start to finish. We see no greater joy than the expression on a learner's face while he is a beginner. Here are some of our basic beliefs that we try to make part of each class:

1. We believe in the importance of the individual and in his ability to learn. Further, as instructor, I accept the responsibility for all instruction and if mistakes are made (by the dancer) try to analyze why they are made and re-teach the material in a more efficient manner. This may be accomplished by a better description of the movement, rephrasing the command, or by using a short demonstration. Naturally, some learn more quickly than others and this problem must be met as the group progresses to more difficult patterns. Some of our solutions to this include constant mixing of partners throughout the course; individual help during intermission (if requested) and a 15 minute brush-up session

before class time. Each lesson starts out with a review of material previously learned, the more difficult patterns getting more review.

2. We regard class members as customers buying our product and along with this consider service to be of top importance. Service is certainly one of the most essential items a caller and his wife can offer in selling square dancing to the public. Giving of oneself unselfishly; of time (for answers to the many questions that arise about records, costume, places to dance, etc.); of effort and energy wherever and whenever needed during the program; be being pleasant (all the time, even when it hurts!); and by being positive, no matter what. Almost any correction can be made in a positive manner but it takes practice.

The giving of service in the fullest sense of the word exacts many demands from the leaders of the group. The more one gives, the more one gets, the getting in this case being happy and satisfied customers who in turn influence others to enroll in future classes.

3. Through the use of a class roll and name-tags for everyone, we strive to learn first and last names of all class members. This takes time and effort but is most rewarding in breaking down social barriers and getting folks acquainted with one another. The larger the class, the more difficult this becomes but it can still be accomplished.

We might summarize by saying, "Learning is Painless, When Fun is Used as an Anesthetic."

Bob Ruff

A FEW SUGGESTIONS ON TECHNIQUES OF TEACHING

A. Callers should make use of generally accepted "laws of learning."

1. In teaching movements or dances, the following principles (if observed by the instructor) will result in better instruction to the dancer. These principles involve going from the known to the unknown, from simple to complex, from easy to difficult.
2. Teach movements with identical or related components. This will help to relax the dancer and give him confidence. However, one should avoid teaching basic figures that are so similar as to cause confusion in the dancer's mind such as ladies chain and right and left thru in the same evening.
3. Repetition is invaluable. If applied judiciously in varied drill form, pleasurable moments of learning take place and the dancer has fun and learns at the same time.
4. Patience is a virtue and a must in teaching classes. There will be times when the dancers (as a group) seem to be having trouble. This is because learning does not follow a smooth upward curve but occurs in spurts, with plateaus in between, during which the learners consolidate their gains.

B. Method of Instruction.

In general, a good method of instruction is for a short simple explanation, followed by the commands necessary for the execution of the pattern by the dancer. The instructor observes the class and is able to ascertain if learning is taking place, and whether further explanation is needed. Possible demonstration might be helpful. Demonstration is in order when a description is hard to get across in a few words or when the dancers are having trouble, and as an easy way of illustrating points of styling or smooth dancing. Repetition of the move helps the dancer to learn the movement thoroughly. Any corrections that have to be made should be given in a positive manner. **ACCENTUATE THE POSITIVE**. Sometimes a bit of humor helps in getting a difficult point across to the dancer. Of the basic steps, only a few can be considered elementary and require no teaching. Most of them need step by step direction with complete explanation and repetition to become thoroughly understood. The instructor should assume that everything should be taught.

The use of key words and phrases is important. Some of these are:

Face - to the right or left
Join - hands
When I Say - this or that
When You Hear - this or that

The use of the voice is equally important.

- a. Voice should show command and yet be pleasant
- b. Enunciation is very important
- c. Learn to "project." Speak as though you were talking to someone six to eight feet in front of you.

Getting attention is important, and how one gets attention is equally important. Care should be given not to be offensive to the dancer. Whistling, scolding, shouting, are not the best ways to influence steady customers. There are more dignified and professional ways of getting attention. Probably the simplest is, "May I have your attention, please!", or another is to use any opening statement to the group and then pause for attention.

SOME POINTS OF STYLING TO CONSIDER IN TEACHING BEGINNERS

1. The square dance step. How to shuffle.
2. Hand placement for man and woman when hand is not joined.
3. Hand positions while circling, men palms up, women palms down, joined hands held shoulder height (girl's shoulder).
4. Inside joined hand position at start of dance, showing how easy to honor partner and corner, to circle left or right, or to lead partner in any direction. Also how to move feet in rhythm to music.
5. Swinging. How girl is placed on right after swing.
Swinging. How girl rolls off man's arm from swing to allemande left.
6. Twirl to promenade. Suggested grips for both as well as rotation of man's hand describing cranking up the old Model T.
7. What happens at the end of a promenade, balance, swing once around and put girl on gent's right.
8. In picking up couples and in making lines of four, suggestions as to how end girl turns under her partner's joined hand (as it makes an arch) just before picking up a couple or just before she flies out to make a line of four.
9. Forearm turns, tension on elbow, not fingers.
10. Allemande left, float balance, not jerk.
11. Ladies chain, lead the girl, don't push.
12. Right and left thru. Gents should be short step ahead of the girl ready to offer his left hand to partner before she veers off in another direction.

COURSE OF STUDY MATERIAL FOR BEGINNERS' CLASSES

Patter Calls

Arkansas Traveler
 Barrel Roll
 Between the Ladies
 Birdie in the Cage
 Chase the Rabbit
 Dive for the Oyster
 Docey Doe
 Ends Turn In
 Follow the Leader
 Forward 6, Pass Right Thru
 Forward 6, Right Hand Over
 Forward 6, Triple Duck
 Four Gents Star
 Four Hands Over
 Inside Arch, Outside Under
 Inside Out, Outside In
 Lady Around Lady Series
 Lady Goes $\frac{1}{2}$ Way Round
 Pick up 2,4,6
 Pick Up Your Corner
 Runouttanames
 The Route
 Side by Side
 Suzy Q
 Texas Star
 Three Ladies Chain
 Two Gents Swing, Elbow Swing

Basic Figures

All Around and See Saw
 Allemande left
 Box the Gnat
 Circling, left, right
 Docey Doe
 Do-Paso
 Do-Sa-Do
 Honor partner, corner
 Ladies Chain, 2, 3, & 4
 Promenade, couple, single file
 Right & Left Thru
 Rip 'n Snort
 Sashay, resashay
 Split the ring figures
 Pass thru around 1,2
 Cross trail (trail thru) around 1,2
 Swing, waist, forearm, two-hand

Singing Calls

Alabama Jubilee
 Down South
 Down Yonder
 Hot Time
 Hurry, Hurry, Hurry
 Just Because
 Little Shoemaker
 O Johnny
 Old Fashioned Girl
 Pistol Packin' Mama
 Poor Robin
 Pretty Girl
 Redwing
 She Didn't Know the Gun was Loaded
 Shiek of Araby
 Solomon Levi
 Suzy
 Trail of Lonesome Pine
 Tweedle Dee
 You Call Everybody Darling

Break Patterns

Alamo Style
 Allemande Thar
 Away You Go
 Double Turn Back
 Grand Right & Left
 Once and $\frac{1}{2}$
 Promenade single file with gents or
 ladies backtrack
 Wagon Wheel
 Weave the ring