

Just Another Square Dance Caller

"I'm just another square dance caller. Tryin' to make a living with a song. Maybe one day I'll get to Nashville, uh-huh. But you know that dog-gone road is so long." (Just Another Square Dance Caller, Chaparral Records C-710, Marshall Flippo.)

Who the heck do I think I am? Nobody special. I'm just a guy who has been given some wonderful opportunities by this great square dance activity, and I'd like to give something back.

Once upon a time, I used to think I'd end up being one of those "full time traveling callers and festival do'ers" but that ship has sailed. The activity continues to shrink and as the festivals get smaller the staffs of each festival shrink or combine to ensure everyone pays the bills. Of course, there's more to it than that. I DID self destruct and walk away from the activity in the mid-90's. I hung up my microphone and didn't even want to hear the words "square dance" for over 5 years. (Not a plan particularly conducive towards a national career!)

Recently, I had the opportunity to work as a "Teaching Assistant" at a callers school. It was a wonderful opportunity and opened my eyes to the fact that I might have something to give back to the activity. Unfortunately, callers school opportunities, like every other aspect of the square dance activity are shrinking, and I've got a pretty short timeframe to share.

I promise you, I am not morbid when I say this, but I have already started working on my "bucket list". You might think that at 44, it's a bit early to start, but with a laundry list of health issues (some more visible than others) I've got to be realistic. My doctors have told me for years that I'll do well to make it to 55. In the past couple years...I've finally started to believe them. My sincere hope is to have another 5-6 good years of calling ahead of me. (One more reason to kick myself for self destructing in the 90's.)

So...here we are. I truly believe that I have something in this big fat head of mine worth sharing. I'm not an "Accredited Caller Coach". I have no awards or certificates or qualifications other than I can type about 20 words a minute and I know how to use my spel chek. Oh...and I love this activity. I didn't like myself at all before I became a square dancer and square dance caller. The square dance activity has helped me more than most will ever know. Sure...there are days I still don't like myself very much, but I usually have square dancing to thank for the good days.

I've got stuff in my head that I really want to get out. If you're interested, read it. If you're not, move on. Take what I write for what it's worth and by all means, do NOT bring anything you see here to a qualified teacher quoting it as gospel. It's not. It may be the ramblings of a (slightly) mad man. But then again, I'm not asking for your money.

Finally, there will be times when I say something you disagree with, and that's ok. My dad always liked to play with words, and one of the things he said along the way was, "Just because there is dis-agree-ment doesn't mean there is dis-respect-meant." And I couldn't agree more.