

The Editor's Desk

Hello Everyone

How does the song go “*Summer time and the living is easy*” - clearly the singer is not living my life. Between the National Square Dance Convention (and the drive to Waco and back) and personal events (his name is Edward Chance Cragg IV) which seem to involve hours of boredom followed by minutes of terror, this month's issue is later than I would have liked it to be.

During my boredom I thought about Calls'N'Cues organization and the areas I have been uncomfortable about. The content consists of WASCA business, wider dancing news, WASCA club news, and various appendices. My major unease related to the Obituaries - they just did not seem to fit together very well

As a result I have reorganized Calls'N'Cues. First will come the WASCA related business items to include NCASDLA and RDTA items. Specifically I have moved the Membership Report up front to come after the President's Pattern, Choreo Corner is also moved up front to just after (the currently non-existent) NCASDLA President's column. This is followed by the RDTA President's letter and information on our next WASCA Spring Festivals.

Second is information on the various national and regional conventions and festivals. These are based on my opinion of their interest to WASCA dancers and the information the organizers send to me. They will be covered in chronological order.

Third come the WASCA Club items - the directory, club news, and calendar. I am putting the obituaries after this, followed by the Board of Directors contact information.

Finally I am including various appendices, (mostly flyers)

I am still not comfortable with the location of the obituaries, but that is probably due to the fact they are my least favorite section to put together.

I will see how this organization works for a couple of issues. Your comments would be appreciated.

And that is all for this issue. Until next time

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CALLS 'N' CUES INFORMATION

Issues

Calls 'N'Cues

is published bimonthly:

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Submissions

Email (Preferred)

editor@wascacclubs.net

or

ecragg@alumni.rice.edu

- All common file formats accepted

- Attachments preferred

- Please start file names with your club name.

- For photos - please provide captions

Telephone:

(703) 920-2624

Let ring at least 10 times

Landline (no Texts - Voice only)

Regular Mail:

Edward E Cragg

Editor: CALLS 'N' CUES,

807 S Glebe Road

Arlington, VA 22204-2444

Deadlines:

The deadline is the 15th of the preceding month

The next issue will be September-October 2026

The deadline will be 15 August 2026

For Announcements of New Issues :

Send an email to:

wascacnc+subscribe@googlegroups.com



President's Patter ***Getting back to your dancing roots!***

Steve Cunnion
(WASCA President 2025-2026)

My parents were square dancers and I learned square dancing in the fifties. Life intervened and it was over sixty years before I returned. Back in those days you learned by the song. Each song had its own set of calls. I remember my parents saying they now able to dance to "Smoke of the Water." One could buy vinyl records of square dance songs so folks could dance without a caller. Back then callers sang to live music, usually a guitar, bass and fiddle.

The traditional square dance still should have a place in modern western dance. Firstly, it is still a great introduction.

Without weeks of lessons dancers can immediately start dancing. Secondly, it is usually done with live music. Thirdly, it's a great dance form for those who have trouble remembering hundreds of calls.

The 2026 WASCA Spring Festival had reintroduced traditional square dancing to its festival and the response was overwhelming and a bit disappointing for many for lack of floor space. Because of this enthusiasm, with board approval, the next WASCA Spring Festival, Revvin' in 2027, will have live music Friday evening for both tradition and modern square dancing on the Plus hall.





MEMBERSHIP

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By Tom & Nancy Stafford

*Membership & Information Services Director
membership@wascaclubs.com*

The next WASCA clubs Delegates meeting is September 27, 2026. This will be a Zoom meeting at 7:00 P.M. Please ensure your club's delegate or alternate attends to keep your club in good standing. An email notification with the email link from the WASCA Secretary will be sent to your club's delegate and manager. The future Delegates meetings are February 28, 2027 and May 23, 2027. Please mark your calendars now.

All Membership dues were to be paid by June 1 2026 which is the start of the new WASCA Fiscal Year. 37 WASCA clubs have renewed their membership as of July 3, 2026. Swingin' Seniors has decided to fold. Three clubs advised us that the checks were in the mail. That leaves 5 clubs who need to renew their membership. The membership information and annual dues are needed to keep your insurance coverage current.

We hope that you keep dancing this summer. Many clubs go dark, some change schedule or location and some keep dancing their normal schedule during the summer. For instance, Rivermont

Ramblers will still be dancing on the 2nd and 4th Fridays as well as having a club danceshop on Tuesdays. Some clubs like Tom Thumb Squares will be having a summer series. Circle Eights of Waynesboro change location and schedule. Be sure to check with the Club before you go. A couple of Festivals that don't require long distance travel include the Star Spangled Banner Festival in July and the Tennessee State Convention in August. Both dances have great callers and cuers.

As an F.Y.I., the email addresses for each club as published in the Calls 'n' Cues, such as "your-club@wascaclubs.com" automatically forward to the email(s) of the club's information contact.

Please send us any email address, phone number, or postal address changes for your President (manager), Delegate, Alternate Delegate, or Information Contact. You can email them to membership@wascaclubs.com or call us. Nancy's cell phone number is 703-217-1670. Tom's cell is 703-217-4791.

Please send WASCA Club Directory changes to

membership@wascaclubs.com



CHOREO CORNER

with Dick Otis

Website: www.DickOtis.com Email: dick.otis@me.com

In the last Choreo Corner, I began the issue with the following request:

"Before I begin, I have a request. If you are reading this article, please drop me a short email. You can just say "yes" (I read them), or feel free to comment on its content. I've been writing this column for many years now, and I have no idea how many, if any, dancers actually read them"

I received only a few written replies, some from overseas, some from students and one from a WASCA BOD fixture who will remain un-named. Several dancers verbally replied as well. Not the resounding response I was hoping for, but still rewarding to know a few people really care.

So Choreo Corner will continue. Here is one response I received:

Hi Dick!

I have a question as far as calling and I meant to ask you last night and totally forgot!

When callers are calling a dance are they kind of making it up/improvising as they go or do you have set routines to specific songs? Like if someone gave you a specific song they requested or a list of songs would a caller be able to call a dance to them or would they need to plan out their dance ahead of time? I teach ZUMBA and I have a specific choreographed routine to each particular song that I use. If someone handed me a list of five songs they wanted me to teach to, that would be difficult because I choreograph my routine routines to the individual song. I suppose in a pinch I could make up something as I go along because I've taught long enough but generally speaking that's not how it works. So I was just wondering the same thing for calling; do you pick a song you want to use and make it up as you go or do you have to "choreograph" the song ahead of time?

The answer is, it depends. A square dance tip

consists of a hoedown sequence (followed by a singing call. For a hoedown sequence, callers use a combination of one or more techniques: memorized modules, written choreography and sight calling.

Pure sight would be the caller looking at the square's formation and arrangement (dancer partner relationship, e.g. Boy, Girl; Girl, Boy; Girl, Girl etc. and deciding what the next call comes next. Pure sight calling is rare. Most callers rely on past memory, e.g. a module sequence in addition to sight calling. A very simple module example would be HEADS Square Thru 4, Swing Thru, BOYS Run, Wheel & Deal, Allemande Left.

The only requirement for a hoedown is that it has a regular, recognizable beat, usually between 120 and 128 beats per minute. There are hundreds, if not thousands of published square dance hoedowns from square dance music publishers. But any song with an appropriate beat can be used. You can listen to a sample of hoedowns (as well as singing calls) on-line at <https://www.ceder.net/recorddb/>

Written choreography means the caller has used checkers, a computer program, or someone's published routine to create a pre-determined sequence of calls.

Singing calls are more structured. You cannot just grab any old song and use it as a singing call. There are seven parts to any singing call, the Opening, two figures rotating the girls to the next boy, a Middle section, two more two figures rotating the girls to the next boy (finally back to their original partner, and a Closing. Each of the 7 parts has 64 beats. In addition there may be an intro and ending of 8-16 beats.

The rotating figure is a defined module which move the girls so every girl dances with every boy.

When a singing call is published by a record producer, these figures are defined for the singing call. Usually, it is the same module used four times. This way the dancers can relax and enjoy the song without worrying about a complicated figure.

Caller can substitute different figures from those published to make it more interesting, however not every figure will fit in every song. Some traditional singing call figures should not be modified.

Very experienced and skilled callers can change singing call figures on the fly using figures they know well in almost any singing call.

Callers can buy singing calls directly from a record label publisher, or through a brokerage site

such as <https://musicforcallers.com>. Take a look at this site and you will see links to many popular square dance music labels.

For an in-depth discussion on music by Buddy Weaver (owner of Blue Star, Hi Hat, and Rawhide labels) check out this link to his presentation to NCASDLA callers.

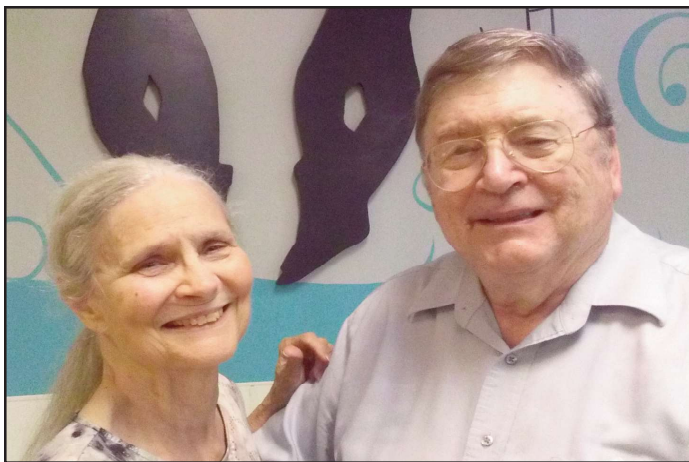
Buddy Weaver Music Part One. (1 Hour 14 minutes), https://youtu.be/xWSyzivL_E8

Buddy Weaver Music Part Two (36 minutes) <https://youtu.be/ZLDOKWV5AF0>

Let the dancing begin!

Bonus: Buddy Weaver and me singing MTA at Merry Notes in 2019 <https://youtu.be/ILLDj5qDySI>





Greetings, WASCA and MDSDF dancers

Yes dancers, it really is July, and we're celebrating our country's semiquincentennial birthday [250th] in typical DC heat and humidity.

While many of our dancing clubs have gone dark over the summer, some gallant groups with good air conditioning have continued to dance and you can find out when and where later in this issue.

But summertime also provides a number of special dancing opportunities and this summer is no exception. July will offer additional round dancing special events with the 50th annual ICBDA Convention in St George UT -- July 8-11, with the Shottings, the Buchanans along with several other RDTA members cueing and dancing at the convention. In August -- August 1-6 --several RDTA members and WASCA/MDSDF dancers will attend "the Institute" in Purdue University, W Lafayette IN.

Locally, you will not want to miss the 61st Annual Star Spangled Banner Festival -- July 16 - 18 -- at the same venue as last year -- the Hilton Double Tree in Pikesville MD. Come and enjoy " Getting our Kicks in 2026" with exciting music and outstanding round dancing with the exceptional national cuer staff -- the Garzas, and the Worlocks -- and our own Amy and Ken Shotting.

Finally, you won't want to miss the RDTA annual Butterfly Ball on Saturday August 15 from 6:30-9:00 PM at the Greenbelt Community Center. This phase II-IV dance, featuring five of your favorite RDTA cuers -- the Hoppers, the Kincaids, Christina Eum, the Shottings, and the Ryders-- will provide "cool" dancing in the air conditioned gymnasium and its wooden dance floor. There will also be some tasty goodies and smooth libations to enjoy. A flyer and the dance program are included

RDTA President's Message

by
Ken & Berni Ryder

later in this issue. RDTA asks for a \$10 per person donation. We look forward to dancing with all who can join us Saturday, August 15.

This summer and fall will also provide opportunities to learn some new round dance rhythms or "brush up" on some rhythms you're still not fully comfortable dancing. The Ryders are continuing their basic dance class and Intermediate Workshop on Sundays at St Barnabas Episcopal Church throughout this summer and into the fall. The Shottings will also be continuing their classes in September. See the flyers later in this issue and other information available on current Round Dance classes in the section on Dance Classes in this Calls 'N Cues Issue and then check with one of the leaders holding a class convenient for you to see when they will be starting to teach a new rhythm.

Stay "cool" and healthy as we all enjoy our favorite "social contact sport"-- choreographed ball room dancing [aka "round" dancing] during these "hot and humid" summer months.





Column
By
Peggy Portner

REVVIN' IN '27
Where It All Began

Revvin' evokes racing and high RPMs. But where and when did racing and competition become synonymous?

Once horses became domesticated and wheeled transport became more sophisticated, horse racing became popular, and, evolved into chariot racing. Informal horsemanship and speed contests occurred first in Persia around 1500-1000 BCE. The Olympics, held in the Greek city of Olympia, featured chariot races, and Egyptian rulers from 16 BCE held horse races to entertain the public.

The original Greek Olympic Games, founded in 776 BCE by Eleans, the wealthy horse-owning aristocracy, featured five foundation horse racing events. The day began with a parade into the hippodrome (a large amphitheater) as a herald announced the drivers and owners. The Greek gods were ubiquitous: a bronze eagle, a symbol of Zeus, the race patron, was raised at the beginning of the competition. A bronze dolphin, the sign of Poseidon, was lowered to mark each lap. As is common today with horse racing, the rider and the owner were different persons; owners were wealthy and often sponsored several teams. Most charioteers were slaves or hired professionals who tended to be slight but very tall, unlike today's small jockeys. Both horses and riders underwent intensive training, requiring strength, endurance and courage.

By the mid-first century BCE, the Roman Empire had become famous for its chariot races in enormous 'circuses', large, open-air venues that served as popular social and political centers. Besides chariot races, they offered gladiator contests, wild animal hunts, theatrical performances and political and religious

events. The emperors used these spectacles to distract the populace from unrest while celebrating their own wealth and power. The typical Roman circus was an elongated, rounded rectangle, with a median strip known as the spina, decorated with statuary and columns. At end each of the spina were metae, conical poles to guide the charioteers; the starting gates were called carceres, staggered so each team crossed the starting line simultaneously. The emperor, senators and their guests sat in reserved sections of the tiered arena seating.

The largest and most famous of the Roman circuses, the Circus Maximus, was built in the sixth century BCE and could accommodate 150,000 to 250,000 spectators. Compare this to the largest US stadium, Michigan Stadium, in Ann Arbor, that holds only just over 107,000. Situated between the Aventine and Palatine hills in Rome, the Circus Maximus was 2,037' long and 387' wide. It fell into disrepair during the Middle Ages and is now the site of a public park where remnants are still visible.

The races themselves consisted of two, three and four horse chariots. The first race started with a massive 40 chariots; spills and even deaths were common and only a handful completed the race. As the venues and equipment developed, races became more frequent and lasted longer: up to twenty-four races per day, lasting from seven to fifteen days. As the Roman Empire expanded, so did the races' popularity: circuses were built in present-day Turkey, Egypt, Tunisia, Spain, France and Austria.

The movie epic, Ben-Hur, recreated a thrilling and unforgettable chariot race. The chariot scene took five weeks (spread over three

months) to film and cost \$1 million. A vast amount of footage was used to film the race; the ratio of footage shot to used was one of the highest ever, 263:1. The sequence used primarily stunt men and dummies, but actor Stephen Boyd as Messala, Ben-Hur's rival, actually performed all but two of his own stunts. The film was praised unstintingly; the New York Times critic Bosley Crowther said ""There has seldom

been anything in movies to compare with this picture's chariot race. It is a stunning complex of mighty setting, thrilling action by horses and men, panoramic observation and overwhelming use of dramatic sound." The Los Angeles Times said the chariot race "will probably be preserved in film archives as the finest example of the use of the motion picture camera to record an action sequence."



Depiction of the Circus Maximus



The Circus Maximus Today