

Our Side of the Mic

An article sponsored by the Denver Area Callers & Cuers Association

Bob Riggs ... Spring 2023

It's almost spring and based on what I'm hearing we have had a successful winter holding square and round dance classes resulting in many new and better dancers. The conversation concerning SSD vs MS continues with the result that many in our community have taken sides resulting in dissension in our community. I expressed my opinion in the winter bulletin, but this article is about ensuring that our community is focused on our mutual objectives. I believe we can all agree that we would like to increase the number of dancers at our dances, in our community and at our special events. We all want our dance participants to be excited about attending a variety of dances. And mostly we want all dancers to thoroughly enjoy each night out in the square and round dance community.

To accomplish this, we need to all use our enthusiasm and skills to communicate the positive features of our great activity. So, forget all the negative. Why do you enjoy the activity? Some words that come to mind include new and old friendships, mental and physical exercise, personal enjoyment, the general sense of joy, and much more.

So, if we can agree with Jerry Story's thought, "Friends Bring Friends" and "Friends Dance with Friends" is the most effective recruiting method, then how do we motivate our friends/dancers to talk about our activity everywhere we go and in everything we do? This means engaging in dialog at church, at the store with clerks, at school with parents or staff, at the athletic club, in our doctor's office, while casually talking to total strangers while out for a walk, etc. So, get out there and make some **friends**. They may be ready to join your next class and then we can welcome them to the activity.

As a follow-up to the SSD / MS discussion in the Winter Bulletin, CALLERLAB, the International Square Dance Callers Association has published a document entitled SSD Frequently Asked Questions that is available on the Knowledge.CALLERLAB.org website, <https://knowledge.callerlab.org/ssd-faq-frequently-asked-questions>. Below I have included two of the questions in the context of dancers.

What if my favorite call is not on the SSD list? If a dancer requests the use of a specific call or the caller desires to use a specific call for a dance. Please feel free to use **any** call you wish, **after** you give a quick and entertaining teach to **that** night's group.

SSD is aimed more at Dance Mode than Teach Mode. If you choose to use extra calls, it's a great idea to select a call which is easy to teach and fun for the dancers to learn.

What if I think the SSD list should be bigger or smaller? Many callers & dancers have expressed the desire to have more calls or fewer calls in the program. Callers should feel free to use **any** call they wish, with their own group(s). Simply give your dancers a **quick** and **entertaining** lesson **before** you use a call that is new to them.

Be aware: SSD is a grassroots effort. You are very welcome to get involved with the Facebook Group and/or the CALLERLAB SSD Committee. Come up with an idea. Convince others that your proposal is solid, and your reasoning is sound. If you invent a

better mousetrap, the entire SSD movement will move in the direction of your success story! It's exciting and satisfying when your idea helps shape history!

We hope the benefits of having a **tested, popular, well-designed** program will outweigh any desire to become a maverick. SSD uses proven methods which have brought great success so far. You benefit from everyone else's experience. And everyone else hopes to benefit from your successes. We're all in this **together**.