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There are many components to an automobile that make it run; loose one and it usually stops in its' tracks. The same holds true with regards to a square dance club. In order to function well a square dance club needs dancers, leaders, and a caller. The caller provides the music, choreography, teaching, and entertainment necessary to create the dance. The club provides the platform for dancers to enjoy the social fun and interaction our activity offers. Regular maintenance is necessary to keep an auto in tip top shape. Oil is changed, filters are replaced, fluids are checked, tires rotated, and in some States an annual inspection is required. Granted callers and clubs are less complex but there are things that need service. Ever change a caller's spark plug or check the clubs oil?

First let's do a diagnostic check up for the caller. It doesn't take long for a caller to become rusty and fall into ruts. All the music starts to sound the same, dancers anticipate the choreography, enthusiasm reduces, applause dies out, and finally dancers stop attending. When taken for granted a caller could care less if he/she is really working at all. What can be done to avoid this? First the caller must desire to change and improve their skills. If so, several options are available. Area caller associations help if information and training can be obtained to spark interest. Weekend seminars offered across the country as well as full curriculum caller's school can also do the trick. A concentrated forty hour school can open the eyes of most callers today. You can teach an old dog new tricks. If funds are scarce there are groups that offer scholarships. CALLERLAB does offer several scholarships every year. Contact the home office at 321/639-0039 to apply.

Another great opportunity to avoid the doldrums is to attend an annual CALLERLAB convention. This year's convention is being held in Colorado Springs, CO. Next year it will be held in Los Angeles, CA. Some callers choose not to attend because they think it's just another meeting. Actually, there is a whole lot more offered at a CALLERLAB convention. Seminars are conducted prior to and during the convention. One on one voice training is available by a leading voice specialist. One on one coaching is available by several CALLERLAB accredited caller coaches. Various refreshment breaks are planned along with other social parties, luncheons and evening banquets providing the opportunity to network, socialize, and exchange ideas with some of the best entertainers in our business. Yes, committee meetings are conducted during the day often generating great discussions. Some callers are very passionate about the activity and wish to share these views with everyone they meet. In the end, compromises are made and work gets accomplished. Most every evening some dance form associated with our activity is available. Folks gather at after parties or other watering holes to discuss the daily results. Overall, callers obtain new skills, sharpen old ideas, and cherish the memories and reunions of fellow leaders. The net result is a caller that returns to a club invigorated, eager to energize the dancers.

Next, let's take a look under the hood of our dance leaders. Many ideas are passed down from one leader to the next only because that's just the way it's always been done. If what you are doing is currently not working seek new ways. Area dancer associations can offer assistance. National organizations can also help. Check out web sites that offer winning ways, new approaches and try again. Experiment with new strategies for recruiting, teaching and maintaining members. Don't give up.

Often new dancers are thrown into leadership roles; sink or swim. This should be avoided. Past officers should provide training to new recruits. Give incoming leaders an owner's manual or some sort of training guide documenting full duties and timelines. Don't just hand them the gavel or they will waste time and money reinventing the wheel. Some regions of the country offer leadership seminars that teach basic skills necessary to operate a dance club. If such a program is not available near you, start one. It's a great place to share ideas, learn responsibilities, and build bridges to the future. It is also a super way to train the leaders of tomorrow.

Those that seek a greater understanding of our square dance craft will be better prepared to mold its' future. Enthusiasm and passion drives our activity; leadership guides the journey. Take on an active role to pave the way. Callers and clubs that are properly motivated and well maintained will secure a better legacy for Square Dancing.