The Ultimate Call

Barry Clasper – barry@clasper.ca



Editor's Note--This article first appeared in the September, 1989 issue of the Zip Coder. Recently, I used this call at a dance, and it worked perfectly.

It has long seemed to me that there are far too many calls. By way of proof, I suggest that you attempt to lift a copy of Burleson's without the aid of hydraulic equipment. Those of you not currently engaging in a program of steroid abuse will perceive the problem immediately.

I have given this matter some thorough analytical consideration and thereby have developed the answer as to why there are so many calls. People keep *writing* them! Dozens, hundreds, thousands of them! There seems to be some sort of deep primal urge at work. They must write! If they go a day without producing a new call they begin to sweat and quiver, make incoherent sounds, and suffer call withdrawal. They are driven to produce more, ever more. Within the past year, this phenomenon reached some sort of pinnacle with the advent of *Rewind*. Through the simple yet devilishly effective device of requiring calls to be done backwards, the author has doubled the number of existing calls!

And that's not all - every new call that gets written now counts for two. Truly a masterstroke!

What drives these call-producing dynamos? Some might deem it an addiction or a form of insanity. But I believe it to be something worse. I believe it is a quest; akin to the search for the Holy Grail, the pursuit of perpetual motion, the watch for extra-terrestrial intelligence, the hunt for a parking space downtown. You might say that it's a *calling*. (Sorry, but you didn't really expect me to pass up an opportunity like that, did you?) They are striving to write, not many calls, but that one perfect call. The call that has perfect flow, perfect timing, may be called from any formation, has an elegantly simple but subtly complex rule, may be understood by a dancer with 30 seconds dancing experience, and may be explained easily to non-English speakers using only gestures. In other words, the ultimate call - the call that supplants all others.

In short, the reason they write so many calls is because nobody has gotten it *right* yet!

So I decided to solve the problem by writing the ultimate call and getting it over with. Actually, I didn't write this, I overheard it. But the instant of overhearing was a revelation! Suddenly, I knew how Newton felt when he was hit by the apple.[1] I knew how Archimedes felt as his bath water slopped on the floor.[2] I knew how Georges de Mestral felt when he first heard that alarming ripping sound.[3]

What I overheard was a friend explaining how to do a certain call. He said, "You go over there and turn around." Eureka!! I knew this was it. Think of it! A call which even a young child can comprehend instantly (if they can understand "go over there and stand in the corner" they can understand this), yet which can be used to express even the most subtle and complex choreographic ideas. Who needs *Big Block Follow the Yellow Bricking Turn and Deal*? Just

1 He understood the gravity of the situation.
2 He was buoyed up by the experience.
3 He felt firmly fastened and hooked into the future. If that's not enough of a clue, send me a stamped self-addressed envelope along with two box tops from any cereal you like, plus $150 for handling (I promise to handle it a lot).

Go Over There And Turn Around. (*GOTATA*)

Oh, you scoff? (I'm sure I heard a scoffing sound). Just consider the possibilities and variations offered by this call:

- *Go Over There and Don't Turn Around*
- *Don't Go Over There and Turn Around* (which may be interpreted by some to mean "don't go over there, just turn around', and by others to mean "don't do any of it" - this provides fodder for those who like to analyze and argue about insignificant subtleties in calls)
- *Reverse Go Over There and Turn Around* (i.e. left handed)
- *Left Go Over There And Turn Around* (i.e. reversed)
- *Cross Over There and Turn Around*
- *Criss-Cross Over There and Turn Around* (after too much wine with dinner)
- *Invert Go Over There and Turn Around* (you walk over on your hands)
- *Magic Go Over There And Turn Around* (you disappear in a puff of smoke and reappear in the new position)

Now, this may seem like pretty simple stuff to those who favour heavy-duty problem solving, but do not be fooled - this call has hidden depths; depths that can provide the mental bludgeoning craved by even the most fanatical C4 dancers.

Consider, for example, what happens when you fractionalize it. *GOTATA* once and a half is fairly straightforward (go over there, turn around, and come back), but think about *GOTATA* 2/3. Since *GOTATA* has two parts, we must seek the lowest common denominator and view 2/3 as 4/6. Now we can determine that the first half of the call (go over there) represents 3/6, leaving a 1/6 remainder yet to execute. Since the second half (turn around) represents a 180 degree turn, the remaining 1/6 of the call, which actually represents 1/3 of the remaining half, is a 60 degree turn. This puts a whole new slant on things! Not many calls can create a square that is no longer at right angles (except in the hands of Clark Baker, of course). This call is rife with new choreographic potential!

But there is even more! Since the direction of "And Turn Around" is undefined, the dancer gets to choose which way to turn. Some dancers may turn clockwise, others counter-clockwise. As a resolution challenge for callers, that makes Asymmetric Squares look like child's play!

Yes, I do believe I've done it. This is it - the ultimate call - simple, elegant, powerful, easy to remember, impossible to master.

Lee Kopman - eat your heart out!

Author's Addendum: At the time this article was written, it constituted square dance political satire. It had become conventional practice for callers to write and introduce a new call (often several) for every weekend and festival. As you might expect, while there was an occasional gem, they were widely scattered amidst a great deal of dross and dreck. I wrote this article as a cry for mercy. As a dancer I was tired of leaving

conventions with the latest disposable whiz-bangs dribbling out my ears and I wanted it to* please *stop. This turned out to be a case of "be careful what you wish for." The pendulum has now swung so far in the other direction that we have no new calls being tried out. While less tiring this way, it feels like we're beginning to stagnate. Anyone feel like writing an article about that?

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For reprint or editorial inquiries, please contact:
Allan Hurst – allanhurst@gmail.com - 650.207.0215