

Return to Vick Neumann

# Press Book



A CALLERLAB COMMITTEE PROJECT



## HANDLING YOUR OWN SQUARE DANCE PUBLICITY

There's no problem, really. You simply look in the phone book under "Public Relations" or something of that type and track down an individual or organization who will turn out press notices for you. That's all there is to it. Of course, you must expect to pay for the service. At roughly \$75.00 per hour, plus other charges, a really good publicity agent could cost you a few thousand a month -- possibly more, and that doesn't even guarantee that your picture or story will break into print, but then, that's the chance you have to take. Or, you could handle the job yourself.

Now, the job of letting the home folks know about you, the new class you're about to start or the fact that the high "mucki-de-muck" of Tasmania has invited you to call a dance in Timbuktu, isn't that big a deal if you know how to handle it and if you have the tools.

### YOUR CALLERLAB PRESS BOOK

The tools in this case are a collection of ready-to-use press releases which you simply retype (or have someone type for you). These contain many typical news items you will need. You only have to fill in the details before it's typed and taken to the local media (newspaper, radio or television station).

These are primarily the work of CALLERLAB member, Marvin Labahn (Chicago Ridge, IL). This is a project of the Communications & PR Committee.

### HAVE YOU A STORY TO TELL TO THE PRESS?

There is no sense in keeping square dancing a secret. With growing interest in square dancing, we need to rely on more than just word-of-mouth communication to let the public know more about the activity. The fact that there is to be a square dance week, a new class starting or a major square dance jamboree in the area will only reach a large portion of the public if it appears in the newspaper in your area. There's a very good chance that unless you take the initiative, the story may never reach these publications.

Local newspapers, believe it or not, are usually on the lookout for good, local stories that include information that is of interest to their reading public. Neat, well-written stories on the subject of square dancing have a public appeal and stand a good chance of being picked up by the editors.

If you have a flair for writing, great! We're including a "sample" news release. You will notice on the left hand margin the WHO, WHEN, WHAT, WHERE, HOW and WHY items that make up a good news story. Be sure your story includes all these elements.

Most of us do not have a natural flair for writing and for that reason, we have included some sample releases in the form of a PRESS BOOK. We invite you to go over the types of releases, selecting the ones that fit the type of news you would like to pass along. You'll need to substitute actual names, dates, times and places for the fictitious information, then re-type the material so it is easy for the folks at the newspaper to read.

Hand delivery of your release to the editor involved is not a bad idea. Be sure to include your name, address and phone number so you can be contacted if the newspaper wishes more information or might like to send a reporter and/or a photographer to cover the event.

While we haven't attempted to cover every conceivable type of news story, the material you find here will serve as guidelines for much of what you would like to

see in print. Incidentally, it never hurts to say "Thank You" if your story is picked up.

NOTE: The first press release regarding Danny Burns, etc. is typed as it should appear. In the interest of saving space, we have single-space typed the other "sample" press releases. Single spacing is generally unacceptable to newspaper editors. These are intended to offer guidance for appropriate structure and wording, etc. and are merely meant to serve as a guide. BE SURE TO DOUBLE SPACE any and all releases you may desire to have published. DO NOT print any words contained within parenthesis in the left margin, i.e., (WHO), (WHEN), etc.!

SAMPLE FORMAT FOR A PRESS RELEASE

LOCAL SQUARE DANCERS  
Carolyn Crosby  
317 N. Water St.  
Omaha, Nebraska 97210  
Phone: (402) 339-8320

FOR RELEASE DURING THE  
WEEK OF APRIL 13, 1987

DO NOT  
PRINT THIS  
COLUMN!

- (WHO) Danny Burns, nationally known square dance caller from Clemson, Texas,
- (WHEN) will appear in Omaha on Saturday, June 8, at the Eighth Annual Square
- (WHAT) Fun Fest sponsored by the Omaha Square Dancers and Callers Association.
- (WHERE) The dance, to be held at Lotus Memorial Center, is expected to attract several thousand square dancers from Nebraska and neighboring states.
- (HOW) Spectators may watch this colorful spectacle by purchasing tickets at the door or by calling at Royal's Music Shop. Dancers' tickets are available through the associations.
- (WHY) Ron Smith, local businessman and association president, says that proceeds from the dance will be directed into the educational fund of the sponsoring group, to assist in financing training classes for area square dance callers.

\* \* \* \* \* E N D \* \* \* \* \*

Thank you for any coverage you may give this release. We also thank you for the coverage you have given us in this past.

Your Name  
Title (if appropriate)

See, that's essentially all you do. Just take a "sample" that fits and where there are blanks (underlined areas) fill in the appropriate information. It's not a bad idea to include a little note similar to the "thank you" above.

\* \* \* \* \*

The following are suggestions for several types of releases. Just select the appropriate topic, substitute the names, places, dates, etc. that fit and type away. Remember to double space your finished press release prior to submission!

#### Announcing a square dance demonstration --

Square dancing, designated as the Official Folk Dance of America, will be in the spotlight here in Clinton the third week in September, which is designated as Square Dance Week. According to Sam Brown, a member of CALLERLAB - The International Association of Square Dance Callers, starting Monday, September 19, all the clubs in the area will be featuring open houses to which the public is invited. A demonstration of all forms of square dancing will be featured and those attending may be given the opportunity to join in on some of the simple dances.

"Square dancing is our traditional dance", said Sam. "It's a warm and friendly activity and is enjoyed not only throughout the United States but in Canada and in more than 50 countries around the world. Anyone who comes to one of our open houses, sponsored by the 18 clubs in this area, will find out quickly how much fun it is."

Mr. Brown also explained that there will be special attractions through the week including a special pageant to be held in Echo Park on Sunday, the 25th. A number of beginner classes will be starting the last week of September. Anyone interested is invited to call SQUARE DANCE INFORMATION, 392-4491.

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#### Announcing new square dance classes --

Telco Squares of this city will conduct a series of square dance lessons starting on Tuesday night, September 27. The course will be held at Carpenters' Hall, 211 Melrose Avenue, 7:30 PM.

Caller for the series will be Ron Smith, an accredited caller with CALLERLAB -- The International Association of Square Dance Callers.

Square dancing, which has been designated the official Folk Dance of America, is an activity enjoyed by young and old alike. You need no previous experience in dancing, just show up at the hall fifteen or twenty minutes early the first night, prepared for a good time. Ladies, please wear a skirt and blouse and low heeled shoes. Men, comfortable slacks and a long sleeved shirt and shoes with leather soles will be most comfortable for you. For further information, call Gladys Brown, 392-4611.

#### A square dance graduation --

Fifty-three members of the Gingham Squares beginners' group graduated last Thursday night, culminating a series of lessons that started last September. The class, which met each Tuesday night in Ramblers Hall, will now dance during the coming months as a part of a special "Half-way" Club also sponsored by members of the Gingham Squares.

The special graduation party was attended by more than 30 of the club's experienced dancers and caller Bill Gibbons, their accredited CALLERLAB caller/instructor, saw to it that everyone had a great time.

"Square dance classes are the starting point in this activity," said Gibbons. "Actually, taking part in a square dance class is just like attending a party once every week. While we learn the dances and the language of square dancing, we still have a great time just dancing for the fun of it, having parties and getting acquainted with each other." According to a club representative, new classes will be starting in September and anyone interested in obtaining more information may call 642-9311.

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#### A coming square dance clinic --

A special three-day clinic for square dance callers and teachers is being offered at Claremont High School, 7th and Palm, next weekend, October 6, 7 and 8. The series of six meetings, starting Friday afternoon, is sponsored by the Claremont Callers and Teachers Association and is open to members desiring to improve their calling and teaching skills.

Instructor of the unique series is Bill Ball of Indianapolis, Indiana, an accredited caller-coach and member of CALLERLAB -- the International Association of Square Dance Callers. Mr. Ball has conducted schools for callers throughout the United States for the past 18 years and is considered to be an outstanding authority on the subject of calling.

According to Phil Stevens, president of the local callers association, a long-time caller in the area, and himself a member of CALLERLAB, "The tremendous growth in popularity of American Square Dancing right here in Claremont makes a short course such as this especially meaningful. We have more than a dozen new classes for beginner dancers starting each year and, with more than forty active clubs in the area, there is always a need for good callers and teachers.

The training course is by advance registration only. For additional information, you may call (area code) 663-9511.

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#### Announcing a new accredited member of CALLERLAB --

Local caller and teacher Sid Green, a leader in the area's square dance activities, has just become an accredited member of CALLERLAB -- the International Association of Square Dance Callers. Green, who regularly calls for the Boots and Ruffles, Side Winders and Double Eights square dance clubs, has been active in square dancing in Wilmington for the past 12 years. His calling at the annual March of Dimes Fund-Raising Square Dance has helped to mark that event as a special civic affair.

Being recognized in this manner by CALLERLAB is tantamount to being accepted as a member in any of a number of the nation's prestigious professional organizations. CALLERLAB, which was formed more than a decade ago by some of the country's most influential square dance leaders, boasts of 1,800 members scattered across North America and in more than a dozen countries overseas.

According to Green, "CALLERLAB has done more in strengthening the role of the caller and teacher than any other single organization. With several million devotees taking part in the square dancing activity today and with the activity growing

continually, I feel very honored to be recognized in this way and to be able to play a role in the growth of square dancing here in this area."

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#### Appointment of a square dance club caller --

John Perkins, local merchant and recent chairman of the local Civic Affairs Committee, and his wife Sarah, recent treasurer of the area's Girl Scout Council, have been appointed as callers for the Cross Trails Square Dance Club. Following their appointment last Tuesday night at Rio Grande High School, the Perkins, who are members of the Tri State Callers Association and board members of CALLERLAB -- the International Association of Square Dance Callers, and have been calling and teaching square dancing since March, 1976, told the members how pleased they were to be chosen. "We see the Cross Trailers as one of the outstanding clubs in the area and look forward to calling for the members," said John. One of the assignments of the new caller and his wife will be to teach the new beginners' class next fall.

The Perkins indicated that the club meets every second and fourth Tuesday at the Roseburg Women's Club, 15th and Main Streets, and those who know how to square dance are invited to attend.

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#### Covering square dance convention attendance --

Martha Smith, resident of Medville, returned home last week after having attended the annual convention of CALLERLAB - The International Association of Square Dance Callers, held in New York City.

In her own words, Mrs. Smith described the convention as "just about the most exciting event that has ever happened for me. Here in Medville, we have four very fine callers and square dance teachers. There, at the Waldorf-Astoria where the four day convention was held last week, there were over 2,000 callers from all parts of the world, the greats in this activity and the near-greats, all sharing their knowledge and expertise with those of us who were relative newcomers."

According to Smith, CALLERLAB has become the guiding force in this activity which today involves more than six million dancers here in the United States with thousands of others scattered around the world. "It has established a code of ethics, definitions for the dances, and systems for the accreditation of callers. It is largely because of this organization that square dancing is becoming so popular today." Asked about square dancing here in Medville, Martha Smith indicated that the number of clubs and classes in the area was growing each year. "Anyone interested in where classes are being held may phone me at 652-7443," she said.

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#### Square dance election results --

The Caldwell Square Dance Callers Association last week announced the outcome of its annual election of officers. Dick Boyd, long-time caller and teacher in the area, will be the 1987 president. Boyd, who regularly calls for the Pi-R Squares, The Guys and Dolls and the Hicks 'n Chicks, is a 30 year resident of Caldwell and has called square dances in the area for the past fifteen years.

A former vice-president and treasurer of the caller's group, Dick has participated in a number of callers' schools and is a member of CALLERLAB -- the International Association of Square Dance Callers.

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#### A special square dance event --

"Thirty Years of Square Dancing." That was the theme of the Jolly Rogers Club at their meeting last Wednesday night. More than 200 past and present members of the club gathered at Ferndale Lodge to celebrate the occasion. Caller Zeb Brown has called for the club since its inception in 1953 and is an accredited caller and member of CALLERLAB, the International Association of Square Dance Callers. He called a program that included many of the old square and round dances that the old timers, as well as some of the newer members, remembered.

The party took on an air of reunion with two couples traveling more than 500 miles to attend. Sidney and Elsa Brown drove down from Salem, while Rodney and Betty Jensen flew in from Milwaukee just for the evening.

"Square dancing is a way of life for most of us," said President Ray Jones. "Many of us who have been a part of the club since its inception think of the other members as part of our 'family'. The hardest thing in the world was to turn off the lights and shut the door at 2:30 the next morning. If we hadn't, I'm sure the party would still be going."

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#### A square dance caller's tour --

Jim and Meg Stevens, callers of the Carousels Square Dance Club and long time residents of Medford, returned last Friday from a 21 day tour of Europe. The Stevens, considered to be goodwill ambassadors for their hobby, called square dances in six of the seven countries they visited. When asked how they could be understood in Germany, France, Italy, and Spain, Jim Stevens explained that all the calling in these countries is done in English. "Many of those for whom we called were not Americans, but they had learned to square dance to the calls in English. This is the same around the world, in the more than 50 countries overseas where square dancing is enjoyed."

The Stevens will be showing their slides of "Square Dancing Across Europe" at the next meeting of the Promenaders at Trinity Hall. "If ever there was an international language", explained Meg, "it would have to be square dancing. This is the official dance of the USA and you would be surprised at the warm welcome we received everywhere we went. Somehow square dancing opens the doors and allows us to join hands and dance with 'friends we've never met before and that's a great feeling."

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### CONSIDERATIONS WHEN WRITING PRESS RELEASES

Find out the deadline date for submitting copy to be published. Be sure the material submitted gets to the editor in ample time.

Press releases should be short and to the point. There are many organizations and people who compete for the available news space in each issue.

Press releases should have a minimum of two inches open space at the top of the page and adequate margins on the sides. This allows the copywriters an opportunity to add ahead and necessary information for the typesetter.

Be sure to use proper grammar. If this is not your cup of tea, get someone knowledgeable to proof it for you before you send it out. Use a dictionary -- be sure all words are spelled correctly.

Use a thesaurus to avoid using the same words or phrases throughout the press release.

Sentences should be short and to the point. Do not ramble on.

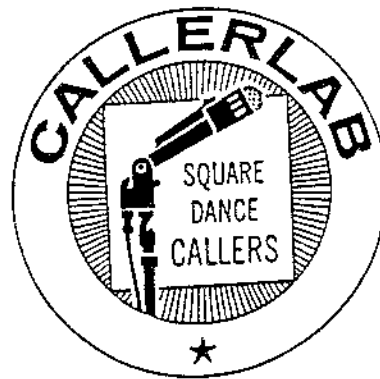
By following the above hints, your press release should be short, snappy and factual. Editors do not want a press release that resembles an essay.

It is illegal to publicize raffles or door prizes. Any use of the words "raffle" or "door prize" would violate U.S. Postal regulations. You may, however, say "Among the prizes to be awarded at the dance is a color television set". (Note: Television is not abbreviated.)

THAT'S IT FOLKS....

From these eleven samples and the brief section on "Considerations When Writing Press Releases", you should be able to prepare a good share of your needed releases. If you need to innovate -- create a release of your own -- use these samples and considerations as your guidelines.

Oh yes, one last word. When you get your story into print, it never hurts to say "thank you". The "thanks" can be in the form of a simple courtesy thanking the media source for publicizing your event or news. A short letter saying "thanks" is appropriate. Who knows, you might be sending in another story sometime!



Here's

To

**Bigger  
CLASSES**