

Ethics

by Tim Marriner

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Throughout all time there has always been a moral right and wrong. Free will allows us to pick and choose the way we live our lives. The subject of ethics was once a clear concise topic that defined what was right, verses what was wrong. Generations of people followed the Golden Rule to do unto others as you would have others do unto you.

Agreements were made by handshakes rather than reams of bureaucratic paperwork. The sign of good character was doing the right thing even when nobody was looking. While these moral barometers still hold true today, there seems to be an upswing of loose interpretation of these views under the guises of smart business. Instead of seeing rules for the common good some business people seek loop holes around issues thinking the rules don't apply to them as long as they are savvy enough to interpret them in a different manner. As a result, more and more laws get written to protect folks from the predators that lurk in the grey areas of our business world.

In our small world of square dancing there are not that many players involved. Those that are most active know the real movers and shakers in the business field. Some are hobbyist while others are full time workers. With growing social media outlets and email, the small community can stay informed of almost anyone these days. At any time, someone can record actions by taking pictures or movies with their phones and post them immediately to a web site. It has become more and more difficult to stay off the radar. The fact that everything in public is privy to be replayed on any social media site these days is kind of disheartening. That makes it all the more important to do the right thing all the time.

Yet some callers still find ways to get into all types of trouble. Some refuse to pay for licensing music. They are not members of any organization that provide such licensing nor have they acquired a private performance license putting clubs they work for at risk of being fined hundreds of thousands of dollars. Some work without contracts and show up for events only when it is profitable and convenient. Some hire other callers to fill in for their scheduled events just to take a higher paying gig. Some leaders and callers have hired and contracted fellow callers only to renege on the payment. Some callers feel the need to publicly tear down other callers without any remorse. The volume of complaints lodged is astounding. These are just the mentionable offenses that get submitted to the CALLERLAB home office for review. The CALLERLAB Code of Ethics would not be necessary if everyone did the right thing. Unfortunately they are necessary in today's field of work. Every CALLERLAB member signs a vow to follow these rules each year they pay their dues. This higher standard of conduct is not set by any other organization.

Please review the CALLERLAB Code of Ethics below or at CALLERLAB.org. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this list, contact the CALLERLAB Home Office or myself for answers.

CODE OF ETHICS

(Revised April 26, 2012)

Code: The professional caller must wholeheartedly subscribe to the established standards of relationships to accomplish the declared purpose and objective of callers in the square dance profession.

I Acknowledge:

1. That I have an obligation to the dancers. Therefore, I shall provide information, instruction and leadership to enable and encourage the dancer to develop to his/her full potential so that he/she may derive the maximum satisfaction and pleasure from the activity.
2. That I have an obligation to the club organizations. Therefore, I shall participate in the development and maintenance of a sound and respected club organization, shall endeavor to discharge this obligation to the best of my ability, and advise them wisely and honestly.
3. That I have an obligation to the profession. Therefore, I shall respect the dignity of the leaders, teachers and callers as persons, and shall maintain an honorable reputation for personal integrity.
4. That I have an obligation to the activity as a whole. Therefore, in my personal, business, and social contacts I shall be conscious of its heritage and its future and conduct myself accordingly.
5. That I have an obligation to continue to work for professional growth; to adhere to uniform nomenclature; and to learn, to lead, and to contribute to the total square dance movement to the utmost extent of my ability.
6. That I have an obligation to all associations dealing with the activity. Therefore, I shall promote a spirit of cooperation between the various elements of the organization.
7. That I will conduct myself at dances in a responsible manner that would not discredit other callers in the profession. This includes: (a) Making every reasonable effort to arrive at calling engagements early enough to ensure that the dance will begin on time; (b) Refraining from using language in poor taste or telling jokes that may be embarrassing to the dancers; (c) Not calling under the influence of alcohol or any controlled substance; (d) Not deviating from the advertised dance program.
8. That except in extreme emergencies, I will honor all of my signed contracts. By doing so I agree to: (a) Fulfill all items of the contract; (b) Prevent a hardship to the sponsoring group by cancelling my contract. I will provide sufficient and adequate notice of any contract cancellation that may be absolutely necessary. (c) Obtain approval from the contracting group before sending a replacement caller.
9. That I will conduct my financial affairs within the square dance activity in a responsible manner. This includes paying my debts on time, or making acceptable arrangements if unable to pay on time.
10. That I will only perform music which has been obtained in a manner that properly and completely compensates the artist(s) and producer(s) responsible for its creation. I will not enable others to use copies of my music while I still retain its ownership.

As a Member of CALLERLAB (The International Association of Square Dance Callers), I accept these obligations as a personal responsibility, and solemnly pledge to be consistent with the highest standard of professional services both in spirit and in fact. I shall discharge these obligations honorably and dedicate myself to that end.