

ARE YOU A 2ND-RATE PERSON?

Sometimes we as cuers seem to have the idea that since we are not callers, we must be second-rate people. And sometimes we feel like we are being treated like second-rate people, both by some callers, and by some square dancers. What could be the cause of such feelings? Are they justified, and if so, what can we do about it, and if not what can we do about it?

First of all, there are no second-rate people. There are also no second-rate occupations; and in the field of square dancing, a cuer is just as important to a general program as a caller - BUT, and that is possibly a big but, a cuer is important in a different way, and sometimes also to different people. One of the important things to remember is what and where those differences occur, and to be able to adjust and act properly to them.

At most joint square/round dance events, you will find a greater percentage of people who square dance than who round dance. Therefore it stands to reason that the caller, who is responsible for the square dance part of the program, generally has a greater responsibility than the cuer. But a greater responsibility DOES NOT make this person a greater person. And that is what we have to remember. But what DOES make this person a greater person (at his/her job, that is), is if they know their job to a better and greater extent than the cuer knows his/her job. And unfortunately this is often the case. This is often why callers get the attitude that cuers are second-rate.

Because of this, and because we often realize that they are correct in this attitude, we often think of ourselves as "second-rate". And then what happens the infamous snowball goes into effect; thinking we're second-rate, therefore acting second-rate, being recognized as second-rate by others. So you see that THIS ATTITUDE ORIGINATES FROM OURSELVES !!

The only way to overcome this is to take the time and effort to know our job, and everything included in it at least as well as the caller knows his/her job. That means:

- knowing about your equipment;
 - how to set it up;
 - how to take it down;
 - how to use it properly;

- knowing how to use your mike without getting feedback;

- knowing how to "work" a floor, remembering we are also responsible for the atmosphere of a dance;
 - using a good variety of music during each tip;
 - using your music to bring the dancers "up";
 - using your music to settle them back down;
 - asking the caller what he wants or if he has a plan for the evening (sometimes they don't even know, then **you** have the upper hand and are more professional than the caller !!);

- knowing how to adjust your program to the level of the floor;
 - bringing a good variety of levels;
 - being willing and able to change things a bit if necessary, both in level, and in the number of round dances cued; (i.e. what would be the best program)
 - not listening only to the "high level" dancers (remember they are usually the only ones who know the **names** of dances to request);

- being able to hash cue (and even doing it once in a while for part of a tip);

- if we teach, really knowing what we teach, and showing it professionally, not sloppily.

I am convinced that if we really start training ourselves to think what would be the best possible program that we can be put together for each and every time we are on the podium we will boost our own morale. Then we will **know** that we are not second-rate and the snowball will move in the other direction; we will feel more professional, act more professionally, and will be treated more professionally by others in our activity.

For a round world,

Susie + Gert-Jan

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