



It is time again for a bulletin article. Hmm, November, Thanksgiving, pumpkin pie, cranberries, ... Dennis O'Neal!

(Clarification: The association was "thanks," not "turkey.")

Last Fall, with the club treasury dangerously low, Dennis volunteered to handle our beginner lessons. He had never called or taught before, but he only expected maybe half a dozen people. Instead, he got 39.

Several months later, he had the caller bug. It is a rare disease. The last new caller in the Denver council was Mike Olivieri, 8 years ago. How serious is it? Dennis went to Callerlab training. He conducts lessons or workshops nearly every week. At our regular dances he sings a tip with the headline caller. He grins from ear to ear.



Even with my *months* of experience as a dancer, I figured callers just had to haul around a sound system and ad-lib some calls. (So, of course, they'd

need to know a lot of calls, maybe even all of them.)

Heck, if it were me, I'd just bring a book and run through calls, in say, alphabetical order: Allemande Left, All 8 Circulate, Bend the Line, California Twirl, Cast OFF 3/4. Oops, there seems to be a problem.

OK I get it. There are squares, waves, lines, circles, alamo rings, stars and so on. It appears that calls don't work with every formation. There must be some list of possible calls from each. Come to think of it, there must also be a list of calls that lead *to* each of these formations. That's a lot of lists.

And after a bunch of spins and swirls shuffle the deck, Whah-La, Allemande Left, and there's the Ace of Hearts (aka my "corner"). How do callers know when corners are lined up? Do they memorize the square? Magic? A really, really complicated list? A computer program?

Toss in a few other skills:

- Style – maybe a creative series of calls with surprising results, or a fun twist to an old-familiar song.
- Stage presence.
- Enthusiasm.
- Sense of humor.
- Good singing voice.
- Elocution (An excited caller mumbles, "Spin the Top Dixie Style" and you ...?!).

Wow, calling isn't as easy as it looks. And, first prize is constant weekend travel. Dennis is a truck driver, go figure.

Needless to say, us Timberline Toppers feel very fortunate having Dennis with the bug. In return, we know that he appreciates an occasional "thanks" and/or Purple Rock. But he seems most rewarded when we laugh and have fun. So, what the heck, it's the least we can do.