

Call of the month: Cut the diamond by Barry Leiba

Most of you know that Callerlab, the international association of square dance callers, designates *quarterly selections* to add variety to the call lists and to try out new calls. SPIN CHAIN AND EXCHANGE THE GEARS was a quarterly selection not many years ago, and it has since been added to the Plus list as an official call. Generally, the quarterly selections have been “experimental” calls, which were being tried out to determine popularity, but recently Callerlab has decided to take calls from higher level lists and make them quarterly selections. This has the advantages that the dancers are learning a call that they are likely to see again later and some of the other dancers already know the call, so they're able to help.

CUT THE DIAMOND is such a quarterly selection. It's the current Plus quarterly, and it's from the A1 list. It's a simple call and can be described as a “cross flip the diamond”. As in FLIP THE DIAMOND, the center dancers (those with the hand-hold) diamond circulate. The difference is that the points of the diamond slide together and trade (which is sort of a “cross flip”). From “normal” diamonds, this results in a two-faced line. It's very important to keep track of which way you're facing when you slide together and trade; if you tend to face in rather than slide sideways, then you can easily face in the wrong direction later, as we'll see. Some dancers make a “karate chop” motion with the hand that's pointing in, and shout “Hi-YA!” That not only

makes for a bit of fun, but it also reminds you which hand you're going to use to do the trade.

Cut the diamond might be called from “normal” diamonds (where everyone has the same shoulder into the center), “facing” diamonds (where the centers have one shoulder in and the points have the opposite shoulder in), or “funny” diamonds (where people are facing in variously mixed directions. In the first case, the result is two-faced lines. In the second case, you get waves. In the third case you'll end up in, not surprisingly, a “funny” formation. Let's take a look at an example of that which you might see at a Plus dance.

From a squared-up set, have the heads pass the ocean and the sides trade and roll. We now have diamonds in which the points are all facing into the square; in particular, in each diamond both points are facing the same wall. If we cut the diamond from here, the centers have it easy; they do a normal diamond circulate. The points must slide together to form a normal couple, and then do a **partner trade**. It's important to face the right direction when trading because it's common for someone to turn around when cutting this kind of diamond. The result is a *three-and-one line* with the head men facing in and everyone else facing out. You don't see this formation often at Plus, but there are some interesting things that you can do from it. Next month, we'll take a look at one.