

Sue Hulsether: I did just want to talk a little bit about how important the Pourparler group has been in my growth as a caller, my growth as a human. The Pourparler is an annual gathering of dance leaders that come from both the international dance community and the sort of contra square dance community. It's sort of co-sponsored by CDSS and the National Folk Organization, and it's aimed to be for people who dance with school and community groups. I started going to it before I was even doing this full time. I went, you know, sort of thinking, oh, I might do residency someday. My first one I went to was in Colrain, Massachusetts, right after 911 in 2001. I was still teaching school, still barely starting to be a caller, but it's just been influential. What's interesting about the Pourparler is it's not a large group, it happens in different places around the United States every year and there's people from different dance genres that all are people who intentionally teach the same populations. So I could gather international dance repertoire if I wanted to, and some people sort of do both contra and square and some international. But to me what's stimulating is to be with colleagues who teach the same population but don't teach the same material. Because then you get to talk about all the ways to work in schools or to work with new dancers, or to develop a series, or to make a living doing work as a dance leader of non-regular groups.

And so all the way back from 2001, when Peter Amidon said to me, "Well, if you're going to maybe think about doing residencies, you might want to get an iPod." I was like, "What's an iPod?" That's the stuff I learned way back then when I was thinking about buying a sound system to now where I'm a more senior member of the community and saying, this is what I've learned about my time doing residencies or this is what I've learned about trying to make a living as a caller or a partial living as a caller. So the Pourparler Group has just been my heart and soul and there's more information, probably trackable through CDSS's website, but definitely the national folk organization is now the umbrella organization. So yeah, it's just been an amazing, amazing resource for me, a regular email list of people who have attended Pourparler so you can troubleshoot with people all the time. It's just been platinum for me.

Mary Wesley: There's nothing like a sort of really solid community of practice, you know? It always amazes me to discover it, even in our smallest little niches of things that humans do, then those humans find each other and it's so powerful. So I love hearing that that exists. I've long wanted to come to a Pourparler event and I usually I'm calling somewhere but someday it will happen and hopefully we'll see each other there.

Sue Hulsether: The curse of the profession, right? Busy on all your weekends so you can't learn on a weekend.