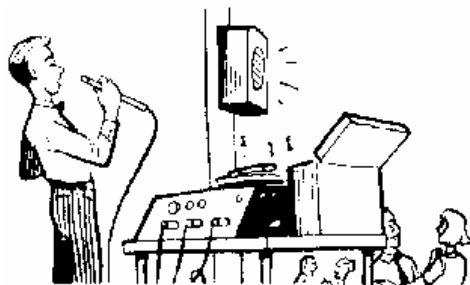


INTRODUCTION

Being a Master of Ceremonies (M.C.) or giving a speech can be fun if a person understands what is expected of him and has the knowledge of what to say, as well as how to say it. According to the World Book Encyclopedia Dictionary, an M.C. is a person in charge of a ceremony or entertainment who makes sure that all parts of the program take place in proper order. At a club dance the speaker may make the announcements for the evening and introduce special guests. At meetings a person may want to speak on subjects that are brought up before the assembly. At festivals or big affairs, the M.C. may have the job of introducing many callers and special guests, some of whom the M.C. may not know. By following a few rules and practice, the part of an M.C. can be fun.

SELECTING AN M.C.

The selection of an M.C. is a very important job. Not everyone makes a good M.C. Remember when selecting the M.C. that the objective is to keep the program moving in accordance with the established program plan and schedule.



RESEARCH AND COMMUNICATION

If you have been selected to be an M.C., communicate with the leaders of the activity so you will know what is expected of you, then do your homework. If you must introduce people you don't know, find out all you can about them. Prepare your cards or notes. Research all announcing details and prepare all information to be communicated. When you have prepared your plan, check again with the leaders for last minute changes.

VOICE

The prime tool of an M.C. is the voice and the method of presentation. An excellent way to practice is to use a cassette recorder and tape yourself in front of a full-length mirror. After you tape yourself several times you'll soon become accustomed to how you sound and obviously how you sound and look to others. Proper breathing will help you to relax and gain confidence. Speak clearly and as briefly as you can. Monotone is a danger to guard against. Make your presentations dynamic, sincere and pleasing to the listeners.

MICROPHONE TECHNIQUES

A microphone is an expensive instrument and is a necessary tool for the caller. When a person is asked to make announcements, ask your caller to show you where to hold the mike and how far to hold it from your mouth. A caller is knowledgeable about this own equipment and can quickly demonstrate how to use it. Check to see if the mike is on, one of the easiest ways is to ask someone ahead

of time to let you know if he can hear you. Banging or even tapping on the head of a mike may damage it, and even snapping one's fingers in front of it can be disconcerting. The purpose of a mike is to amplify the voice, so there's never a need to shout into it. At the conclusion of your talk, hand the mike back to the caller or lay it down very gently, preferably on a protective padding or in its case.

RESPONSIBILITIES

It is an honor and a privilege to be asked to perform as an M.C. at any function. The first responsibility as an M.C. is to the audience. The M.C. should never perform in any manner that might discredit them. An M.C. needs to be prepared. One secret of public speaking is for the announcer to sound as if he is talking "off the cuff" while knowing exactly what he intends to say. The M.C. may not be responsible for the sound but he should monitor the floor for first hand knowledge of sound problems and if necessary aid in the adjustment of speakers, etc.



An M.C. sets the stage and pace of the program, welding it together so the audience has the feeling of attending a well-planned presentation.

DUTIES

A few points to check off when you are an M.C. are:

1. Start the program on time and end it on schedule.
2. If you are introducing a number of people, callers, etc., plan what you are going to say well in advance and make yourself some notes. Notes on 3" X 5" cards are handy for immediate reference.
3. Be at the activity at least 30 minutes early, to check the sound, to see if there are any last minute changes and to become familiar with the hall, equipment and the program.
4. Be sure to acknowledge and give credit to those who deserve it.
5. Group the necessary announcements in such a way that they can be delivered without losing your audience.
6. Get the attention of the audience. Often a clever gimmick can be worked out to get their attention.
7. Remember, being an M.C. is an honor. Treat this honor with careful consideration and you will add pleasure for everyone, even yourself.
8. If conducting a meeting whether it is a small or large meeting, an agenda is needed. It may be simple: Call the meeting to order, read minutes, treasurer's report, committee reports, old business, new business, announcements

and adjournment or a more elaborate agenda.

9. Remember the M.C. can make or break any program.
10. The M.C. should dress according to the activity: Square dancers should wear square dance clothes, etc.
11. If the callers, cuers, are donating their time, give them praise and solicit applause from the dancers. "Applause" is their pay!
12. Look at your listeners while you speak. Eye contact is essential. Watch and listen for feedback from your attendees.



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MASTER OF CEREMONIES



This information sheet was developed by the Education Committee of the UNITED SQUARE DANCERS OF AMERICA, INC. and will provide a brief summary of being a Master of Ceremonies or speaker as it pertains to our hobby. Most dancers will be asked to speak before a group sometime during their lifetime, whether it is to make an announcement, introduce someone, or give a talk about the square dance activity.

Leadership Education material can also be printed directly from USDA web site at www.usda.org