

METRO MATTERS

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METRO SQUARE AND ROUND DANCE ASSOCIATION
Edited by
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New Year's Eve Party at Cole Harbour Place

Balloons, party hats and noisemakers set the scene for a festive evening of square dancing at Cole Harbour Place in Dartmouth. We would like to express our appreciation to one of the finest Callers in Nova Scotia, Kerry Fletcher, for an outstanding, award winning performance, which was enjoyed by all. Our compliments to Cole Harbour place for the in-house catering service complete with linen tablecloths and all the trimmings. We say thank you to all those who attended and made our party a success. To those of you who had other commitments, we missed you and we wish you all a Happy New Year!

Junior & Pauline Arsenault

In Memory of Nancy Norris

Nancy died on Monday, February 4th, at the age of 55, after a courageous battle with cancer. Nancy and her husband, Frank, have lived in Sackville for about 25 years. They began dancing with the Fun Time Rounds and Scotia Dancers in 1986. In recent years Nancy usually danced with Sheri Meek and they were faithful members of both In the Pinks and Dancing Shadows round dance clubs. They specialized in smooth executions of the more difficult round dances. Nancy was always an enthusiastic and determined dancer. Even a broken ankle about 1992 only slowed her down until she had a walking cast. She displayed the same determination during this last year attending her last round dances just before Christmas. Nancy's knowledgeable dancing and cheerful enthusiasm will be sadly missed by all in the round and square dance community.

In Memory of Marg Keighan

We were sad to note the passing of Marg Keighan in last week's paper. Her death on Friday, February 15th in Niagara Falls, Ontario was apparently caused by cancer. Marg and Tom's 48 years of marriage included many years here in the Maritimes. During that time she learned to cue from John Essex. Marg cued for the Dancing Shadows for several years in the late 70's and early 80's taking the club over from John Essex and passing it on to Alex Ritchie when the Keighans moved to Ontario in 1986. She was involved in the planning for the Halifax National Convention in 1982 and in 1983 she started the Fun Time Rounds. Although she has been gone from the Metro Area for a long time, those of us who danced with Marg still have fond memories of her competent teaching and smooth cueing and Tom's inexhaustible supply of humor.

What can we do to help Square and Round Dancing in Nova Scotia?

Lately there is lots of doom and gloom regarding the future of Square Dancing. Clubs are shrinking and dying. Leaders are retiring without replacements. Classes are small or non-existent. What can we do that might reverse these trends?

1) Dance with enthusiasm.

Consider yourself improperly attired if you are not wearing a smile. Smiles are contagious and seem to spread into every corner if given half a chance. Help make every evening a joyful one for all.

2) Help with the chores.

All dancers need to participate in the ongoing chores associated with a club. All clubs need people to work at all levels even if it is only to help arrange the dance floor or to assist the caller in setting up equipment. Remember that many hands make light work. Also too few hands make a burden too heavy to carry.

3) Visit other clubs. Dance to other callers. Meet more people.

You will find that they are just as much fun to dance with as your own club and you broaden your experience and find new friends who are just as interested in this activity as you are.

4) Take pride in Square Dancing.

Take pride in your club, your association, your province federation, your national society, and your international activity. Be interested and involved in the square and round dance activity at all levels. This is a truly incredible organization with its opportunities to share the joy of dancing with others from different clubs, regions, provinces and countries. Metro needs your input to improve the local dance scene. The province needs your involvement in planning Festivals and coordinating special dances. And what better way to show your support nationally than to attend National Convention 2002 in Saint John, New Brunswick and help welcoming dancers from across Canada and around the world to the Maritimes.

5) Spread the Word

Use every opportunity to tell non-dancers about the unique recreation you have found. You never know when you will spark some interest that will bring new friends to the dance floor. If you have an idea for a larger publicity venture, suggest it to your Metro Representative.

6) Every little bit helps.

A small input on your part can reap amazing benefits. Divided we fall but united we prosper. Square dancing has become an internationally successful recreation because many dancers supported the activity over many years. We can continue to be successful if we continue to participate both as dancers and as organizers. Changes in society have changed the framework within which we are functioning. If we work together we can find new ways to entice new dancers and to maintain and to improve what we have.

7) Enjoy the Moment

"That was great, let's do it all again!" Sarah Hughes made this comment just after her gold medal winning long program in figure skating. Enjoying the moment is what it's all about.

Changes in Metro

Metro has a new executive that is bringing new ideas to Metro Association in its ongoing attempts to promote and improve our activity. See the accompanying Club listing for the names and contact numbers of our Metro Executive, Club Contacts and Local Leaders. The next Metro meeting has been rescheduled for March 3rd because the new Executive has several ideas they want to put in motion.

Metro Survey Results

Thanks to the 80 dancers who responded including 25 with 1-5 years and 17 with more than 20 years of experience. Of those, 91% dance Mainstream, 48% dance Plus, 23% dance Advanced and 19% dance Rounds. 67% belong to only one club and 22% belong to two.

Regarding Special Dances:

Results indicated a slight preference for 2 hours over 2.5 hours, for one hall over two halls and for several callers/cuers over one caller/cuer.

75% say Mainstream should be 3/4 or more of the dance,

40% say Plus should be 1/4 to 1/2 of the dance.

52% wanted one or two rounds after each patter-singer combination.

Regarding Summer Dances:

60% have attended at some time, 50% did so occasionally or regularly last summer.

35% favored Traditional Dress while 46% favored Casual Dress all or part of the time.

71% answering that question were willing to pay more for air-conditioning.

72% wanted one dance per week with 70% of them wanting it to be 2 hours long.

50% wanted the dance to be all one level but they were split between levels.

Those wanting a mix indicated about 2/3rds mainstream and 1/3rd plus.

77% of those answering that question wanted at least one round per evening.

It was an even split between those wanting to drill Mainstream or Plus and those wanting to just dance.

Summer Dancing Changes

Metro has been searching for a way to make summer dancing more successful. Heat and low Tuesday attendance last summer resulted in financial losses. Consequently we are planning several significant changes this summer. First we have moved to an air-conditioned hall in the Dartmouth Sportsplex. Secondly, we are planning just one dance per week of 2.5 hours in an attempt to bring all dancers together and still accommodate some variety in the program. Plus callers will call Plus during the last 1/2 hour when there are sufficient Plus dancers present. Additional possibilities include a few callers from outside the Metro area and a few theme nights. Look for more details in the next Metro Matters.

Saint John National Convention 2002

Don't miss the big event of the year. There are still hotel rooms available and lots of RV parking on Long Wharf. Registration is about 2500 now and we hope to welcome 3000 dancers to Saint John. There will be halls for all interests from Easy Mainstream to Challenge, Rounds, Contras and Clogging. There is a bus full of Japanese coming. If they can come half way around the world, we should all be able to manage the short drive to Saint John. We hope you are already registered; but, if not, please plan now to come join the fun.

NEW MAGAZINE -- "SQUARE DANCING TODAY"

Grand Square Inc. has announced the publication of a new square dance magazine, *Square Dancing Today*.

Square Dancing Today will initially be a quarterly magazine with the first issue scheduled to "hit the stands" in mid-March 2002. The magazine will be square dancing's first "full four color" magazine. It will be printed on 8 ½ x 11 paper - similar to the look of other major national publications. The Publisher and Executive Editor will be Tony Oxendine who is a past chairman of Callerlab and recipient of its prestigious Milestone Award.

Square Dancing Today will be offered free of charge to all square dancers. Advertising dollars and donations will pay for all costs of the magazine. Their goal is to remain self-sustaining. It will be distributed to square dancers worldwide primarily through direct mailings. In addition, sample copies will be distributed at various square dance events. A total of 60,000 copies will be published and distributed initially. The goal is to have a circulation of 100,000 within twelve months.

For further information, advertising rates, or to be put on the subscription list, send your name and address to sqddancingtoday@aol.com or you may fax it to 704-375-7373.

National Society AGM

Since *Canadian Dancers News* is no longer being published, all Canadian publications have been asked to assist in spreading information. Accordingly we are printing this notice. The Canadian Square and Round Dance Society Annual General Meeting will be held in Saint John, New Brunswick, 9-11 am Friday, July 19th, 2002 in the multi-purpose room of the Saint John Public Library in Market Square. All Society members are welcome to attend. More information can be found on the society website at csrds.ca

CALLERLAB EMPHASIS CALL -- Mainstream Program -- Wheel Around

This call has a lot of potential that is rarely used. Although it is most commonly called from a couples promenade, it can begin from parallel lines facing in or out, two-faced lines, a static square, a double pass thru or completed double pass thru, trade by or eight chain thru formation. In all cases the designated couple, working as a unit, turns around (180 degrees). The left-hand dancer backs up while the right hand dancer moves forward. The pivot point is the handhold between the two dancers. Dance examples:

Couples Promenade, Heads Wheel Around, Lines Go Up and Back, Pass Thru, Wheel Around, Slide Thru, Pass Thru, Left Allemande

Heads Square Thru, Swing Thru, Boys Run, Couples Circulate, Bend the Line, Pass Thru, Wheel Around, Pass Thru, Wheel and Deal, Centres Wheel Around, Allemande Left

Heads Lead Right and Veer Left, Ladies Chain Down the Line, Ladies Lead Dixie Style to a Wave, Men Trade, Left Swing Thru, Girls Run, Ferris Wheel, Centres Wheel Around, Swing Thru, Turn Thru, Left Allemande

Couples Promenade, Sides Wheel Around, Lines Go Up and Back, Slide Thru, Right and Left Thru, Half Sashay, Pass Thru, Wheel Around, Grand Right and Left.