

SQUAREUPB.C. Report  
to the Annual General Meeting  
of the B.C. Square & Round Dance Federation, Penticton  
August 9, 2007

A mid-year report of activity was presented to the Board of Directors Meeting at Victoria at the end of March but this report will review the complete year, as appropriate for an Annual General Meeting.

Firstly, for newcomers to the B.C. Federation, SQUAREUPB.C. is a marketing initiative of the B.C. Square and Round Dance Federation. It has been organized as an entity since August of 1991 with an appointed Chairperson, Brian Elmer of Westbank. The primary function is to assist the various areas of the province with marketing advice and resources and to conduct programs and projects on a province-wide level that improve general awareness of our recreation. In marketing terms, such awareness-building is called competitive positioning.

The various SQUAREUPB.C. tasks performed over the year include the following:

SQUAREUPB.C. serves as a participant on the Canadian Square and Round Dance Society's Public Relations and Promotions Committee. During one of the biannual national teleconferences, committee members expressed pleasure with the availability of marketing materials for our recreation, largely with thanks to British Columbia. Among the tools now available to market our activity are:

- the "Dancing Keeps You Young" DVD Promotional Video
- the "Moving and Grooving" audio cd instructional series
- the documented Fitness Evaluation that endorses square and round dancing from a health, fitness and conditioning standpoint
- the "Cool Moves" youth promotional video
- easy lines of communication such as the B.C. Federation's toll-free number: 1-800-335-9433 and the web site: [www.squaredance.bc.ca](http://www.squaredance.bc.ca). The Society also maintains telephone and web options.
- documentation from educational seminars by Jim Hensley on marketing from Festival 2005 in Abbotsford and by Nasser Shukayr on the Square Dance ABC program from an August 2006 weekend also in Abbotsford.

The educational seminars were inspiring and notable for their new sense of direction. Jim told us not to feel guilty that our efforts to promote have fallen short. He pointed out that we just need to take a new approach because today's new dancer prospects "think, act and are motivated in entirely different ways from the previous generation." Nasser presented us with details on the SquaredanceABC program which fills many of the needs of today's people that were revealed by Jim in his market research. Dance organizations in Ontario have now booked Nasser to speak to them, following B.C.'s lead.

A 30 second p.s.a. tv announcement promoting square dancing is now being seen on various cable systems across Canada, including Shaw's distribution service from Victoria to Thunder Bay. The Shaw system is also inserting the psa into its StarChoice satellite system. This initiative is largely that of the Canadian Society but SQUAREUPB.C. has once again handled the Western Canada component. The square dance psa is inserted at no charge into programming on 7 U.S. specialty cable tv channels in select regions. Those include TLC (The Learning Channel), A & E (Arts and Entertainment), CNN, CNN Headline News, Speed, WTBS (a Super Station--Chicago?) and SPIKE TV (a channel for men). The contract with SHAW allows for 12 consecutive weeks in which the psa will be scheduled at random. It started July 15th and will end on October 7th.

Another initiative that is being continued by the National Committee is to advertise our recreation in 50 Plus Magazine, particularly through the Summer months, leading up to Fall recruitment.

Continuing with other marketing and promotion efforts:

Electronic inquiries about our recreation continue to be received. For instance, a school teacher in Kelowna was looking for a square dance instructor for her students. She found the help she wanted by discovering the Dance Connection on the web. Also, a senior lady in the Lower Mainland recently sent us an inquiry about dance lessons for her and her partner. Clubs and Associations are encouraged to keep information coming to their area webmaster and maintain their sections on the site so they're up to date. This is especially important during the cable tv public service announcement campaign.

On a technical note: the web site domain name for the Dance Connection, which is "squaredance.bc.ca," was renewed on July 23rd until August 28th of 2008 at a cost of \$14.28.

We are still determined that every Telus directory in the province have a listing for the B.C. Federation's toll-free number in the yellow pages under "Dancing Schools." We had contracts in place for that but the Yellow Pages Group had difficulty activating them, for which the problem has been rectified and the Federation has been compensated. Now we are ensuring that the contracts will be rolled over year-to-year.

In followup to dance demonstrations conducted during the B.C. Seniors Games in Abbotsford last Summer, your Federation has applied for our recreation to be included as a competitive event at the Games in the future. That application was accepted but it will take a few years before square dancing is seen on the Games agenda because they plan far in advance.

"Square Dance Awareness Week" put the spotlight on our activity last year from September 10th to 16th, as proclaimed by the Lieutenant-Governor, Iona Campagnolo. Thanks, again, to Lower Vancouver Island for launching that great initiative. SQUAREUPB.C. assisted in spreading the word and your Federation is now securing another proclamation for this year's dates of September 16th to 22nd. Clubs and Regional Associations are encouraged to seek Proclamation's in their home areas too, such as from the Mayors. Examples of Proclamations are available from President Nick Turner and there are also samples of press releases and appeals to media that were made last year in the Okanagan Valley. It is by gaining the attention of the media that the effort pays off to hold Square Dance Awareness Week.

The Stampede Whirlaways club in Williams Lake is making a strong effort to have our recreation noticed in their area. They've formed a committee of about 12 persons to deal with the various tasks that have come from brainstorming ideas. For instance, they'll appeal to the Mayor for a Proclamation and they're meeting with a local recreation director regarding a city-wide Fitness Dance. It may involve various community and business groups, possibly in competition for the best level of involvement. They expect to use pedometers to record distances danced and have healthy snacks in keeping with the health and fitness angle that dancing can promote.

The Federation is still pursuing a graphic artist, particularly an illustrator, to create new artwork that depicts our modern day dance activity. A prospective artist in Williams Lake is being approached by the Turners.

On a side note, the 58th Annual Pacific Northwest Teen Square Dance Festival took place at the Mount Boucherie Complex on Kelowna's Westside, April 27th and 28th. The Festival is a competition for pre-teens and teens and it attracted about 150 youth from B.C. and Washington State. Notable was the participation for the first time ever by about 50 elementary school students representing 5 different schools, one of which travelled from Kamloops. These students chose to compete in the School Category after learning about the Festival during their in-class square dance instruction as provided by programs offered by the Westside Youth Team Dance Club of Kelowna/Westbank and the City Slickers Youth Club of Kamloops.

The Teen Festival had never been in Kelowna before and it made some impact in the region in terms of children anxious to join the local youth group when it starts up in the Fall. One particular family of four children all want to learn to square and round dance after attending the Festival as spectators.

From the Festival trivia files, the young dancers drank about 95 litres of water from a water cooler and consumed 352 fresh Royal Gala apples furnished by B.C. Tree Fruits of Kelowna.

It has to be noted that SQUAREUPB.C. is about marketing, not just promotion, and indicators are that our product--our dance service offering--has to undergo some adaptation prior to promotion to meet the modern interests of our target demographic group, the Baby Boomers. They are said to have a very different mindset than we've been used to as well as different needs and wants. Shorter instructional offerings such as the ABC Program and flexible attendance options have to be seriously considered. For callers and dance leaders, this presents a challenge to operate new and simpler programs while preserving the traditional dance clubs. Marketing addresses all the components of product, place, price and promotion. It begins with offering a product or service that people seek. We apparently need to come up with a dance product that's "new and improved."

In closing, SQUAREUPB.C. is available to assist regional promotion committees or even club promotion persons. Also, for purposes of general competitive positioning of our recreation against other leisure time pursuits, it is recognized that regional committees and their member clubs could benefit by learning to produce media kits and to issue press releases.

This concludes the SQUAREUPB.C. report to the Annual General Meeting.

Respectfully submitted, Brian Elmer, Westbank -- SQUAREUPB.C. Chairperson