

SQUAREUPB.C. Report

to the Board of Directors Meeting

of the B.C. Square & Round Dance Federation, Victoria -- March 31, 2007

This is a mid-year report on the various tasks performed by SQUAREUPB.C. since August of 2006.

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.

SQUAREUPB.C. serves on the Canadian Square and Round Dance Society's Public Relations and Promotions Committee. That committee recently held a national teleconference. They usually conduct two per year. Committeemembers across the country are pleased with the availability of marketing materials for our recreation, mostly with thanks to British Columbia. The B.C. Federation has spearheaded the production of a 30 second tv public service announcement, the "Dancing Keeps You Young" DVD Promotional Video, the "Moving and Grooving" audio cd instructional series and the documented Fitness Evaluation that endorses square and round dancing from a health, fitness and conditioning standpoint. The DVD promotional video is being dubbed into the French language for use in French Canada. The Society itself produced the "Cool Moves" youth promotional video which continues to be played to children, especially in schools.

Another valuable marketing tool available to us is the new understanding gained through the B.C. Federation's seminars with Jim Hensley and Nasser Shukayr. 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.

The Society's P.R./Promotion committee will contract once again with several cablesystems in Canada to broadcast the 30 second p.s.a. tv announcement starting around July 1st. That tv promotion is inserted at no charge into programming on 9 U.S. specialty cable tv channels in select regions. In Western Canada, that arrangement will be made with SHAW cablesystems of Calgary to have it appear for 3 months on their system from Victoria to Thunder Bay. Many parts of B.C. are served by SHAW.

Another initiative that the Committee is continuing 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:

Our Federation's "Dance Connection" web site continues to serve our dance community well. The valuable information on the site frequently makes it one of the top listings following a search engine inquiry, such as with Google. An excellent example in recent times includes a school teacher in Kelowna looking for a square dance instructor for her students. She found the help she wanted by discovering the Dance Connection on the web. 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.

Some special opportunities to promote our activity last Summer and Fall were identified and acted upon:

Our recreation made an appearance in late August at the B.C. Seniors Games in Abbotsford. It all started with a written and spoken presentation prepared by SQUAREUPB.C. to Games representatives in Summerland. The Federation's Ken Crisp and Les Brekstad followed up by arranging dance demonstrations during the Games. The process of spotlighting our recreation has now advanced to the point that Games organizers plan to include square dancing as a competitive event in coming years.

As Fall approached, it was made known to British Columbians that "Square Dance Awareness Week" was in effect, September 10th to 16th, as proclaimed by the Lieutenant-Governor, Iona Campagnolo. SQUAREUPB.C. assisted in spreading the word and considerable thanks goes out to Lower Vancouver Island for launching that great initiative.

With regard to the road ahead... it seems that our directive should be to take the new-found knowledge about the needs of today's public with regard to a dance-related leisure time activity, and to apply that knowledge using the many new marketing tools that we have at our disposal.

For instance, the market research revealed to us says that the health and fitness card is the best one to play in appealing the Baby Boomers. The Turners of Williams Lake have suggested that our recreation's health-oriented angle, as mentioned in the promotional DVD "Dancing Keeps You Young," should be presented to health professionals, possibly as a group through their local associations. Such an appeal could include excerpts from the Fitness Evaluation, funded by the B.C. Federation. The DVD could be handed out to patients by their doctors like a prescription for active living. Likewise, the wholesome qualities of our

activity, along with its physical and mental health benefits, could be presented to churches or church groups who endorse good living.

In closing, the following is a reiteration of what's been said before:
Research results are telling us that we need to re-design our dance product or, at least, re-package it. The reason is that the most sought-after demographic group, the Baby Boomers who are now aged 43 to 61, 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 have to be seriously considered. Callers, cuers and dance club leaders will have to work together. New dance programs, requiring little long-term commitment, will likely have to operate separately from traditional dance clubs.

The real challenge now is to redefine our marketing mix which involves the four components of product, place, price and promotion. Promotion can only be undertaken once our product is re-designed and offered at a place and a price that appeals to the Baby Boomers.

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 Board of Directors Meeting.

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