

Class of 2011 Results Report

Seven clubs from four regions entered the Class of 2011 contest. There were no entries from Regions 4, 5 or 9.

This year one round dance club entered the contest. Interestingly, they advertised their product as “Cued Ballroom Dancing” and were successful in attracting 8 new dancers to their class. The instructor taught Rumba, Cha and then Two Step and was successful in retaining 3 of 4 new couples. One couple dropped out because they headed south for the winter.

One of the most successful clubs this year appointed a “New Class Chairman” who had several meetings with club members before the dance season began in order to generate enthusiasm about recruiting new dancers. Personal printed invitations to dinner and a fun evening of square dancing were developed and each club member was asked to give out one to potential dancers. RSVP was to the couple handing out the invitation. The chairman said she could not stress enough that “the enthusiasm and friendliness of the recruiters was paramount” to their success.

Another successful club has what they call a “great” ad with a good sized picture of a couple of dancers on the page. They bill themselves as “the fun club” and wear badges asking people to ask them about square dancing.

One club surveyed each new dancer who showed up to their class and found that 70% heard about the class directly from another person. A few saw a handout or flyer. The odd one saw a demo. Just one found them on the website. They also contacted everyone who dropped out and have come to the conclusion that they might need to adjust the pacing of the initial lessons so as not to overwhelm some of the new dancers and thereby retain more of them.

One club which saw a disappointing number of new dancers drop out this year said all but one couple quit due to health reasons. They did a lot of recruiting with posters, and even stuck a few in big store lunchrooms. A few of their recruits saw square dancing at the BC Seniors Games. One younger couple that started is presumed to have chosen another dance form.

THE RESULTS SQUARE DANCE

Club Name	Region	Started	Finished	Membership	Ratio
Wheeling 8's	2	5	5	7	71%
Country Cousins	1	39	23	69	33%
Westsyde Squares	3	11	9	45	20%
Swinging Singles	2	19	16	115	13%
Abbotsford Grand Squares	2	11	5	45	11%
Ocean Waves	8	8	2	70	3%

THE RESULTS ROUND DANCE

Club Name	Region	Started	Finished	Membership	Ratio
Rainbow Rounders	1	8	6	20	30%

Thank you to all of those who participated in the contest and were good enough to share your ideas with us. Congratulations to the winners!

Sincerely,
Gordon Ruedig
Contest Chairman

Personal contact still seems to be the number one way to recruit new dancers. But there's a huge gap between saying that and getting

everyone in a club to actively engage in conversation with strangers about their activity. The clubs which do this most successfully are the ones which are able to give their members the tools to work with. Gimmicks like the “Ask Me” badges, or the personal invitations to attend a “fun evening of dining and dancing,” are icebreakers which get positive conversation started.

On the down side, the large number of new dancers who drop out due to health issues is indicative of the age group we are targeting with our campaigns.