

TOLL-FREE INFOLINE Report, E-MAIL INQUIRIES & FACEBOOK INQUIRIES Report  
to the Annual General Meeting of the B.C. Square & Round Dance Federation, Surrey  
July 7, 2017. By Brian Elmer, volunteer receptionist

### ***Background***

The B.C. Square and Round Dance Federation's toll-free INFOLINE was established many years ago as an overall source of dance information via telephone for the dance community and the general public.

The number 1-800-335-9433 "forwards" to the home of volunteer receptionists Brian Elmer and his wife, Rosalyn Garnett, in West Kelowna. Contracted with Telus, charges incurred to the number are billed to the treasurer of the Federation. The number is only supposed to connect within B.C.

Inquiries also come via e-mail and those are documented below. Some of them are prompted by persons viewing the promotional "landing page" when they click on paid advertising ([SquareDanceFun.info](http://SquareDanceFun.info)) or free publicity (such as on Twitter) done by SQUAREUPB.C.

Additional inquiries sometimes come to us through the B.C. Federation's Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/BCSquareAndRoundDanceFederation>) and those are documented below, if any.

Note that the Canadian Square and Round Dance Society also maintains a toll-free information line which is 1-866-206-6696. At this point, the number connects calls from the U.S. although that might be halted in the near future (see below). The volunteers on the end of that line are B.C. Federation members Ron and Jan Mills of West Kelowna.

Note that the INFOLINE call-tracking report from July 2, 2016 to March 27, 2017, prepared for the April/17 Abbotsford B.O.D. meeting, can be read online at:  
<http://www.squaredance.bc.ca/images/bod%202017/InfolineReport-BOD-Abbotsford-April1-2017.pdf>

### ***INFOLINE Call-tracking – March 30 to July 1, 2017***

As calls come in to the INFOLINE, an effort is made to document each, noting the name of the caller, the nature of the inquiry and how the inquiry was satisfied. For cost efficiency, most responses are sent by e-mail when queries cannot be answered immediately over the phone.

The following list of calls received is chronological:

**Thurs. March 30, 2017, 5:04 pm** – Call from Bill (& Nancy) Kirkby of Burnaby seeking information about B & B accommodation within walking distance of the Festival site in July. A comprehensive e-mail response was sent to them on March 31 that contained B & B listings and web links to others. No properties other than the Holiday Inn Surrey East appear to suit their need for walking distance. They dance with the Century House Squares in New Westminster.

**Sat. April 1, 2017, 11:33 am** – Call from Fred (Betty) Bergmann of Blind Bay, BC, inquiring about RV camping at Festival 2017 in Surrey. He wondered how to book space, the cost and what services would be available. In an e-mail response, he was informed that Festival organizer Wendy Krueger could help with their inquiry and that registration could be done online. Later, an e-mail from the Festival Secretary, Christine Dahl, was sent to them with pertinent information.

**Sat. April 1, 2017, 2:29 pm** – Another call from Fred (Betty) Bergmann of Blind Bay, BC, inquiring about the process of registering online for Festival 2017 in Surrey. He sought assurance that giving his financial information would be secure. In a response, he was assured that online registration is secure and to look for the lock symbol to the far left in the address line.

**Sun. April 2, 2017, 2:25 pm** – An additional call from Fred Bergmann of Blind Bay to say that he and his wife had decided not to attend the Festival after assessing that they're perhaps a little too along in years to be driving their RV in busy Summertime traffic. He had registered online at that point so Festival organizers were contacted by e-mail to cancel that registration and possibly waive the administration fee. As well as telephone conversations with this couple, including placing a toll call to them, several e-mails of correspondence between the INFOLINE, Festival organizers and the dance couple were exchanged over the four days of April 1 to 4.

**Tues. April 11, 2017, 6:55 pm** – Salmon Arm area caller Don Krebs is interested in calling at Festival 2017 in Surrey but wonders if the callers' tables in the halls will include p.a. units with turntables. He prefers to use vinyl for his music. Response: He was re-directed to caller program organizer Brent Mawdsley to learn what equipment will be available to callers on the Festival program.

**Thurs. April 13, 2017, 2:25 pm** – Dancers John & Val Leasing of Vernon called to say that they have to cancel their pre-registration for Festival 2017 in Surrey due to some health challenges. Response: They were assured that the Festival organizers would be contacted and their request processed. Initially, a same-day e-mail announcing the cancellation went to the Festival administration with a copy to the Leesings. They're eligible for a full refund (to May 18/17) less a \$5 administration fee.

**Sun. April 16, 2017, 4:15 pm** – A follow-up call received from Bill (& Nancy) Kirkby of Burnaby seeking further information about accommodation during Festival 2017 in Surrey. They'd like to stay at the Holiday Inn Surrey East because they don't have a vehicle but understand that all the blocked rooms have been booked.

Response: It was suggested that they contact the salesperson at the Holiday Inn Surrey East to ask about being put on a waiting list and to ask if some blocked rooms for other organizations might come available. They've reserved at two other hotels as a backup in case they can't locate closer to the event.

**Monday May 15, 2017 – 3:39 pm** – Gina Hunter of Chilliwack called in search of places to buy new or used crinolines. She is a seamstress and is making some outfits for non-square dance use. She's looking for plus sizes. In response, she was told that inquiries would be made into where used crinolines might be located, including through the Rhythm Reelers club of Chilliwack. Contact was made with the Rhythm Reelers who had just conducted a used clothing sale and some crinolines were apparently acquired.

**Sun. June 4, 2017 – 11:09 am** – Bea Maudsley of the Lower Mainland called from Penticton as she was travelling through to inquire about the location of the 2017 Peachfest Square Dance Festival. She wanted to do a site survey because the event will be in a different location this time. Usually held at the Drop-in Centre, she was informed that the Festival will be at Princess Margaret School on Green Avenue. She and her husband will want to park an RV on the site during the dancing.

**Thurs. June 8, 2017 – 1:26 pm** – Marlene Krebs of Salmon Arm called to ask if she and her husband can park their RV on-site at the Festival. The last word was that all serviced sites at the event are gone but dry-camping is still available at \$10 per night. She was directed to call Betty Langtry who's on the Festival committee and is handling accommodation. Betty's phone number was given.

**Fri. June 23, 2017 – 1:59 pm** – Julianna Yung called from Port Coquitlam to ask about attending only one day of Festival 2017 and on what day there would be the most dancing. She was given the full schedule and a suggestion was made that Friday July 7 would be the day with the most dancing because there would be no ceremonies and the morning sessions start at 10:00. Julianna dances with the Town 'n Country Swingers in Maple Ridge.

**Wed. June 28, 2017 – 8:04 am** – Ricki Switzer of Surrey, a dancer with the Surrey Square Wheelers, called to confirm that she can register at the door for Festival 2017 at a cost of 3 days for \$50. She was assured that was correct and an e-mail request was sent to the Festival organizers to confirm again with her by phone. Co-chair, Wendy Krueger placed that call to Ricki.

**Thurs. June 29, 2017 – 11:00 am** – Doug Jones of Parksville called to identify his registration and purchase of RV Camping for the Festival and to ask about RV hookups being

supplied. His RV will be a 45 foot vehicle and he particularly wants to learn if water, power and sewer hookups will be furnished. His registration was submitted before only dry camping became available. He was redirected to the Festival volunteer in charge of accommodations, Betty Langtry, and given her phone number and e-mail address.

**Fri. June 30, 2017 – 3:38 pm** - Marie Hopland of Courtenay, a dancer with the Ocean Waves club, called to ask about the location of dance halls for the Festival in Surrey and the proximity of the RV camping to the dance venues. She was informed about the 3 halls that will be utilized and told that the RV camping will be within walking distance of the dancing but that shuttles are planned to transport the campers to the halls. Her RV booking is for dry camping unless word comes that a serviced spot comes available. She was given the web address for the Festival and planned to have a look at the information available there, especially the map of the grounds.

***E-mail inquiry tracking – March 30 to July 1, 2017***

**Sat. April 15/17 – 12:44 pm** - Email from Nancy Kirkby of Burnaby read that she had learned the block of rooms for reserving at the Holiday Inn Surrey East – Cloverdale was now filled up. She and her husband explored other hotels but found them too costly, so they asked for further consultation with us. Upon replying, they were thanked for the news that all the blocked Holiday Inn rooms were fully booked. They were given a short list of more economical accommodation in the area and referred to the Festival Committee for further assistance. The final solution was through an offer by Ken & Sally Crisp to drive the couple, who are visually impaired, to the Festival event each day.

**Mon. May 15/17 – 5:36 pm** - Email from Shannon Keefe of Richmond, a recreation director for the South Arm Community Centre. She was seeking an instructor who can teach beginner square dancing to active older adults on Fri. June 16. A same-day response was sent, expressing a willingness to help, followed by several e-mail messages exchanged back and forth into June. She was directed to the Vancouver and District Caller Teachers Assn. and their online list of members with contacts. In addition, an e-mail was sent to caller Chuck Jordan of Coquitlam who responded that the event was a little farther than he wished to drive. On June 7, nine days before the event, Shannon announced that she had found a caller and it would be Brent Mawdsley of Surrey. She was appreciative of the assistance given her by the B.C. Federation.

**Wed. June 14/17 – 3:15 pm** - Email from Bernice Fetterly of Maple Ridge, a Ministry Team Coordinator at Maple Ridge Baptist Church. She was seeking a caller relative to their country fair-themed windup day of their week-long Vacation Bible School on Fri. Aug. 18 (7 pm). She clarified that she wanted a caller to come out and do some very basic simple lessons for those who come out to the Fair. In a quick response, she was assured that we would locate a

caller to perform the task and it was Brent Mawdsley who stepped forward to accept the engagement.

*(No Facebook inquiries were received during this particular period)*

### **Special Addendum:**

#### Consideration of expansion of the service area for the Federation's toll-free INFOLINE

Our INFOLINE service was originally set up through Telus to only be active in the province of British Columbia. There are occasions, though, when it would serve us well to be active across Canada and into the U.S.

One of those occasions would be to communicate with prospective registrants to our provincial Festivals who live outside of British Columbia.

A case in point arose recently when a Washington State dancer tried to get information via our INFOLINE relative to Festival 2017 in Surrey. The American citizen's phone service told them that the number is not applicable in the U.S.

The INFOLINE number was displayed on Festival literature in that dancer's possession but no alternate phone numbers were shown. This prospective Festival registrant was left without a resolution to reach a "real person" for a telephone inquiry.

The option exists to utilize the Canadian Society's toll-free line (1-866-206-6696) which does serve Canada and the U.S. The volunteer receptionists are Ron and Jan Mills of West Kelowna, B.C.

There is a new challenge regarding that, though, because the Mills have the line redirected to their cell phone for which considerable cell system usage fees apply for calls originating in the U.S. They don't welcome U.S. calls.

They also identify that they get the occasional "nuisance call" from the U.S. that might range from a political solicitation to dance information not particularly relevant to the Canadian dance community.

One answer would be for the Society to cease toll-free service from the U.S. But, there are promotional considerations such as with regard to our provincial and national Festivals. If U.S. dancers want information about coming to our events, surely we want to furnish such and get them to register.

Another opinion about the toll-free line is that people should learn to use the internet instead. That's all very well but we are a "people-oriented" recreation. We're not selling inanimate objects. We need to be able to present a real person when dancers want information and a warm response from a human voice over the telephone can help. It can "close the deal" when it comes to getting people to register or attend our events.

In some cases with regard to some of our older dancers, they are not internet-savvy and might not even own a computer.

Furthermore, potential attendees to our events often have questions that are not addressed in the online (or print) information. In example, a recent call to the B.C. INFOLINE asked how far it will be to walk from the RV parking area at Festival 2017 to the dance venues?

Another answer with regard to soliciting the participation of U.S. dancers in B.C. events, such as our Festivals, is for our INFOLINE service to be expanded in range to accept callers from across Canada and the U.S.

When Festival 2019 takes place in Salmon Arm it would be helpful to be able to take inquiries from Alberta and the States of Idaho and Washington. Of course, we'd have to publicize the "international" availability of the INFOLINE in literature and online.

Our toll-free service needs to be able to serve the various needs of the dancers, wherever they live, and to serve as a "sales tool" in attracting them to our events. We can't have dysfunctional communications in place. The ability for people to talk to people is important in advancing our recreation.

- Brian Elmer

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