

## SQUAREUPB.C. Report

to the Board of Directors Meeting

of the B.C. Square & Round Dance Federation, Victoria -- March 31, 2012

For those who are unaware, SQUAREUPB.C. is a marketing initiative of the Federation. A marketing approach requires that attention be given to creating an attractive product or service, presented at a desirable place for a representative price before launching the promotion or advertising.

It is undeniable that we must adapt and position our great recreation to receive the huge wave of middle age and retiring Baby Boomers who the research says “think, act and are motivated in entirely different ways from the previous generation.” They’re not attracted to our dance form in the way it is currently structured, especially with regard to the very long instruction period required for the Mainstream square dance program.

The Board of Directors meeting will feature the presentation “Square Dance Makeover: A New Menu for a New Customer.” It will define the most logical new customer, Baby Boomers, along with their needs and wants. Possible adaptations to square dance programs will be explored. The presentation material is planned to be available soon on our Dance Connection web site.

SQUAREUPB.C. activity in the Fall included the creation of internal press releases of which several saw publication in the print media Valley Circle and Cross Trail News and the electronic/print medium known as the Cariboo Connection.

Topics included a new Twitter page for the Federation, how Baby Boomers may reject snow-birding and how our Dancing Keeps You Young online video feature surpassed 1,000 views.

Another press release topic was about the health-orientated article on Vancouver Island’s dancers that was published in September, with photographs, by Senior Living magazine. There was a spinoff from that great article when SQUAREUPB.C. assisted a writer for the Canadian Diabetes Association. The writer was put in touch with a dancer featured in the Senior Living article who was subsequently interviewed about diabetics keeping active on the square dance floor.

The Senior Living article is still available for viewing on the magazine’s web site and has had over 500 views so far. The online version contains fewer photos than seen in

print. Find it online at: <http://www.seniorlivingmag.com/articles/dancing-keeps-you-young>

Much time has been devoted over the Fall and Winter to learning about new opportunities to promote our recreation through social media. Participation in several online “webinars” has been undertaken with the social media company “Connect Wisdom.” Sessions have included exploration of YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and Wordpress blogging software. Analytics, such as who and how many are “tuned-in,” and the purchase of advertising on social media were also studied.

The professionals at Connect Wisdom say that if your organization doesn’t have a presence through social media, you don’t exist. The various social media communication tools are now that important. Also, the next generation to which we have to appeal, the Boomers, are mostly savvy to use of these tools.

Social media is basically an extension of our marketing. It’s an extension of our outreach to the public (our customers) and of our non-profit organization. We need to be utilizing the new communications opportunities provided by social media. After all, we are a social recreation!

Your Federation is involved in several informational and social media areas. We’ve had a web page for a considerable time called “The Dance Connection” at: [www.squaredance.bc.ca](http://www.squaredance.bc.ca)

We are maintaining a page on the popular Twitter messaging web site. Our information there primarily lists events and notices in bulletin-board fashion. Find us at [www.twitter.com/bcfeddancenews](http://www.twitter.com/bcfeddancenews).

A new Twitter page has been added with the desire that it becomes an interactive meeting place about dance-related topics for those within and outside our dance community. It’s a long-range strategy of “cultivating” others toward the benefits of joining our activity. As your friends, relatives, acquaintances and others “follow” your Twitter messages, they’ll be exposed to your preferably favourable comments about your dance experiences.

Particularly, we invite you to post positive messages about your dance world that can include photos, videos and links. Please visit and see what we have so far and consider opening a free Twitter account so you can contribute: [www.twitter.com/bcfedlive](http://www.twitter.com/bcfedlive)

A wonderful feature about the software is that if the dance-related message that you create, called a “tweet,” includes the phrase #bcfedlive it is possible to search for all messages with that notation. It’s called a “hashtag” and opens the possibility for online “chats” between each other. The only thing is that Twitter limits your message to 140 characters. It’s been called “mini-blogging” and its fun.

Furthermore, the hashtag can be an excellent way to deliver dance announcements using Twitter to the general population. For instance, a tweet about new dancer sessions in Victoria will be read by people throughout the city if the message contains the hashtag #Victoria.

See an example of a couple of square and round dancers using Twitter to praise our activity along with day-to-day comments at: [www.twitter.com/brianandrosalyn](http://www.twitter.com/brianandrosalyn)

A new social media element has been added to our Dance Connection web site. It’s a “blogging” section employing the finest Wordpress blogging software. Blogs can be memos, notes or letters about anything on your mind but we particularly welcome material on the topic of any of the dance forms supported by the Federation. That can be square, round, contra or clog dancing as well as submissions by callers, cuers and leaders.

Our blogging section is very new and “under construction” right now but you can access the opening page and read some comments. You’ll be greeted with the heading “Celebrate, Discuss, Suggest, Inspire! A Blog Space About Square Dancing and its Related Dance Forms.” Explore it and plan to contribute soon at: [www.blog.squaredance.bc.ca](http://www.blog.squaredance.bc.ca)

Your Federation is also maintaining a unique web site address in order to access the 10-minute promotional feature on the internet entitled “Dancing Keeps You Young.” In actual fact, the video plays over the popular social media web site “YouTube.” In all your promotional efforts, you should be directing the non-dancing public to [www.DancingKeepsYouYoung.ca](http://www.DancingKeepsYouYoung.ca). In entertaining story-fashion, it tells of the many benefits of square dancing and shows the learning process.

We’re proud to announce that our Dancing Keeps You Young feature has received over one thousand, seven hundred views on the internet since July of 2010. Produced for the B.C. Federation, it closes by directing people to our toll-free INFOLINE number for more information. Also shown is our Dance Connection web site address.

Future social media considerations being explored by your Federation are Facebook, LinkedIn and Pinterest. The latter is a very interesting web feature where you “pin up” pictures of interest. The very photogenic nature of our recreation makes that a potential promotional tool.

It’s all very well to have these tools but they have to be used to be effective. We ask for all the membership to explore the social media avenues. Don’t just explore but contribute.

An element that the Federation should address is the re-design of our Dance Connection web pages. We are competing for attention with many other recreations and a professional look would move our image into one of higher regard. It’s also a fact that our new customers, the media savvy Baby Boomers, expect polish and shine. Our treasured volunteers can continue maintaining the content of the Dance Connection but we should explore some paid professional assistance for a fresh, modern, competitive look through a re-design.

Clubs are encouraged to delegate a member who owns a digital camera capable of higher resolution images (300 dpi required by print media) to undertake a publicity and public relations role. Their task is to regularly submit photos with captions or articles to community newspapers and seek other opportunities such as community cable tv exposure. The same photos can gain additional publicity if posted on social media such as Twitter and Facebook.

Over the Fall and Winter, the Westsyde Squares dance club in West Kelowna has met with considerable success in seeking publicity. Several local newspapers have reflected special events such as fundraisers, Christmas parties, a Leap Year Dance, a clogging demonstration and visiting guests from Germany. See a display of club photographs from which some were published at: <http://photoshare.shaw.ca/gallery/eunicar/>

Please make good use of the health-orientated promotional brochure, developed by your Federation. It is considered a useful promotional tool in light of the interest in good health by our new customers, the Baby Boomers. Please make use of it by placing several copies in health-orientated facilities in communities where new dancer sessions will take place. Do so well ahead of time.

The brochure can also be handed out alongside the health-centered pull-up promotional screen that each region was gifted by the Federation. The screen is a simple way to promote at malls or community events such as Fall Fairs but book your space soon. It

should only be used indoors because its light weight cannot withstand wind. Our president, Norm Cox, can furnish you with the brochures.

“Square Dance Awareness Week” is observed in mid-September. Regional associations and their member clubs should be planning now what you'll be doing to make our activity stand out at that time.

Should you have the opportunity to promote our activity through commercial or cable tv interviews, remember that each region took delivery of a DVD disc containing unedited raw video footage of square, round and clog dancing at Festival 2009 in Vernon. Using that, you can tell about the fun that we have on the dance floor and show some of it as well.

Do remember that a couple of our most basic communications and marketing tools are the toll-free INFOLINE at 1-800-335-9433 and e-mail through [info@squaredance.bc.ca](mailto:info@squaredance.bc.ca)

SQUAREUPB.C. is available to assist regional promotion committees or even club promotion persons. Contact Brian Elmer by phone at 250-768-2694 or e-mail [brian@squaredance.bc.ca](mailto:brian@squaredance.bc.ca)

This concludes the SQUAREUPB.C. report to the Board of Directors Meeting.

Respectfully submitted,  
Brian Elmer, West Kelowna -- SQUAREUPB.C. Chairperson