

B.C. S. & R.D.A.
2nd VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT
BOD 2014

In the fall of this year, I fielded several enquiries regarding West Coast Square Dancing (WCSD) and sent copies of the latest version of the program to interested parties in our Federation. Some interest was also generated outside of our province by an article which was written by a reporter for Powell River's local newspaper and somehow found its way into an online American square dance publication.

One of the things I've wanted to do is create a simple website where potential new dancers can be directed to learn about WCSD. Not being much of a computer geek and somewhat daunted by the thought, I put it off until I found myself with too much free time at Christmas. After plunging in, I ran across a website building tool for dummies like me... which I found encouraging. In short, I now have a little site up and running: westcoastsquaredance.com. Its number one objective is to promote square dancing in general and WCSD in particular to people who have never square danced before. Secondly, I've included information about upcoming classes and events for those who are interested by what they've read. It currently only lists West Coast classes and events occurring in Region 8, but I would be happy to expand that to include all West Coast activities occurring in B.C.. I think the wider the net is spread, the more legitimate the activity will be perceived by non-dancers and the more encouraged new dancers will be to stay involved in our pastime.

On another front, I've participated with the selection committee headed by Allen Ebl evaluating funding applications, most recently for new dancer classes. Small classes don't support themselves; we can help in a small way, but they also need parent club involvement. Beyond the immediate duties of our committee, we've been grappling with budgeting issues and how to fairly distribute what we have available to us in a sustainable way.

The "mobile" Library seems to have become stuck in Region 8. I've not received requests from elsewhere for a time share as of this writing. I've made some minor changes to the application process and have set a maximum period that one region may keep the library before it is returned to the Federation Librarian for updating and inventory. I hadn't anticipated that

it would stall in one region as it has. Hopefully, these changes will be in place on our website by the time of the BOD Meeting.

And finally, a little philosophy... our president, Norm Cox noted in his report that class sizes are on the upswing but it's too bad we can't close the back door to prevent some of our existing dancers from leaving us. Chairman of Square Up BC, Brian Elmer has warned us that coming generations of new dancers are not joiners. Years ago, I heard an interesting statistic about people who belong to clubs in general. It was that the average length of time individuals spend in any one club, from bowling to gardening and everything in between is about two years. So what's the answer? In my opinion it's volume! If our new dancer programs take two years to master, we'll lose most new dancers who enter our program before we ever get a chance to dance with them. Incorporating multiple start dates into such a program may increase the volume but it doesn't fix this problem. The only way to increase volume **and** offer new dancers the opportunity to experience square dancing as we know it, is to offer a short introductory program for new dancers, preferably, one which can be run more than once per season. We then need to support this program by providing dances, possibly even clubs for graduates of the program. Given what we have seen and what we know, many newcomers won't stay as long as we'd like, but through volume we can build our ranks and by relaxing our entry level requirements, we just might retain more new dancers.

This concludes my report,

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