

SQUAREUPB.C. Report

to the Board of Directors Meeting

of the B.C. Square & Round Dance Federation, Abbotsford -- April 5, 2014

For those who are unaware, SQUAREUPB.C. is a marketing initiative of the Federation, chaired by Brian Elmer of West Kelowna, who serves in an appointed position.

Marketing Activity

Throughout the year, various B.C. Federation web pages are maintained and updated with content. See those web pages at:

www.Facebook.com/BCSquareAndRoundDanceFederation

and

www.Twitter.com/BCFedDanceNews and www.Twitter.com/BCFedLive

and

www.Blog.squaredance.bc.ca

and frequent updates are made to the promotional “landing page” at:

www.TakeMeDancing.squaredance.bc.ca

Marketing activity during the 2013/2014 dance season has included two major social media and internet advertising campaigns, one in the Fall and another in January.

The Fall campaign experienced a delay for several reasons:

- the new dancer session information wasn't furnished early enough by various clubs
- the charge card against which all billing for the campaign was to be applied was compromised and had to be replaced (the Federation does not have its own charge card, so advertising placed on the internet has to rely upon the personal credit cards of volunteers)
- the keyboard on the personal computer being used to prepare the campaign failed and required servicing (the Federation relies upon the personal equipment of volunteers)

The purchased internet advertising utilized two different systems: Google AdWords and Facebook.

On Google AdWords, our ad, targeting the most desirable Baby Boomer demographic, appeared on the computer screens of anybody searching for dance-related information. On Facebook, while also targeting the Boomers, our ad appeared not only in the standard ad space in the right hand column of Facebook pages but also within the information timelines as people viewed their pages, called the “news feed.”

In promotion of our youth dance clubs, separate advertising ran only on Google AdWords, largely targeting parents.

Where known, new round dancer sessions were included on the landing page along with the square dance details under the appropriate city.

At no cost, occasional messages were placed on our @BCFedLive Twitter page, targeting specific cities.

Regardless of the delayed start, the results for the Fall internet advertising include the following:

- The Google AdWords campaign resulted in a total of 751 clicks on an adult-targeted ad which appeared on 762,476 computer screens (known as “impressions”).
- The Facebook campaign resulted in a total of 1,486 clicks on an adult-targeted ad which appeared on 176,346 computer screens.

Winter Marketing Activity

Since funds remained following the Fall 2013 campaign, it was decided to run a Winter campaign in January 2014 in support of clubs offering new dancer session start-ups. When underway, the favourable response experienced prompted the addition of some SQUAREUPB.C. funding to continue the campaign to the end of January.

The statistics for the Winter effort include the following:

- Google AdWords resulted in a total of 377 clicks on our adult-targeted ad which appeared on 50,800 computer screens. The youth-targeted ad attained 55 clicks and appeared on 13,375 computer screens.
- The Facebook campaign resulted in a total of 1,205 clicks on an adult-targeted ad which appeared on 98,085 computer screens.
- A parallel Facebook campaign ran promoting youth club start-ups, resulting in a total of 275 clicks while the ad appeared on 26,379 computer screens.

The January campaign saw several inquiries placed directly to SQUAREUPB.C. where interested persons chose the e-mail option on the landing page for more information. That resulted in many direct referrals to specific clubs or regions. In addition, some inquiries came to us through our Facebook page and dialogue was undertaken with those individuals.

Facebook and Twitter Pages Reach Out

Another benefit from the internet advertising is that our Federation’s Facebook page has seen a great increase in “likes,” now approaching 150. Many newcomers to our Facebook page were a direct result of the January social media campaign. Now, those same people are viewing our newest Facebook postings.

Recently, a posting about this B.O.D. meeting had 29 views, another about the Stampede Whirlaways in Williams Lake raising \$950 through a dance and pie auction had 37 views and another featuring members of that same club square dancing in snowshoes attained a surprising 114 views. Postings like that where the topic is fun or unusual tend to attract many more viewers.

Just last month, our Facebook page received a comment from Cranbrook where a woman wanted to know where she could find a caller to entertain at her husband's 40th birthday party. Although square dance clubs in the region are inactive, she was notified of a couple of callers living in Cranbrook and given the names of some in nearby Washington State.

Our Twitter pages have 45 people following @BCFedDanceNews and 19 are following @BCFedLive. We are engaging people.

New Dancer Session Information-Gathering Assistance Desired

The gathering of information about new dancer sessions around the province is a substantial task. It's hereby proposed that one or more of each of the regional representatives on the Federation take on the role of information-gatherer for their area and submit details to SQUAREUPB.C., including updates.

Thousands of Views for our YouTube Promotional Video

It's notable that our promotional video on YouTube called "Dancing Keeps You Young" has now had over 6 thousand views (www.DancingKeepsYouYoung.ca). That is, at least in part, thanks to it being featured on the promotional landing page to which people are sent when they click on one of our advertisements.

Statistics-to-Date for our Internet Advertising

Since starting to advertise our recreation on the internet in 2012, we have seen a total of almost 2,000 clicks to our promotional landing page or other promotion-related pages on Google Adwords and the ad has been shown on 1.4 million computer screens.

Since we began advertising on Facebook, 4,914 clicks have been made by people who became interested through our ads. All-in-all, our ads have appeared on Facebook at least 625,232 times and probably more since some of the older statistics are not available.

Volunteer Training/Upgrading

In an effort to stay current with regard to marketing practices, on November 20th a seminar called the Okanagan Marketing Summit was attended in Kelowna. The morning session was about delivering your message through traditional media, such as tv, radio and newspapers.

The afternoon session focused upon social media advertising and promotion—particularly relevant to recent Federation campaigns. At the time of this report, a promotional web page about the 2013 summit is still available for viewing at: www.oms2013.com

Advertising our Federation to 2014 Ottawa Convention Dancers

At the request of the Federation's Executive, a full page colour advertisement has been purchased in the Festival 2014, Ottawa, convention program book (2 copies are available here for viewing).

New Promotion/Advertising for the Same Old/Same Old?

The most frustrating element about SQUAREUPB.C. efforts to publicize, promote and advertise our recreation is that many B.C. clubs are not adapting their lesson offering to meet the needs and wants of the next generation. As the American Callers Association has commented: “we can no longer sell new people what we have been trying to sell for years.”

Clubs need to shorten their total number of lessons and reduce the list of calls accordingly. Mainstream (68 calls) can no longer be the destination for newcomers—perhaps later they'll want to undertake learning the calls to attain it.

Our own West Coast Square Dancing program, developed in this province, is probably one of the best options for getting Boomers dancing. That program involves only 10 sessions teaching 46 calls and then the dancers have a chance to dance for a while at that program.

While mentioning that program, kudos go out to most if not all upper Vancouver Island clubs that have adopted the program and to others in Abbotsford and Kamloops that have offered it. A web site dedicated to the program can be found at: www.WestCoastSquareDance.com

The active SQUAREUPB.C. marketing program that has placed advertising on internet social media systems is beneficial to clubs that have adapted their lesson offering but possibly a dead end for those that have not. The Callerlab Foundation's research of 2000 warned us: “If the dance community launches an active marketing program without first changing the things that need changing, it runs a risk of bringing new dancers in to discover the same old same old.” (Focus Group Survey of 2000, closing comments—see:

<http://www.callerlabfoundation.org/Portals/34/Foundation%20Documents/200201-FocusGroupSurveyRpt-Full.pdf>).

The Image of Square Dancing

We've got to be sensitive to the image that we project. The research commissioned by the Callerlab Foundation revealed that “We have badly underestimated the image issue we have. Research showed that 90 per cent of the focus groups surveyed thought that square dancing was done out in the country, in a barn with fiddle music, with the ladies dressed in puffy

clothing! Those surveyed also thought that square dancing was fun, good for you and that they would probably try it when they were old enough.”

Read more on the web at:

http://squaredance.bc.ca/articals/JIM_HENSLEYS_SEMINAR.htm

As the first generation to grow up on television, the Boomers were presented with lots of not-so-positive imagery of the square dance. A Boomer-aged elementary teacher was overheard recently trying to explain to his grade 4's why they weren't included in square dance instruction underway at the school. He identified for the students his hillbilly image of the recreation as being highly influenced by a Bugs Bunny cartoon. Ignorant—yes, but that was his reference point and it shows the power of the visual medium on his generation. See the 2 min, 42 sec. cartoon sequence for yourself on YouTube at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QuaojjCV1Tk>

OR

Go to www.YouTube.com and type into the search window:

Bugs Bunny's square dance in 'Hillbilly Hare'

A few years ago, a square dance group in Australia assumed wrongly that just dancing on stage in traditional dancewear to a live caller would be talent enough to entertain a panel of judges and a nationwide tv audience. They hardly got started before their “act” was considered too boring to continue. They were by no means "old people" because their ages spread from 20 to 50. See a 1 minute, 18 second YouTube video from the talent show at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9TUVFNG6pqM>

OR

Go to www.YouTube.com and type into the search window:

Australia's Got Talent – Dancing Judges

What's Your Vision?

What's your vision for the near and distant future to preserve, promote and perpetuate our great recreation—the purpose of the B.C. Federation as stated in its constitution?

It could be to act upon adapting our dance offering to fit the needs and wants of the next generation—the Baby Boomers, currently aged 50 to 68. Ideally, we most want those still working or not fully-retired. It could be to offer only 10 two-hour instruction sessions and during that time-frame teach them only 46 calls as the West Coast Square Dance program does. It could be to limit the dress code to “dressy casual,” not just for new dancer sessions but throughout the dancer's participation in our activity, if they so desire. It could be to make new dancer sessions available two or three times a year, not just annually.

A new vision could be to instruct your caller to play only music to which those Boomers born between 1946 and 1964 can relate. It could be to have your caller modernize all expressions

when calling and perhaps even drop patter-filler, which often incorporates some very old expressions—the Boomers don't relate to them and, in fact, see it as old-fashioned and, possibly, a “turn-off.”

Image Re-Branding

If our clubs modernize and adapt for a “new customer,” all B.C. clubs could benefit from an image re-branding campaign utilizing conventional media such as television. We could update our image to “cool, youthful, fun and easy-to-learn.” We want to re-position the square dance as a fitness activity—something particularly sought-after by the Boomer generation. Above all, we want to sell “a great experience!”

The B.C. Federation can facilitate that, especially if a community gaming grant application was to be submitted and successfully attained to buy advertising. Provincial non-profit organizations like the Federation can be eligible for up to \$250,000 annually in support of programs or services of direct benefit to the broader community.

In 2012, the government of B.C. relaxed many former rules in applying for community gaming grants. They also invited applications from sports groups and arts groups (like us). See an overview online at:

<http://www.gaming.gov.bc.ca/grants/community-gaming.htm>

Another option that might be available to the Federation is to apply to Shaw Cablesystems for a partnership. For a minimal investment, Shaw will produce a public service announcement for your non-profit (for instance, a 30 second tv commercial) and insert it into various cable channels.

What's your vision?

Final Thoughts

Congratulations to clubs that planned an event or got some press through Square and Round Dance Awareness Week in September. In some cities, newspaper press releases announced the special week. Thanks to our Federation Secretary, Ken Crisp, for acquiring yet again a Proclamation from the B.C. Government.

Accolades also go out to those clubs that have achieved internet press postings with an article and one or more photos. The Williams Lake club has done well to get free publicity both in print and online. The effort in the Kamloops area to have frequent postings on that city's community internet portal was exceptional.

Dancer Jean Wood of Salmon Arm is to be applauded for the late 2013 launch of a brand new dance magazine called the “Well Rounded Square.” It's very nicely designed and full of

relevant content. The magazine not only serves the Thompson-Shuswap area but also the greater region of the south-central interior. Jean can be contacted at:

wellroundedsquarenews@gmail.com

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

In your promotions, remember to tell of the 10-minute promotional video, aimed at Baby Boomers, called “Dancing Keeps You Young.” Send people to it online at:

www.DancingKeepsYouYoung.ca

Also consider showing in your advertising/promotion/publicity our promotional “landing pages,” such as www.TakeMeDancing.squaredance.bc.ca, specifically detailing the many benefits of square dancing.

Many traveling dancers are turning to www.WheresTheDance.com to find dance events. Consider submitting your dance events to this free listings service.

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

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

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