

Moving & Grooving Report - BOD

March 2015

Submitted by Mary Anne and Nick Turner

We continue to make Moving and Grooving available and handle its distribution. In the Lower Mainland, Wendy Krueger keeps several copies of the program and if someone from that area wishes to purchase one, Wendy is often able to save them the \$15.00 postage. Thanks, Wendy.

We also continue to manage the Moving and Grooving website which is hosted by the BCS&RDF. It is located at <http://movingandgrooving.squaredance.bc.ca> and we encourage you to link your club websites to the Moving and Grooving site, if appropriate.

We have often said that it is not necessary to be a teacher or a caller to go into schools and help out with a dance program. If we have a familiarity with Moving and Grooving, and are willing to do some preparation, success is within reach of all of us.

Square dancer, Diane Weismiller, from Terrace, was invited to teach square dancing to a couple of classes at Uplands School in Terrace. They were Grades 5/6 and there were 58 of them. She wrote to us and asked for some teaching tips which we were happy to give. Then she familiarized herself with the 'Moving' part of the program and off she went.

I asked Diane if she would share her experiences with us and below is the account of her adventures.

"We had 3 one and a half hour sessions with 2 classes - 58 students in Grades 5 and 6 at Uplands School. We were supposed to have 4 sessions but I wasn't well enough to start on the day we planned. They wanted to do dancing for the school's Arts Month and asked if I could help them learn to square dance. When we met the first time we started with the folk dances you suggested and we decided that it would be better to stick to folk dancing in the limited time we had to spend with them. The school was very busy preparing for their production of "Oliver" which they performed in the REM Lee Theatre on Feb. 20 and 21. All of our students were involved so the second time we saw them we met each class for 45 minutes while the others caught up on classroom work or went to rehearsals. On the final day I saw each group for 30 minutes to teach a new dance and review one of the favourites. We had 30 minutes overlap so they could practice the Popcorn Dance together for their assembly presentation.

I used our club's sound system and wireless mike. The teachers were there to help organize the groups and demonstrate the dances. I sent them the instructions for the dances and also found video links to the Popcorn dance, Kinderpolka and Heel and Toe polka that they could share with the students on their Smart Boards. They showed them to the kids and did some practicing during the week.

We didn't really have any problems. The hardest part was getting them to form a circle! The first week we had 4 circles - one with all boys (I will send you a picture of them), two with all girls and one mixed. The dances we did were Cat's Meow, Popcorn, Mayim, Mayim, Kinderpolka, Simple Circle Twosome, Heel Toe Polka and Andy's Special Mixer. The boys seemed to enjoy dancing together and many of them came up individually to thank us at the end of the first lesson. They have had excellent music instruction since kindergarten so most were able to hear the beat and follow the rhythm of the dances. They liked the fast, bouncy ones best and I was able to speed up the Popcorn Dance to 105%.

I had Art there to help and Kathryn (retired Kindergarten teacher) from our square dance club also came along to help supervise. It was good to have the extra adults to keep an eye on everyone especially when we had both classes. I found the instructions for the dances easy to follow and it was great to have many of the dances cued. I'm sure that any classroom teacher could use this program to find some dances that their students would enjoy."

So it sounds like Diane had success with her school dance experience. I enjoyed reading that the boys all preferred to dance together in their own circle and so did the girls. That is exactly why the Moving and Grooving Program does not require boy/girl pairings. The dancers are referred to as 1s or 2s. This allows the children to dance with friends of their own choice.

We continue to encourage all dancers and leaders to become familiar with the Moving and Grooving programme and to speak to your local schools and community groups about it. Refer them to the Moving and Grooving website for more information and to hear sound clips. Help us to involve children and others in a positive dance experience.

As mentioned in an earlier report, Diane also uses Moving and Grooving with her square dance club, Skeena Squares. They do not have a caller so Diane has taken on the responsibility of planning lessons, instructing the dancers and obtaining resources that will allow the dancers to dance. The 'Grooving' part of Moving and Grooving is entirely Modern Square Dancing. There are ten sequential units, with all instructions and calling done on the CDs. Since Diane is teaching adult men and women who are quite willing to dance with each other, they are not too fond of the 1s and 2s designation that Moving and Grooving uses for the school children but they have successfully learned to adapt.

Here is Diane's comment on using Moving and Grooving with her square dance club.

"The Moving and Grooving program has been a lifesaver for me and our club. I am willing to help new dancers learn the moves but I am not at all keen to try calling.

I have been using the M&G tips for the past two years as the basis for the lessons for our new dancers. I supplement them with video from the Traveling Hoedowners and the Saddlebrook Squares. We also use the Taminations animations from time to time. I use

"Anytune Pro+" on our ipad to play the music and "Download" for the videos. I play the DVD's on my computer and I use the school Benq projector. The dancers really like the addition of the videos and I find them very helpful when I am trying to explain the moves we will be learning.

I like the M&G program because the dancers are dancing right away and they feel successful. Nick's explanations of the moves and the additional information about styling and handholds is very helpful. Even our more experienced dancers learn from them and they aren't bored by a lot of repetition or frustrated by broken down squares. They have also been very good at adding their own hints to help the new dancers.

This year we will be able to finish the M&G square dance tips in 15 lessons and everyone is feeling confident about the moves they have learned. When we have learned a few more moves we should be able to use many of the singing calls that we have in our collection. Unfortunately, we have a few dancers who missed lessons due to work or health problems but having the program organized in tips makes it easy enough for me to review the ones they need when they are able to join us again."

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