

SQUAREUPB.C. Report

to the Annual General Meeting

of the B.C. Square & Round Dance Federation, Penticton -- August 5, 2011

Since the object of this report is to explain the various tasks performed by SQUAREUPB.C. since August of 2010, it will include a brief review of some of the information presented at the Board of Directors Meeting at Chase.

For those who are unaware, SQUAREUPB.C. is a marketing initiative of the Federation.

The new health-orientated promotional brochure, developed by your Federation, was test-marketed in parts of the province last Fall. 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. Our president, Norm Cox, can furnish you with the brochures.

In support of the health theme, a professional-looking pull-up promotional screen developed in Prince George is now available to each region of the province courtesy of the Federation. The Okanagan Square and Round Dance Association has acquired theirs and at least one member club plans to display it at a busy shopping area and, in conjunction, hand out the health-orientated brochures. The value of the screen, being absorbed by the Federation, is \$300 delivered. Regions desiring a second screen can have another, also at no cost to you, because your Federation allotted up to \$600 per region for the purpose.

Planning is now underway to develop a new program where a caller is engaged by the business or corporate world to present square dancing to their employees on a one-time basis. The program concentrates on the teamwork element of square dancing which is a quality sought by business in order to have their employees work together in a cohesive manner. Inspired by a credit union convention at Whistler where a caller was similarly engaged, the concept is to offer the program in seminar fashion to organizational gatherings around the province. The hope is that the participants will enjoy the experience to the extent that they'll want to continue the dance fun at local square dance clubs. At the very least, it will help to raise awareness and educate people about the true nature of the square dance activity.

It is felt that the program should come under the SQUAREUPB.C. banner because of its marketing nature. Federation secretary, Ken Crisp, will present more detail on the program at this meeting.

Is the B.C. Federation going to support square dancing as a competitive event in the 2012 B.C. Seniors Games, as it did in 2009 and 2010?

We should probably hold on to any Federation projects or programs like this that bring any promise to raising awareness and perpetuating our activity.

Continued involvement in the B.C. Seniors Games, especially in 2012, makes sense because it will be held in Burnaby, August 21 to 25. Surely many, many more participants will be there than seen in Courtenay/Comox in 2010. As far as the 2012 Games organizers are concerned, square dancing is already planned for Bonsor Hall in Burnaby. We're on the program.

Games participants are an ideal demographic of persons most likely to become interested in our activity. They're perfect candidates to become involved in square and round dancing. They're already showing an interest in active living.

Should the B.C. Federation decide to participate in the 2012 B.C. Seniors Games, SQUAREUPB.C. will see that a 1/4 page ad is placed in the Games Souvenir Program Book .

For your information, the competitive element for square dancers at the Games is rather a brief amount of time within the overall experience.

An opportunity to upgrade to the latest in marketing approaches took place in the Spring. A professional marketing company from Eastern Canada held a seminar in Kelowna and an entry ticket valued at \$95 was obtained on a complimentary basis.

The presentation confirmed that we are doing right if we observe the "Four P's" of marketing and keep an open mind about our customers and how to attract them. Those who have had marketing training will know that the "Four P's" are product, place, price and promotion. They'll also know that no amount of promotion can sell your product if your customer doesn't desire it unless it can be "new and improved." All indications are that we need to re-package our dance form in order to attract the Baby Boomers, our new and very different customers.

Caller organizations such as Callerlab and the American Callers Association are revealing in their newsletters and elsewhere that we're probably expecting too much of our new customers. We tend to expect them to fit the mold of a very well trained square dancer before joining our clubs, while all they want is to dance without a long commitment to learning.

The marketing seminar went so far as to say that the new marketing slogan is a variation on the golden rule. It goes: "do unto others as they would do unto themselves." It basically means that you have to serve the customer's needs and not shape the customer to fit your needs.

Remember that your Federation is maintaining a page on the popular Twitter message web site. Find us at www.twitter.com/bcfeddancenews. Urgent news about the cancellation of the Festival in Prince George was quickly posted there and the rescheduling of this meeting to Penticton is also shown.

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 all your promotional efforts, you should be directing the non-dancing public to www.DancingKeepsYouYoung.ca. The feature closes by directing people to our toll-free INFOLINE number for more information. Also shown is our Dance Connection web site address.

Remember that we're observing "Square Dance Awareness Week" in mid-September. Regional associations and their member clubs should be planning 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 last Summer 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.

SQUAREUPB.C. is available to assist regional promotion committees or even club promotion persons. Contact Brian Elmer by phone or e-mail brian@squaredance.bc.ca

This concludes the SQUAREUPB.C. report to the Annual General Meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

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