

Makeover Committee Report

July 3, 2012

Chair: Lyle and Diane O'Hara

Members: Brian Elmer and Rosalyn Garnett

Gord and Yvette Ruedig

Nick and Mary Anne Turner

The Makeover Committee has been using electronic media for its communications since the last BOD due to the distance between each member except for an impromptu meeting held between Brian, Gord and myself at the American National Convention held in Spokane Washington in June. Since the last BOD meeting, Gord has approached and got the buy in of several Callers in Region 8 to try the West Coast Dance program he has been working on. They intend to try it out this coming September. When the first wave of new dancers has been trained to the West Coast Square Dance level (end of December), the callers will be seeking the approval of their respective clubs to set aside one of their regular dance nights per month and advertise it as an evening of West Coast Square Dancing. The intention is to give new dancers an opportunity to experience club square dancing after a short training period while at the same time providing existing dancers with a dance which feels to them like full mainstream. A proposal to offer an incentive of \$200 per club to participate in this pilot project will be made at the AGM, monies to come from the pilot project fund approved at the BOD meeting this past spring.

We are starting slowly with this one project to see what the results are. We feel we will see the effect of the program by January 2013 and expect to see what effect it has on retention of dancers by January of 2014. The following are some other ideas to consider:

- **"Blast"** Classes where the first forty moves are taught in one full day, with lunch and dinner provided by the host club, then several weeks of dancing up to this level followed by another full day of teaching up to the full Mainstream level. This has been tried in some areas and has had success and reasonable retention levels. (greater than 50%)
- **"Flash Mobs"** where a group of dancers pre-arrange to meet at a specific place and set time with a caller and sound system to dance a couple of songs and disperse. Could be similar to the Flash Mobs organized over social media. Dancers would be in regular street clothes and the caller would have to have a portable sound system, perhaps in a suitcase.
- **"Walk and Dance"**, possibly for charity, where there are several callers set up around a town or central area and the dancers can walk from one to another. The dancers would get points for each station they danced at and for the distance they travelled between, perhaps monitored by pedometers. They could solicit donations for the number of steps they do during the day for a donation to a favorite charity. If they were in square dance attire some of the area merchants might be persuaded to give discounts to them for shopping at their stores also.

One thing that I took away from the Seminars at the Spokane conference is we are a collection of **closet square dancers** and we really need to come out of the closet in order to create awareness that square dancing is still alive. When Brian, Rosalyn, Diane and I went for dinner at a restaurant one block from the Convention Center, the Hostess asked about the dresses and where we were dancing. She was shocked to find out there were 5100 (actual final total was 5588) dancers at the center only one block away. We

need to blow our own horn more to let the general public know we are around yet. McDonalds and Coke did not become household words by hiding in the closet. Ask yourself "How many people did I mention Square Dancing to today?" Regardless of what we do about the length of teaching time or the difficulty of the dance moves, we must have people coming in the door or we are not going to grow. Our best advertisement is us dancers.