

BC SQUARE & ROUND DANCE FEDERATION
PRESIDENT'S REPORT
AGM July 11, 2019

The purpose of the BCS&RDF shall be to preserve, promote and perpetuate Square Dancing, Round Dancing, Contra Dancing, Clog Dancing and other related forms of dance in the province of British Columbia.

Communication... I keep bringing up this problem every chance I get but it seems that it's not working! It's not like we need to send up smoke signals or wait for Canada Post to bring us the correspondence. With the tools that are available to us, communication can be immediate and does not need to be difficult or complicated.

I feel that two meetings a year just doesn't get the job done. We need to be able to have more face to face discussions about the problems and solutions that the different regions and clubs have.

Following the March 30th meeting, we had a short workshop. We may not have solved any problems, but I felt it went well and could be a step in the right direction. The lines of communication were opened, and many ideas were put forth and shared. So now what? Your executive has been experimenting with video meetings and despite a few glitches, it works well. We have not committed to the purchase of any specific program, but I recommend that we do so. This would be an extremely helpful tool in "reducing the size of the province". Once this is in place, anyone in the province will have the ability to contact the program "host" to request a video meeting.

I'm sorry to say that, despite clubs celebrating milestone anniversaries, there are clubs closing their doors. The most recent ones, that I am aware of, are Region 9's Ta'Lana Twirlers from Blind Bay and Region 3's Penticton Squares. It's sad to see them go and I hope that there will come a day when they are able to resume dancing.

Volunteers... We are all volunteers but look around your club; it seems that it's always the same people doing the bulk of the work, doesn't it. I have heard it said many times that, "I've already done my time and I just want to dance". Yes, you've done your time, but we need your experience and *not* just dancing. You may have skills, abilities, or talent that could be utilized to promote dancing in BC. Don't be afraid to come forward with your ideas; you might think it's not worth mentioning but there are times when a little idea leads to a big Ah Ha!

We do have newer dancers taking on the challenges, but it would be easier for them if they had assistance rather than stumbling around in the dark. It also helps if they are rewarded with a "thank you" instead of criticism. Many of us have forgotten that we were once in the same boat... without the paddle. Working together brings unity and could very well breathe new life into our quest for new dancers to allow us to continue doing what we love most... dancing!

New Dancers... I will continue to be an advocate for new dancers. We need to treat them better if we want to keep them. I feel that guidance, and encouragement, is the key, not verbal or physical aggression.

Not too long ago, I danced with a young lady who made a point of learning to dance the left-hand position. I later watched as she danced in a square with "experienced dancers". She was being pushed and pulled around the square, quite often into the wrong position. Finally, she had to say that she knew where she was supposed to be so stop pushing. This was not the first time that I've seen this happen and I think that we really need to look at how well we're doing before we place the blame on others. Remember, none of us are ever perfect and maybe some of these new dancers have a better handle on the moves because they have just learned them so it's fresh in their minds. Think first... we want to keep these dancers; we need them more than they need us.

Recruiting won't work if we're apathetic! When volunteers are called for and no one turns up, it's frustrating for those who are organizing a membership drive. These organizers eventually get to the stage where it's, "why bother?" How can we convince people that it's fun when we don't look enthusiastic in the presentation? You can't do much of a demo when only six people show up. Let's get excited; this will convince people that this is how they want to spend their valuable free time!

Callers & Cuers... A person must wonder, with clubs folding, why we need more leaders. Well.... it goes like this.... if you have no leader, it's difficult to have a club; if you want to start or revive a defunct club, you need a caller; if your caller or cuer retires, you need a replacement. We need to keep training leaders; we need to support those that we have, and we probably should look a little closer at that "goofer" who is talented but needs the encouragement to take the next step. Perhaps it's time that BC started hosting its own schools for leaders? Unless we want to start using recorded music, we need to take care of our callers and cuers. We need them more than they need us.

About the BCS&RDF purpose to preserve, promote and perpetuate Square Dancing, Round Dancing, Contra Dancing, Clog Dancing and other related forms of dance in the province of British Columbia. As there is a large aboriginal population in the Shuswap, a local group has been invited to do a jigging (similar to clogging) demonstration at the BC Festival 2019 Opening Ceremonies on Thursday evening. I'm sure many an eyebrow just went up but it's not that much different than the forms we currently dance. If you were to go to YouTube and type "clogging" into the search box, you will get some interesting results; better than half of them are aboriginal dancers. They wear the same, if not fancier, square dance clothes that we do, and their dance style basically resembles a combination of square dancing and clogging. I believe we might want to consider the addition of "other related dance forms" to help rebuild membership, especially in the outlying areas of the province. I realize that this requires a lot more attention than just saying, "we want" but it must start somewhere, right?

What happens when you don't get new dancers and we don't have leaders? Clubs fold, regional and provincial memberships go down; all of which contribute to a bank account that is being depleted. Without the funds, how can we support the callers, cuers and dancers in BC?

In March, the BC Square & Round Dance Federation got quite a boost when the Swinging Singles Building Fund donated \$100,000. We need to consider how best to make use of this and invest the money in the most beneficial way. Bring your ideas to the executive and who knows, it might be another Ah Ha!

BC Square & Round Dance Federation Documents and Memorabilia... In March, it was brought to the attention of the Board of Directors that we have BC Federation documents, memorabilia, and equipment spread throughout the province. I'm sure anyone who has served on an executive, at any level, will find they have an item or two left over after they have completed office. We need to find a way to centralize, perhaps digitize, all this material as well as have someone, perhaps a historian or a librarian, to manage it. In organizing it, this material becomes more accessible throughout the province. Any ideas?

A huge *Thank You* to Dennis Sutton who has put a lot of time and effort into bringing our bylaws into compliance with the new societies act. Now the fine-tuning starts; a committee, consisting of Dennis Sutton, Bill Cave, Bill Wood, Wendy Krueger and Jean Wood (as ex officio), is working on editing, simplifying, and organizing the bylaws and handbook as necessary. This is a challenging task and it's not something that will be done overnight.

Thank you for all the support and direction that I have received for the first year of the newest challenge in my life. As the current executive can attest to, I have more questions than answers. My opinions are my own and may not always fall in line with "the way things have always been done" but I can only do the best that I am able. I hope that you will continue to support me as we head into another year.

Respectfully submitted for the 2019 AGM,

Jean & Bill Wood
President Couple,
BC Square & Round Dance Federation.