



Ontario Square and Round Dance Federation

Newsletter – May 2021

Spring greetings to all dancers!

This time last year who would have imagined we'd still be asking the same question now; "When can we get together and dance?" Well, we still don't know!

With the ongoing vaccination program it's looking brighter that we will be able to dance again sometime this fall. There are still many questions that will have to be addressed:

- Will our dance venues be open?
- Will school boards allow community groups?
- Will we have to ask if people coming to dances are vaccinated?
- Will our dancers return?
- How can we recruit new dancers?

From the Federation's perspective we will have to be guided by the health authorities. Stay tuned for more information as it comes available.

New Website!

Check out our new website at squaredance.on.ca. The website has a fresh new look, works better, and will continue to be updated as we have new things to share.

Please contact the president, Dan Roy, if you have feedback on the website.

Trillium Awards. Each of the four regional associations can submit two nominations for each of the two categories: Merit and Long Service. The deadline for submission for this year closed on April 30. You can see on the new website that the Trillium guidelines and nomination forms have been revised. The time of service for a Long Service Award has been changed from 25 to 20 years. We hope you will find it easier to submit nominations next year. Give some thought about nominating some hardworking people in your club for 2022.

2022 Canadian National Convention – Fredericton, July 20-23

[Click here for the convention site](#). This will be a great celebration after the disappointment of the cancellation of the Surrey, BC convention.

The convention hotels are: The Crown Plaza Lord Beaverbrook Hotel at \$172/night (they're taking reservations now) and The Hilton Garden Inn is \$209/night (reservations open July 21).

Annual General Meeting update

Federation held their AGM on April 17th. Thanks to all who attended. The minutes and the supporting documents can be found on the webpage. <https://squaredance.on.ca>

Due to covid, nothing much has changed over the last 12 months. We've discovered the advantages to meetings on zoom; committee members from all over the province are able to attend without traveling long distances and more people can easily attend the AGM.

The Ontario government is making funds available from the Trillium Foundation of Ontario. Non-profit groups can apply to help them recover from the effects of covid shut down. The Federation are looking into submitting an application and we ask the clubs and Associations not make their own applications so we are not competing against each other.

We are sorry to say farewell to Wayne and Sharron Hall, caller and cuer and long-time members of our executive committee. They served two terms as presidents as well as holding other positions and were also long time members and presidents of the T&D executive committee. We will miss their wealth of knowledge and mentoring on both committees. We wish them well going forward and no doubt we will see them at dances and events.

Ideas and plans for start-up

A lot of clubs are talking about how and when they will start up again. As always, clubs are looking to find new dancers.

The B.C. Federation has posted a [number of YouTube videos](#) which are of interest to square dancers everywhere. [This is their channel.](#) There are many ideas which will give us a lot of points to discuss with your clubs.

There is a presentation by Mike Hogan from March 21st. It is especially good as it talks about dancing after Covid and recruitment. Mike is a caller with 42 years experience but his professional life is marketing. As Mike is American they do things a little differently. Lessons are usually separate from club nights; however we share most things in common.

Here are a few of our take-aways from his video but please watch it as there is much more to learn:

- Be realistic and accept the fact that our target audience is over 50.
- To attract and keep younger dancers, give them their own time.
- Members of the executives are often high-level dancers. When making decisions, focus on the newer dancers; avoid favouring experienced dancers.
- With new dancers, after 5 weeks of lessons, just hold a dance, NO teaching!

- No crinolines – jeans are fine.
- Classes should cost more – don't undervalue our activity.
- Use a variety of music.
- Stop encouraging dancers to “move up” – let them have fun.
- People come for fun and socializing – don't push it as a fitness class.
- Have several intakes a year.
- Don't push newer people to be on the executive.
- When we have permission to dance again, perhaps consider dancing for a few months before bringing in new people. Show this is a safe environment.

Mike Hogan also brought up the SSD (Social Square Dancing) program – 50 moves taken from the Basic and Mainstream programs. The idea is that it can be taught in 12 weeks. It's for people who want a social, fun time and have no interest in moving to Plus. If they eventually want this, it would have to be with another club or different time. Here is the link to the information from the Callerlab webpage: <https://knowledge.callerlab.org/social-square-dance-ssd-an-introduction-and-overview-by-barry-johnson/>

Another valuable resource for recruitment and retention ideas is the Callerlab Marketing Manual: <https://www.callerlab.org/download/marketing-manual/>

Zoom Dancing

Many of us have been enjoying virtual dancing over Zoom. Some callers will continue with it even after the clubs resume, especially at the Challenge level.

It's wonderful to hang out with dancers from all over the world and to dance to callers and cuers one normally could not – like our weekly sessions with a caller in England!! Making contact this way has helped many through difficult times: health issues, family problems and just loneliness. There's also a lot of laughter.

See the links to Zoom dancing <https://squaredance.on.ca/events/>

We hope you all have a good summer and look forward, hopefully, to dancing in the Fall.

Submitted by: Howard and Jean Lander