

This newsletter provides promotion and marketing ideas, shines a light on people in our dance community, provides history and general information about our much loved activity, and highlights provincial and national events. If you wish to contribute an article, or see an event, topic, person, or club featured, contact the editor.



CREATING COMMUNITY - by Editor Claudia Littlefair

I've read articles on how square dancing was the perfect activity for Americans after WWII. People needed to "get back to normal", to meet their neighbors, and to build community. They needed an activity that was inexpensive, fun, required no special gear or training, and above all else, was highly social. Square dancing met all those requirements and it spread like wildfire across the States and Canada. For thousands and thousands of people, square dancing was key in creating an active and significant social life.

Fast forward today where we are shut-in by the COVID-19 pandemic. When the smoke clears and the ashes settle, people will be looking for something social to do. The economic impact will be harsh making many activities unaffordable. I think we'll see that our square dance program has potential to help, once again, create community.

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YOUR BRAIN LOVES MUSIC

Montreal documentary shows healing power of song

- T'cha Dunlevy, Montreal Gazette, Updated: January 22, 2020

Isabelle Raynauld grew up feeling guilty about her ability to hear. "On my father's side, all my aunts, uncles and cousins were deaf," explained the filmmaker and Université de Montréal professor. "I felt an immense privilege being able to hear. But there was music in her home all the time. Her parents met in a choir at university, and her mother played piano. Her grandfather had been an opera singer.

When Raynauld suffered a concussion in 2010, listening to music was part of her path to healing, as prescribed by her doctor. That got her to thinking. As a follow-up to her 2006 documentary *The Mystical Brain*, about altered states provoked by meditation, she began to wonder about the transformative powers of music.



Her new bilingual documentary, *Tuning the Brain with Music*, began when Raynauld was granted a fellowship at MIT, which put her on a path of accumulating scientific and real-life examples of how human existence is positively affected by song. "I really think music, for the brain, is the equivalent of oxygen for the lungs," Raynauld said. "It regenerates you. It can change your mood in five minutes. And there are no side-effects."

Among the film's subjects is Harvey Alter, a former criminologist based in New York, who developed aphasia, losing the ability to speak following a stroke in 2003. He eventually taught himself to talk again, by singing.

Raynauld sits down with *Guitars for Vets Canada* founder Jim Lowther, who **uses music to help his fellow army veterans deal with PTSD.** "These guys play together and it bypasses speech therapy," she said. "You can express very, very different emotions than with words. You can express yourself in a profound way and enter into a relationship with somebody else without explanation."

Raynauld experienced the phenomenon first-hand when she approached Julien Perrin about talking to participants in his musical therapy program for homeless youth at Montreal's Dans la rue. Before committing to anything, Perrin asked her to attend the weekly drum circles at the centre. **"I actually really enjoyed the drum circles," Raynauld said. "They healed me, too.** A lot of these young people have incredible stories — a lot of them are extremely talented and profound but life has dealt them another set of cards."

She was particularly struck by the story of one young man in the group, Mike, and how music has given him a sense of purpose. "He has such insight," Raynauld said. "Music saved his life, it has kept him alive."

In Westmount, **a music-therapy program for autistic children helps the youngsters communicate in ways they never could otherwise**, as they pick up instruments and microphones and sing about their day. And at the Montreal Children's Hospital, a music therapist eases the pain of infants born prematurely, simply by singing to them. "One of the things that surprised me was the immediacy with which music can affect a person's anxiety, and cool their burning thoughts," Raynauld said. "**Premature babies can reorganize themselves, calm down and slow their heart rate.** I witnessed all that in a 20-minute music-therapy session. These babies would enter a different state."

To add weight to her survey, Raynauld speaks with neuroscientist David Poeppel at MIT, as well as members of Montreal's International Laboratory for Brain, Music and Sound Research. "The goal of the film is to find not only stories but proof of what music does to the cells of the body and the brain," Raynauld said.

By spending time with her subjects and letting their stories of musical redemption emerge as a matter of course, she hopes her film can convince people of music's vast potential and healing attributes. "I hope it encourages people to take things into their own hands," she said, "and integrate music into their lives, either by singing, learning an instrument, joining a choir ... or listening to a song that moves you. Music has real healing powers."

BUILDING BRIDGES, NOT FENCES

10 Tips On How To Grow Your Dance Community

- Blog "Zouk the World", June 2015

(Editor's Note: Zouk is a type of Brazilian dancing. The following tips can apply to any form of dance.)

1 Foster a Positive Community

Positive attitude creates more positivity. Your local dance community should offer a positive, uplifting environment and every member of the community can contribute to that. Remember that the reason why many people dance (or have basically any hobby) is to free their minds of their daily chores. It might be their only "my own moment" during the day, or the only thing they look forward to. To get the ball rolling on positivity, it's important that the leading members of the community set an example with their positive attitude.

2 Build Bridges, Not Fences

In a scene as small as ours, it's important to be open. If you're scared of losing students and start building fences, for example by telling people "The other teachers are no good", "The way I dance is the only right way", "If you go to the other classes/parties, you're not welcome in mine", instead of locking people in, you'll most certainly leave people outside your fence. How to build more bridges? Work together with the other dance schools and organizers in your local area, whether they're involved with zouk or some other dance style. They can help you in organizing parties, inviting guest teachers from abroad or just spreading the word. You'll notice it will benefit everybody!

3 Share Responsibilities

While it's good that there are certain people that take the lead - such as the local dance teachers - there's only so much a small group of people can do. In every community there are a number of dance addicts that go to every class and every party, and travel to every possible event. The more experienced dancers and any active members of the community can just as well work as 'dance ambassadors', spreading the word wherever they go and offering their help getting things organised.

4 Be Active

Keep the dance community active! Plan ahead a regular flow of classes, socials and parties. I know it takes a lot of work in the beginning - if you don't have time to do everything by yourself then team up. You can also make an occasion out of anything; somebody's birthday, you have new music to play in the party, a dancer from abroad is coming for a visit or there's a big event happening somewhere in the vicinity. An active scene engages more people.

5 Don't Forget Life Outside Dancing

Every now and then it's also good to break from the norm. Ask people to join you for a day on the beach, to dinner, to the movies, make a trip to some interesting place close by - whatever you like to do. It's good to get people acquainted outside the dance studio.

6 Be Visible

It's sometimes (read: often) easy to get in a rut. You may do a lot of work inside your studio and the normal dance events you visit. But you may have not noticed that there's a lot of other dance related activities in your city! If you see a public dance event, ask if you can do a zouk demo there. There might be also public places in your city where people organise aerobics, zumba, joga or dance classes - see if you can organise a class there. Try to take part in activities, expos and any public get togethers, wherever there are people doing partner dancing. It's always good to get out a little. Of course, if there are some world-class dancers around, then perhaps it's not a bad idea to try to use any press connections anyone may have. Some people have also had some success from signing up for a national "talent" or dance TV show. It's worth to look into! Just make an effort to be visible somewhere outside your normal circles every now and then.

7 Make It Easy To Take The First Step

Starting a new thing is not easy for everyone - so make it as easy as possible for people to join in. Keep the barrier to the first try as low as possible. You can have "open doors" days a couple times a year. It's also a good idea to let people bring first-timers for free in the socials you organize. These are also good things to promote about. Then remember to have something for the excited newbies to return to that doesn't require a long-term commitment right away, such as drop-in classes.

8 Work Across Borders

One of the best ways to activate people and to get attention is to invite guest teachers from abroad. As this may require some resources make sure you know what teachers your local dancers are interested in and which of them offer high quality workshops, have a good work ethic and a positive attitude. You can also work across borders with the nearby countries by making an excursion to a dance event with your local dancers. Another good boost is the annual International Zouk Day, don't forget to take part in that!

9 Offer Information

While this is obvious, this seem to be one the biggest problems: finding information. There are so many activities and events in the dance scene that our social media feeds fill with event invitations. There's no simple solution to this - just try to make sure you keep a good list of your dance events, classes and socials in an easy-to-find place. Share those to any local event website, dance directories and calendars.

10 Listen To Your Community

Do you feel like you get so sucked in to what you do that you sometimes forget who you're doing it for? Are you doing it just to please yourself or are you doing it for the whole community? Get everybody involved and give people a chance to take part in creating the dance scene. Find out what is it that people want to do - don't just expect that they will come tell you if they have an idea, a problem or a solution you haven't thought about. Be present and willing to offer your time. You might be surprised what people have in their minds and how they can help you!

GREAT TRUTHS THAT LITTLE CHILDREN HAVE LEARNED

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1) No matter how hard you try, you can't baptize cats. | 5) You can't trust dogs to watch your food. |
| 2) When your Mom is mad at your Dad, don't let her brush your hair. | 6) Don't sneeze when someone is cutting your hair. |
| 3) If your sister hits you, don't hit her back. They always catch the second person. | 7) Never hold a Dust-Buster and a cat at the same time. |
| 4) Never ask your 3-year old brother to hold a tomato. | 8) You can't hide a piece of broccoli in a glass of milk. |
| | 9) Don't wear polka-dot underwear under white shorts. |
| | 10) The best place to be when you're sad is Grandma's lap. |

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND GRATITUDE

- by Austin Hayward, South West Ontario Square & Round Dance Association

'Acknowledgement' is:

- The act of expressing gratitude or appreciation for something.
- The action of showing that one has noticed someone or something
- A statement of indebtedness to others.

I am of the mindset that, dependant upon circumstance, all the above are significant and are paramount when associated with our Square and Round dancing activities.

- We know enough to thank all those in our square at the completion of a tip, but did we think to acknowledge the caller or cuer for their expertise and the time it took them to prepare the dance program?
- Did we think that those yummy cookies and treats just magically appeared on the goodie table? Have you thought to thank those that prepared and brought those treats for your enjoyment?
- Are we so naïve to think that booking the hall, decorating, setting out tables and chairs, sweeping floors and cleaning up was all done by the dance fairy?
- When dancers come through the door to attend your dance, are you thinking that you are not needed to welcome them and that someone else will do it?
- Have you ever thought of how much work, time and knowledge go into the production of your monthly newsletter or publication and that perhaps that she or he would love to hear how much they are appreciated?
- Your club, association, Federation and Society executive members have taken a step forward and have committed their leadership time and talents to make our activity what it is, and they too appreciate acknowledgement with an occasional, simple thank-you.
- **Are you aware that a recent survey has indicated that nearly 50% of those that contribute freely of their time and talents would not do so if they felt they were not appreciated?**



Words of gratitude or of showing appreciation in our everyday lives can be powerful. **We can all benefit from being recognized for things we have done.** Gratitude is also an essential element of one's well being. A sense of gratitude is a sincere and positive experience that play a large part in increased moral and a happier life.

Square and Round Dance leaders are not looking for cards, gifts, acts of service or words of praise. **A simple thank you goes a long way.**

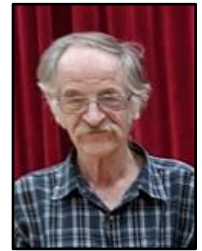
Whether you are grateful for something big such as an award or a recognition certificate for something you have done, or for something small, such as a caller offering words of support or a teach that has contributed to you being a better dancer, expressing your gratitude can mean a lot to that person who has helped you. This can also cultivate kindness and create positive relationships on the dance floor and in our personal lives.

Let's open our hearts. Let's acknowledge what others do for us, not only in association with dancing, but in our everyday lives. Show your appreciation for the little things in life as well as for those things of significance. Don't just think it, say it. Put a smile on someone's face and you might be surprised what it does for you as well. Hop aboard the "Gratitude" train and watch it enhance your experiences of joy, connection, love and enthusiasm on the dance floor and in every aspect of your life.

A thank you for someone holding the door for you, a wave to the driver of the other car for yielding you the right of way or to the post man for delivering your mail. **We all have so many opportunities to acknowledge kindness and to show gratitude.** Experience the rush, the feel good, the sensation of a warm feeling knowing you have put a smile or a happy thought in someone's heart and mind. See you on the dance floor and thanks for taking time to read this article.

KELLY'S KORNER - by Kelly Thompson

Kelly started square dancing in 2016 after being coerced by his sister. He admits that he would have never walked into the club on his own. He has since found a whole new way of looking at life, a community of new friends and personal confidence that didn't exist before.



JOIN THE FAMILY

I had a very intuitive discussion the other day with someone who actually agreed with something I had to say. From my perspective I would have to say she is very smart because not all that many do agree with me very often. I said to her that square dancing breaks a very fundamental rule of life. We know in life you can choose your friends but you can't choose your family. **The issue we have with square dancing is that you join in to meet new friends, but eventually square dancers become part of your family.** Square dancing could be very unique in that area.

Throughout this season, and in the past, I have occasioned to attend various square dance club nights, and every time the members made me feel quite at home, welcoming me like I had always been there. One day at an open dance I had thought we were to square up, but instead there was to be a round dance demo, therefore the lady I was about to ask for the dance said she couldn't round dance. I replied to her that I couldn't round dance either but she claimed to have seen me doing that at a previous dance. I told her I don't round dance in public but she reminded me the previous dance was a public dance. **It was then I told the nice lady, this isn't public, this is family.**

From Latin: familia - any of various social units differing from but regarded as equivalent to the traditional family. This is just one of several definitions of family but it does give us the basic idea. It could be quite a detailed discussion, although I suspect square dancing meets the criteria to be designated as a family culture.

It may interest some to know that hydrogen is first on the periodic table of elements, oxygen is eighth which when combined creates water. Water has a tendency to want to be together, as two drops of water placed together, will become one drop yet are almost inseparable. Since that genetic device you put those dance shoes on is about 95% water it wants to stick to other genetic devices. We might call that friendship, but is it coincidence we have one caller and eight dancers in a square? Maybe who ever invented water knew what he was doing when she (?) invented square dancing.

Something we find out after we become members of the family is how the family exists in other parts of the world. For the most part we would see the idea of attending the dances in faraway places as a chance to meet new friends, but who would ever think these friends are the equivalent of our cousins? Who knows, maybe there is a rich uncle out there we haven't met yet?

What could happen if everyone joined our family of square dancers? Something I was always told that couldn't be done is to repair the sidewall of a tire, yet I watched a video as to how that can be done. My next discussion may well be about how to bridge the gap between brains and common sense, although that may not be something I write. We simply need to enjoy our family get-togethers and invite others to join in, because nothing fills gaps, or holes, faster than the call to square up.

In the final analysis, to join our square dance family, is only a true common sense way to fill the hole in a sidewall of life, **Come for a friend, stay with a family.**

GREAT TRUTHS THAT ADULTS HAVE LEARNED

- 1) Raising teenagers is like nailing Jell-O to a tree.
- 2) Wrinkles don't hurt.
- 3) Families are like fudge...mostly sweet, with a few nuts.
- 4) Today's mighty oak is just yesterday's nut that held its ground.
- 5) Laughing is good exercise - like jogging on the inside.
- 6) Middle age is when you choose your cereal for the fiber, not the toy.

GREAT TRUTHS ABOUT GROWING OLD

- 1) Growing old is mandatory; growing up is optional.
- 2) When you fall down, you wonder what else you can do while you're down there.
- 3) It's frustrating when you know all the answers but nobody bothers to ask you the questions.
- 4) Time may be a great healer, but it's a lousy beautician.
- 5) Wisdom comes with age, but sometimes age comes alone.
- 6) No one expects you to run - anywhere.

A GLIMPSE OF THE PAST

This column features excerpts from the book *“As I See Saw It –Bob Osgood”*, reprinted with permission from the author and square dance caller, Paul Moore. Jim Mayo, First Chairman of CALLERLAB, states in his review: “This is truly the only book about the whole of Modern Western Square Dance and it is certainly the most complete (and accurate) book that will ever be written about this huge activity.” Paul had access to all of the material that crossed Bob Osgood’s desk at Sets in Order/American Square Dance Society. For additional information, contact Paul Moore at paulmoore@wildblue.net or look for this 600+ page book on Amazon.ca (\$26).

SQUARE DANCE VACATIONS AT ASILOMAR

The one goal that we had not achieved by 1951 was to give callers and dancers the Lloyd Shaw type experience. I had attended the Lloyd Shaw sessions in Colorado Springs in 1947, '48, '49, and '50 – I’m not sure how many of them. We had so much fun at these sessions we got the idea – why couldn’t we do something like this for dancers?

A square dance vacation institute would not be the first in the country, but it would be a new experience for us. We didn’t have any guidelines to go by, but we knew that it was going to be important to have a good, well rounded faculty. Unlike Shaw’s program where he was the only teacher, ours was going to be a staff situation with callers from different areas that could give a broad aspect of square dancing and round dancing.

Going back to that time before the Second World War, I never forgot that wonderful facility where hundreds of students attended a weeklong college YM/YWCA conference and where I had first been bitten by the square dance bug. My memories of my college *Asilomar* experience thirteen years earlier were still very vivid, so why not combine the best club feeling of square dancing and the expansive outreach of the magazine with the unbeatable setting of *Asilomar*? This would be an opportunity to be with dancers from all over, and not just from our own community. It would provide us with the viewpoint we felt that we needed for publishing the monthly magazine, *Sets In Order*.

Jay Orem, our most capable, energetic business manager and friend, set out to tie-up the details. **Working with the management of *Asilomar* (then owned privately and run by the YWCA), he buttoned down the dates and rates.** *Asilomar* eventually became a State-run conference grounds in Northern California, adjacent to Pebble Beach, Carme, and Monterey. A quick trip up north, a visit to the conference grounds, and we had a complete package: meals, living accommodations, dancing and class facilities, all in one location, right on the beach overlooking the Pacific Ocean.



Asilomar means ‘place of refuge’ in Latin.

We wanted to focus on Western style square dancing – the type we advocated in the magazine – and we also wanted to fully integrate the smoothness of contra dances and the grace of round dancing. We invited several callers to be on our staff – they all agreed. We set the dates from June 27 to July 2, 1951, and everything seemed to be in order. Now, would anybody come?

I think we had 180 people for that first session. It was fun and we did lots and lots of things that became a permanent part of the program. That first summer we had one session and it had a waiting list.

Then, a few years later, we were doing two sessions in the summer and one in the winter and a winter weekend ...

We still carefully structured the program so there was something special for everyone. For people who just came to dance we made sure they were exposed to the finest callers who worked on styling, smooth dancing, and the latest in choreography. Callers, of course, got to observe first-hand how the best called; in addition, aspiring callers could get one-on-one instruction time. There were also special sessions on round dancing and clinics for round dance leaders.

We stopped doing all of them in the 1990s, after almost 40 years. That session of our life was over. We handed the program over to Frank Lane who kept *Asilomar* going for several more years.

GRANDPA LEARNS TO SQUARE DANCE (OR DOES HE?)

- excerpt from *American Squaredance*, June 1990

My wife, Jackie, and my stepdaughter Phyllis, being experienced square dancers, and loving it, decided I should become a square dancer too. They wanted me to enjoy one of the better things of life. We used the democratic way to decide my future. We voted. I lost two to one. They knew a square dance caller who was starting a class for beginners, and believe me I was an absolute zero beginner. I warned them, if things didn't go well, my first lesson would be my last.

"You'll do just fine" Phyllis assured me. I was just as sure, I wouldn't do just fine. I had a negative attitude, and two left feet.

When the night of the first lesson arrived we drove to the hall, parked and went inside. Seated at a small table just inside the door was Bette, wife of Ron, the teacher and caller. She smiled and held out her hand. I shook it. That was my first mistake. I was supposed to put two dollars in it. So I did. I paid two dollars to go through all the torture I anticipated.

I looked around the hall. Young boys and girls outnumbered us oldsters two to one. I had joined the youth movement. I couldn't see any other grandpas. I panicked, but Jackie had a firm grip on my arm, and dragged me out on the floor, where we joined three other couples. Ron the caller looked down on us with pity, and began his lecture. Some of it was a foreign language. I understand some Spanish. It wasn't Spanish. After some instruction, something about doe-se-doe-ing, alamaning and promenading he started the music.

I became so confused and fouled up the square so bad, I committed the almost unpardonable sin of square dancing. I walked out of the square. I was going home. I could find easier ways to make a fool of myself than this. Some of the others talked me into staying. They said I was allowed to make mistakes. So I stayed and again joined the square.

After going through some strange maneuvers I found myself out of position, and without a partner. I looked around. A lady way over there was waving at me. I waved back, then I looked a little closer. She wasn't waving, she was beckoning. I hurried over and we began to promenade.

"Where is your home?" she asked.

"In Layton," I answered.

"No, I mean your home in the square."

"Oh, I don't know. When the others get in place, we'll take what's left," I said.

"Good thinking," she said. I beamed.

"Take a break," Ron finally announced. We all joined hands in a circle, bent down, then back up, and said "than...k yo...u. What for? I thought.

I needed a rest, so I started for a bench; one of the girls threw her arms around me and gave me a hug. Then two more hugged me right there before Jackie and everybody. I looked around to see if Jackie had observed this hugging. She was hugging all the men and boys. I hadn't seen this much hugging since the last funeral I went to. Did somebody die? Maybe the way I moved, they thought I was dead, but nobody was crying.

When Jackie got all her hugging done she walked up to me.

"A fine spectacle you made of yourself, hugging all the men and boys," I said.

"Oh, come on Lowell, everybody hugs at square dances. It's harmless," she said.

"They do? Well then I'd like to square dance with Dolly Pardon," I said sarcastically. She hit me.

Ron is a good teacher, but I'm a poor learner. When he says doe-se-doe your partner I'm not through alamaning my corner. He told us not to spread our square out too much, to keep it smaller. I told him the reason ours was spread out, they were all hunting for me.



We are supposed to learn sixty-five basic movements to become a mainstream dancer. In five months the others have learned fifty. I think I have learned about fifteen.

I am not a graceful dancer. When Ron calls a California Twirl mine is more like an elephant twirl. I do an ocean wave like we were in a hurricane. When he says stir the bucket I look for a spoon. Ron makes a mistake once in a while too. He says, "Now you should be back home with your partner". Well, I'm not back home and I'm not with my partner, so I'm one up on him there. The other dancers seem to like me though, as long as I'm not in their square.

Sometimes it seems everybody in the square is mixed up but me. I wish they would try to do better. I'll just have to be tolerant of them. At the end of the tip one of the girls will hug me and say, "You've done good". I love 'em. Bless their little lying lips. The others try to guide me. I end up facing wrong and someone turns me around. I find myself without a partner. She hunts till she finds me.

The messages have to go from the caller, through my ears to my brain, then to my feet and hands. With the others the messages don't go to their brain - they go directly to their hands and feet, so it's no wonder I can't keep up.

I'm still out there struggling, but do you know something? I'm having fun, and I love it. Thank...You!

HAPPY DANCER DISCUSSION CONTINUES . . .

- excerpt from 'Solo Corner' by Kathy Rooney, Footnotes Newsletter, Washington 2016

Last month I listed a few suggestions to solo dancers on how to attend dances with confidence and feel comfortable finding a dance partner.

Since every one of us has been single at some point in our lives, we can all relate to living in a society where, at times, it feels as though everyone is coupled up besides us. So, to narrow the chasm between couples and solos, here are some nifty ways for everyone to come together and help solos feel more welcome at dances. This begins long before the dance starts. When designing flyers, rather than just time and place, caller and cuer, how about sending out a personal invitation to solos, too?

When solos attend your dances, have your caller announce that anyone without a partner can join a square, hold up a hand and the caller will help fill that square just as any square is filled. If it's known that the solo dancer can dance either position, invite any dancer to join them, belle or beau.

If you have solos in your club, or if other solos have come in, point these folks out to each other, so they'll know there are potential partners available. Or, there may be a dancer who is available while their partner is working in the kitchen or at the front table, or who just needs a break.

Solos, keep in mind that when the caller and cuer are at work, their partners are also considered staff and they don't feel free to get in squares unless invited. If everyone seems to be coupled up, check with the non-working partner to see if they'd like to dance. This goes for Rounds, also. There aren't many dancers who would choose sitting out over joining in the fun. Also, the caller/cuer spouses I've had the honor to dance with are often adept at dancing either position, in both Rounds and Squares, depending on their spouse's specialty.

When we welcome solos to our dances and as club members, we're not only doing the right thing, we're enriching our club's resources, and promoting a healthier future for Square Dancing, in general.

One of the signs that we solos are being integrated into couples clubs is that solo clubs are not as well-attended as in the past. In the last few months, Solo Squares, in Seattle, has disbanded and our local solo club, Capitol Singles, is now Capitol Squares, choosing to end its focus on solos.

There is a certain sadness to the end of an era, particularly since it was in place to support solos, but when it means a healthier relationship between solo and coupled dancers, we can focus on the positive.

THE LIGHTER SIDE OF DARKNESS - by Dee Jackins

Dee is an avid square and round dancer, and enjoys writing. She shares the lighter side of some of her experiences, challenges and near disasters as a sight impaired person. See issue #2015-6 for her complete story under "Chatter Close-up".



Dee and her husband square danced from 1969 to 1971. In 1975, she lost sight in her left eye, and by 1989 her vision was completely gone. While trying to cope with her blindness, Dee's husband was diagnosed with cancer. He died 10 months later in October, 1991. A friend suggested that she try square dancing again, and in 1995 she joined Calgary's singles club. Dee has been dancing ever since. She dances by visualizing the calls and positions, and with the gentle guidance of dancers' hands for no-hand calls such as weave the ring.

A while back I had mentioned all the crazy maneuvers that took place when a lemon had fallen to the floor. That lemon escaped my grasp so many times and had its share of being batted around like a tennis ball. Well I excelled over that problem with overwhelming victory when not too long ago, reaching for an item at the back of the fridge, I accidentally knocked over a container which was on the edge of the shelf. It took a few seconds to register what went down as these little balls hit my feet.

"Not again!" Another slight version of a previous blooper. I thought one lemon was bad, this is worse. Balancing on one foot like an ostrich, I carefully lowered myself down to my knees. What a neat surprise, a full container of cherry tomatoes had rolled out in every direction of the kitchen. It took some time picking tomato's one or two at a time but once again all the swimming strokes were performed repeatedly to gather up all these little escapees as I continued on my hands and knees to check down the hallway up to the front entrance.

About a week later a lonely shriveled up tomato showed up at the bottom part of the fridge. So far so good, not even one had rolled under the fridge or stove. On the brighter side, some spring cleaning got done a bit early. There's a country gospel song called '*Jesus, It's Me Again.*' The next line applies to me quite often - 'I'm on my knees again,' seems like I'm singing it more often than not...

As most square dancers know, after every dance, whether it's a Square dance or Round dance everyone forms a circle to say one big 'Thank You.' One time the weather was very unsettling along with ice and snow covered roads. One gentleman was asked if he got a bit nervous when his wife was behind the wheel. He tentatively thought about it for a few seconds and replied with a somber "no, but I prefer to do the driving myself."

My ears perked up and without any hesitation I remarked, "Sometime you should try being a passenger in my vehicle when I'm behind the wheel!" Needless to say, there was no further discussion. We did our final thank you with a few chuckles and everyone headed home with no further comments, but maybe a few warm smiles. I always offer to drive but amazingly nobody ever takes me seriously. Hmmm - wonder why! Maybe some day...

- A six year old was asked where his grandma lived. "Oh," he said, "she lives at the airport, and when we want her, we just go get her. Then, when we're done having her visit, we take her back to the airport."
- My young grandson called the other day to wish me happy birthday. He asked me how old I was, and I told him, "80". My grandson was quiet for a moment, and then he asked, "Did you start at one?"

21st CANADIAN SQUARE & ROUND DANCE FESTIVAL



Sheraton Guildford, Surrey, B.C.

JULY 29 – AUGUST 1, 2020

Email: Festival2020Registrations@hotmail.com

Website: squaredance.bc.ca/2020

Note: Check website for updates regarding COVID-19 and cancellation of events.

52ND ALBERTA DANCE CONVENTION - EDMONTON



Alberta Square & Round Dance Federation
 52nd Annual Convention 2020
 Central Lions Seniors Recreation Centre
 11113 - 113 St NW, Edmonton, Alberta



SEPTEMBER 4 – 7TH

For Information & Registration visit www.communitydance.org

Proudly hosted by **COMMUNITY DANCE CAPITAL DISTRICT**

An Open Letter Regarding COVID-19 and the 2020 Alberta Convention

In these difficult times, we are all focusing on our health and the health of our loved ones – friends and family alike. And so we should be. You may be wondering, **‘What about the 2020 Alberta Convention, scheduled for Labour Day weekend 2020?’** This is the current information that we have:

1. **The Central Lions Recreation Centre in Edmonton is closed**, and it has been closed since March 16th. It was first closed as a City of Edmonton facility, and confirmed as closed this week with the declaration of a ‘state of emergency’ in Alberta.
2. **Our convention date is still more than five months away and presently we are still planning to hold a convention;** however it is possible that we may have to cancel out of concern for public health, and/or at the direction of public authorities.
3. **In discussion with the ASRDF (Alberta Square and Round Dance Federation) executive, we have developed a contingency plan**, should we have to cancel the 2020 AB Convention. If we have to cancel, Edmonton will host the 2021 Alberta Convention. All registrations received for the 2020 Alberta Convention, will be applied to a 2021 Alberta Convention, in Edmonton.
4. As always **watch our webpage for updates**. This is the direct link:
<http://www.communitydance.net/convention2020.html>
5. **So, now you know: you will not lose your registration monies!** You can safely register now, at our early registration rates (to April 30, 2020). If the 2020 Alberta Convention proceeds,
“Oh boy, are we going to be ready to get back to dancing!!”
 If it becomes necessary to cancel the 2020 Alberta Convention, your registration will be applied to the 2021 Alberta Convention.
6. Lastly – **please help us promote our convention**. Promotional activities were curtailed due to the shortening of the dance season. Talk it up with your friends and fellow dancers. Send them a link to our website and encourage them to register. Finally, please take care of yourself. We look forward to dancing together again sometime soon.

Gary & Eileen Smith

Chair couple of the 2020 Alberta Convention Committee