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The Olde Tymmer

*The Newsletter of
Canadian Olde Tyme
Square Dance Callers
Association
June 2022 Issue 70*

Website: <http://sca.uwaterloo.ca/cotsdca>

Presidents Report

Bill Russell

At the last AGM on Zoom, it was decided that “the current Executive stay in place until this Covid fiasco is over”. I must inform you that the members of the current Executive will not stand for election whenever that should happen. Nancy will continue through August, while Dave, Deborah and I are holding on for another year or until “the fiasco is over”. I have served three consecutive terms as President, so I am not eligible to run again; I should become the Past President. Dave, Deborah and Nancy have served on the Executive for over a decade.

It is time to reflect on how we should maintain our mission to keep alive the traditions “of the pioneers”. Do we want to focus more on being a resource or on organizing events? Can we successfully do both?

If you want to see Canadian traditional square dancing continue and prosper, it is your time to step up.

The AGM also decided to survey our membership on how we should proceed, in light of the pandemic and the restrictions (particularly in Ontario) we were under. Thank you to the folks who contributed to designing the survey. In particular, I would like to thank Lorna Irwin for really putting it together. She first tried to use an apparently “free” application, but it proved way too expensive for our purposes. Lorna persisted and came up with the version we used. Thank you to all who responded, over half our membership.

Please note that your responses were anonymous, and each question was separate from the others. We got ten responses to question 20 about helping with cataloguing, making videos, adding posts and pictures, etc. Unfortunately, if you indicated that you would like to help in any way, we cannot tell who you are. And even if you did not do so, but feel like helping out, please let us know. You can email me at cotsdca@hotmail.com to tell us what you would like to do. If you do not have Internet, please phone me

at (416) 658-5162. Always leave a message.

Thank you.

No Big Dances

As I have been writing this, the governments of Ontario and Canada have lifted most mandates. Proof of vaccination will no longer be required by the government to attend indoor functions. At the same time, a new, more contagious variant has developed in east Asia, particularly in China. Past experience tells us that there will be more variants, if they are not already among us. We are not in the clear, although we can be hopeful that the worst is over.

SURVEY RESULTS

SURVEY RESULTS
Bill Russell

I believe that we got very clear information from you. The following reports will be more or

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less in the order of questions asked, but with some digression on my part. Please note that the decision to poll our members had been made well before the Omicron wave came upon us.

PART 1 – Who we are

There were 43 responses, 36 online and 7 by mail, including just about all of our callers. Over half of our dancers have been square dancing for over 25 years. More than 66% of those who answered are over 70, and over 29% have been dancing at least 50 years. About a third of our dancers also do Modern Western Square. Two-thirds of the responders attend our dances as a couple, the other third as singles. We must keep all this in mind as we consider future activities.

PART 2 – Future dances

Twenty-one out of forty said they would likely attend a dance with the restrictions listed – the rules in effect before Omicron. Nineteen would not. About 14 people said that they would likely attend with live music, even without dancing.

Written responses ranged from no masks at all to dancing only with masks on; rapid tests and proof of vaccinations, to no restrictions at all; daily numbers down below 500 per day, 200 or less, very low cases, Covid completely gone; rapid tests at the door, live music; when social closeness in normal again; everyone vaccinated.

As to where we should start up again, 33 out of 40 said that the Westway United Church has been

suitable. This is not surprising, as most of our members have been attending the dances there. In general, we do not want to travel too far. The majority of those who responded live in, north of, and west of the GTA. Interestingly enough, over half said that they would like dances to be held north of the GTA; just under half, to the west; and 17/40, elsewhere in Toronto.

At this point, the Westway has raised its price. We will need one more set to cover that increase – or have to increase our admission fee. Any help in finding other locations is very welcome.

PART 3 – The future of the Association

We got quite a variety of comments, included below. I believe that the distinguishing features of our Big Dances have been live traditional music, a variety of callers, and a major focus on dancing. Whether this will be able to continue really depends on how successfully we recover from the pandemic interlude

COTSDCA Survey Comments

10. What changes in the Covid requirements, if any, would need to be in place, in order for you to attend an Olde Tyme Square

Dance again? 32 responses

- Current guidelines are sufficient but Covid numbers have to be down to under 500 per day

- requirements are fine-just want to see case numbers down because dancers come from all over Ontario
- No masking
- Allow dancing
- None
- No masks. Rapid Tests acceptable.
- Touch one another
- Lifted capacity limits, mandatory double or triple vaccine required, no need for social distancing, masks okay.
- the daily numbers need to be much lower and public health measures must be in place
- I would obey all the present requirements as nobody really knows what will help.
- no restrictions
- Very low cases
- For Covid to be over
- Complete gone
- Prefer not to reply
- Having rapid tests at the door. Live music.
- What is outlined in (8) is fine.
- Triple vaccination
- All Covid requirements are in place. But too much Omicron around now
- masks for sure, regardless of Public Health guidelines which may not require them.
- when social closeness is normal again
- None

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- Double vaccination & no symptoms
- end of the 5th wave
- No masks and everyone vaccinated
- none
- Covid numbers down to 200 or less
- I'd like to see infection numbers go down before attending
- There would have to be no limit on attendance
- No masks
- Masking
- removal of mask mandate

15. How do you think the Association can bring in and retain newcomers? 32 responses

- don't know
- No idea - we've tried
- Start classes at various senior centres. Hopefully younger seniors would be attracted.
- Increase social media presence and connect with local churches in the area to offer it to their youth and congregations
- teach dancing to young people, perhaps in connection with schools (gr 7 and 8 level and above)
- Do not know.
- Perhaps by learning from groups like:
<http://www.londonreels.co.uk>
- .?
- ???

- don't know. It seems to be a dying senior's activity.
- Teaching
- This is a hard one, I tried to start a family square dance, and it fizzled out very quickly.
- Have no suggestions
- Finding ways to expose more people in places that are convenient to them, then having regular places to dance for those who want more.
- make cross-connections with dancing groups from other cultural backgrounds
- The dances at the Westway are no place for newcomers. If you come, you need to know the basics and probably some of the easier dances. At present, the Association does nothing to encourage newcomers. They do no teaching and have no teaching programs. Teaching is left to individual callers where and when they want to do it.
- Expand venue to other areas. Work with schools and young people's groups to promote it.
- Bill Hands classes at Armour Hts bring in newcomers
- upgraded website, videos and pictures of younger folks (not just those with grey hair), and wearing normal clothes - hardly

- anyone looks good in crinolines and skirts.
- Don't know
- Move the dances around to different locations. Have one at the U of G
- Keep the price down. Keep putting the word out. We've had no trouble before covid to keep the #s up in the Algonquin area.
- word of mouth, networking
- Hogtown Hoedown had a licensed venue

- Be sure to have good callers who are quick to read the flour to determine whether there needs to be a quick teach., develop a way to keep friends from dancing in the same set all afternoon or evening. Use a card system to break up cliques.
- No idea
- target the newly retired - as they will be looking for activities.
- Maybe ask schools or use bulletin boards in stores if you could put up flyers
- I believe The younger folk are just not into this type of dancing ., It is sad to say but it looks like it is on the way out , Just the same as good country music is no more . even at Jams it is only the older folk keeping them going ,
- More publicity

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- advertise at community centres and set up open workshops

16. Do you know of any venue (and rental fee and capacity) in your community (such as a Community Centre, Church Hall, Senior's Centre, Legion, School) where a square dance could be held? 31 responses

- No
- no
- I don't know rental fees but Newmarket Senior Centre has large dance floors.
- Newmarket Seniors Meeting Place
- Joshua Creek Heritage Arts Center, 1086 Burnhamthorpe Rd. Oakville
- Canadian Legion, Arena
- Legion at Pape & O'Connor. PLEASE NO SENIORS CENTRE. Unless you want to repel younger dancers.
- Yes, Seniors Centre
- Bracebridge Senior's Centre
- Barrie seniors or Army and Navy club.
- No yet, we are new to the area and covid has kept us shut in.
- At present, no.
- There are venues in Barrie such as the Legion and ANAF and Sunday afternoon rental fees are in

the \$300. to \$500. range. Any place that holds a fiddle/jam dance could potentially hold an Assoc. dance. Have a member take the list of events on the Assoc. web-site and get in touch with the venue or contact person, to determine the feasibility and costs for a dance at that location.

- Legion in Barrie, eg. Also, some schools have large gyms and stages. Don't know the cost at this time. Duntroon has a large community centre. Lots of other places if one looks.
- Willowdale Presbyterian Church, North York
- No one will do it for free
- Yes - Local community centres & church halls. Usually fee is \$100 to \$120.
- Most of them charge more than I feel comfortable collecting.
- senior center, legion
- Willowdale Presbyterian Church has been accommodating (Triangle Squares) and reasonably priced. Dancing has been halted by the Prov Gvmt
- I have heard that the Army & Navy, Cawthra area, Mississauga did have Square dancing, they do have line dancing for the seniors. Speak to Louanne - 647-528-6581 Another

place owned by the City of Mississauga is the Small Arms Inspection Building - 1352 Lakeshore Rd. E. Mississauga, ON L5E 1E9 - 905-615-4860 (they are open to the public so drop in to check it out) You may get a good deal for seniors.

- Newmarket Seniors Centre

17. Can you suggest any group or organization in your community that would be interested in learning to square dance or having a square dance event? 27 responses

- No
- no
- I am sure there are people in Newmarket who have S.D. in the past and would like to be reintroduced to it. It is taught in schools.
- Possibly at the Seniors Centre
- mvmvmvm
- Not a group but know lots of people in the north
- At this time, no. I would expect any group might welcome a square dance after covid, and it was offered to them. Unfortunately, it is presently out of the question.
- No #18 Best of luck
- I am currently unaware of any such group. I have

called for refugee groups, but with the pandemic, it is really not possible.

- Contact your local Probus Club. If there was a standard Assoc. teaching program that could be used, with appropriate customization where appropriate.
- Not at this time, but Probus clubs might be a possibility.
- Not aware of any
- We should try to get something going in the Ottawa Valley & invite some guest fiddlers.
- I sometimes go to another town to teach olde tyme square dancing, dancing in preparation of Fall Fairs. I do handouts of formations.
- legion, or an event at the senior center
- I have been line dancing on a Thursday at Clarkson Community Centre, for the past 13 years (cost \$2. for 2 hours) we follow the front line. They get about 40-50 dancers some are our Square dancers.

19. Many communities have Community Recreation Programs covering all sorts of activities. Is there a place near you where you could start up a series of square dance lessons, either as a caller or

as a dancer? Please provide

details.26 responses

- No
- no
- All kinds of dance lessons in the Newmarket activity brochure but I've never seen Square dancing offered
- City of Mississauga Park and Rec have a full array of dance programs available.
- As a dancer
- Possibly
- When I was younger, we did run several clubs but not anymore.
- Bracebridge seniors. We have done so in thd past.
- It has been in the back of my mind. At one time, I taught square dancing at a public school during gym class. I would like to try it at a high school or community college. We have to start young in order to survive. Another thought would be a running group, church group, or slow learner centre.
- ??????
- Already done
- I have not yet identified such a place near where I live.
- A new Community Centre will be built near us at Horseshoe Valley in the next 2 years. I can explore doing something when it is complete.

- Never looked into it.
- Unsure of any
- Most of them in the north charge too much. I was doing SC before they introduced the covid scare.
- yes. senior centre .It is an event there, so there is no extra fee for insurance. everyone volunteers
- Nancy Wheeler used to cal at York-Fairbank Seniors Centre
- .
- When I started Modern Square dancing is was at Burnhamthorpe Community Centre, (under renovations at the moment) beginners and Main Stream, Plus level was at Clarkson Community Centre.
- yes, we live in 2 senior communities, but we've tried 4 times and each time it just fissilled out
- Streetsville
- The city of Brampton already has a square dance program at their seniors centre

21. Is there anything else you'd like to tell us? Please add any additional comments below.26 responses

- No
- CODSDCA mail in #1
- I would encourage more dances with live music vs.

Recorded. The attraction to new comers is multiple times greater.

- More information on how access square dance music, calls, videos on how to learn Square dance, a program that people could use to have a dance, caller's in different areas so people know who to contact.
- Bring back outdoor dancing (in the parks).
- I really hope you can keep olde tyme square dancing alive. It's so much fun and people really love it when they get a chance, ie weddings. Keep up the good work. I remain a member to support the group but am no longer active. It has been a lifelong pleasure.
- I started with Alex Boustead when Wally was very young. I have also done a lot of modern [square dancing] - not as much fun - and some modern callers incorporate a bit of olde tyme. It might be good to work with them. Best wishes,
Lorraine Taylor
- Make square dance dvds recordings of calls in real time. Record caller calling to actual group of dancers to get timing right. All old records are far to fadt to dance to comfortably.

- I know where you are at, I have been there before. You are doing a great job under the circumstances. Please don't give up.
- I have a few tapes of early dances
- #18 - Situations for teaching old-time vary greatly. I suspect that a guide of some sort would be helpful. The Alex Mulligan book of calls could be a great starting point.
- Thank you to the Executive for their hard work and perserverance
- How can we call ourselves a National Association, when we only have 60-70 members and the bulk of them are in Southern Ontario, probably within 100 miles of Toronto? We have little or nothing to offer people or groups outside of Southern Ontario and we know nothing about them in terms of what they do or what their needs are. We should change our name to the Southern Ontario Old Time Square Dance CLUB. We should start dialogue with the Square and Round Dance Society to have them accept Old Time Square Dance Clubs into their membership. This would bring us closer to the modern square dance people and I think

- both sides would benefit. After all, we just want to dance. If we can be accepted, that should solve our insurance issue. The Assoc. failed once, and a group came together to bring it back to life. They should be commended for their efforts, but what they brought back to life was what had already failed once. In this day and age you have to think outside the box and change with the times. If you keep doing "same old-same old", you are doomed to failure again. The current Executive is to be commended for initiating this Survey to try and figure out where we go for the future. If I see there is true interest from the membership in moving forward to change with the times, I will do all I can to help with those changes. Best regards Ralph Price
- The Association needs to expand its influence well beyond Toronto and Ontario in order to properly be called COTSDCA. At the moment, it is Toronto-centric and would hold little appeal to areas of Ontario and the rest of Canada which are too far removed to attend a dance. In the ideal world, there would be chapters in every

province and territory in Canada who hold regional dances and teaching workshops for their local populations. Workshops are a great idea, but the question above implied that the workshop would be held in the afternoon with the dance following at night.....lots of seniors don't want to drive at night anymore, so could the workshop and dance not all be held in the afternoon? Have a workshop for an hour or so and then a dance following, finishing by maybe 5 pm to allow people to get home before dark. If it is decided to save money and have a jam band, instead of a paid band, and if dances are scheduled outside Toronto, I would be prepared to help co-ordinate band members for any dances in our area, and possibly other areas depending on location.

- Would love to see Old Tyme back again!
- Add a real teach in advance of a dance, rather than just a few minutes to learn (like at Duff's). Love that Bill Hands invites callers up to call at his dances!
- COTSDCA mail in # 2 - noted they needed a driver for question 11

- I think it is ludicrous that we are expected to distance 6' then allowed to swing, etc. Most vaccinated people don't think they're safe from other people whether they are vaccinated or not. If some are vaccinated and others not sick, you should not catch something that's not there. PS. I didn't receive this until January.
- suggest more outreach to modern square community. Contra as well. Cross-list competitions at Royal Winter Fair, Dundalk and Guelph College Royal on your site. Fiddle Jams are hard to find.
- To follow up on #20. People have to be exposed to new activities. People need to be welcoming to new dancers-. Ask them to dance with experienced people. The young ones catch on quickly
- my answers shouldn't count as I'm moving to the Yukon in May
- We have a group in Streetsville, our hall is small and cannot accept members outside Mississauga. I know our numbers are dwindling, dancers moving out of the city to be near their families.
- COTSDCA mail in # 3 - 11. great location! 14. you

need one GOOD square dance fiddler, not a hacker. 18. Some callers are not good teachers! Boring!! Talk too much! No creativity.

- COTSDCA mail in # 4. Comments - 4. As I've retired from calling 3 years ago, I find there is little enthusiasm in this area as is most places with its old tyme or modern. It's only for old people is what I hear. Too much social media, it's a thing of the past. Such a pity.
- not really, like I said, we've tried 4 times, didn't work out
- Whenever this covid is all behind us , have a dance and just see how many are still able to attend , That might give you a lot of answers to the questions.. good luck

Callers Corner

By Bill Russell

Question 18. Should the Association develop a standard introductory teaching program that any caller could use to teach square dancing to beginners?

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Of those who answered, over 70% (27/38) said "yes".

I am volunteering to work on this and am looking for input from callers and dancers alike. I think it could also be a guide for people learning to call.


- How do you start with newcomers?
- What have you learned that you would like to share with learning callers or dancers?
- What do you think is most important?

If you would like to contribute your ideas, please email me at cotsdca@hotmail.com

If you are not online and would like to help, please phone me at (416) 658-5162. Always leave a message: I do not pick up a number I do not recognize, but will return your call.

50 Years ago

This is when our dances always had a 1st chain, 2nd chain & a breakdown in each set of squares. Check out the callers how many do you remember? I believe only 4 of the names on this program are alive now.



*Annual
Spring Dance*

Lakeshore Lions Memorial Arena
21st Street, New Toronto

THURSDAY, MARCH 30, 1972
8.30 p.m. sharp

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Canadian Old Tyme Square Dance Callers' Association was formed in 1954 for the purpose of promoting Canadian style square dancing.

The Association holds two dances annually—spring and fall.

For further information about the Association, please communicate with any of the members of the executive listed below.

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EXECUTIVE 1972

President
Herb. Pollitt 251-6309

Vice-President
Tom Wight 251-0915

Treasurer
Wallace Boustead 741-1822

Secretary
Norah Hill 488-2105

Dance Committee
Herb. Pollitt — Tom Wight — Norah Hill

PROGRAM — FIRST HALF

MASTER OF CEREMONIES — ED HAZEL

WALTZ TWO STEP

SQUARE DANCE

1. Forward four in line Reg. Boustead
2. Climbing up the golden stairs Geo. Willis
3. Double pass through John Wilson

FRENCH MINUET BLACK HAWK WALTZ

SQUARE DANCE

1. Birdie in the cage Lorne Johnson
2. Maple sugar square Alex Wood
3. Dive through pass through Doug. Lawson

GAY GORDONS THE ROBERTS

SQUARE DANCE

1. First Gent stand between the opposite Jack Hayes
2. When you are smiling Geo. Tavender
3. Glory Hallelujah LaVerne Major

POLKA ST. BERNARDS WALTZ

INTERMISSION

PROGRAM — SECOND HALF

MASTER OF CEREMONIES — ALEX WOOD

PROGRESSIVE BARN DANCE

SPANISH COUNTRY DANCE — TOM WIGHT

SQUARE DANCE

1. Three ladies change Ed Hazel
2. Donegal Square Max Ferguson
3. The Texas Star Herb Pollitt

NAVY TWO STEP VARSOUVIANNA

SQUARE DANCE

1. Take a peak Wilber McBurney
2. Nellie Gray Tom Wight
3. Susie Ernie McCullough

IRISH WALTZ MILITARY SCHOTTISCHE

SQUARE DANCE

1. Ladies chain across the set Geo. Betts
2. Open up your heart Alex Mulligan
3. Chase the squirrel Fred Giles

SPANISH POLKA CROSS COUNTRY WALTZ

HOME WALTZ

Music by — Bob Arbuckle



Square Dance for Fun

*Annual
Fall Dance*

Lakeshore Lions Memorial Arena
21st Street, New Toronto

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 2nd, 1972
8.30 p.m. sharp

PROGRAM — FIRST HALF

MASTER OF CEREMONIES — ALEX. BOUSTEAD

WALTZ	TWO STEP
SQUARE DANCE	
Parlez-Vous	Alex. Boustead
Bell Bottom Trousers	Art Steffler ✓
Forward Four In Line	Alex. Wood
FRENCH MINUET	ROBERTS
SQUARE DANCE	
Coming Round The Mountain	Ernie McCullough ✓
Ace In The Hole	La-Verne Major ✓
Grand Square	Herb Pollitt
GLOW WORM	ST. BERNARDS WALTZ
SQUARE DANCE	
Ladies Do-Si Vallonet	Ed Hazel
Red River Valley	John Wilson
End Turn Under	Tom Wight
JESSE POLKA	GAY GORDONS
Intermission	

PROGRAM — SECOND HALF

MASTER OF CEREMONIES — TOM WIGHT

PROGRESSIVE BARN DANCE	
SQUARE DANCE	
Three Ladies Chain	Doug Lawson
When You're Smiling	George Tavender
Lady Around Lady Gent Also	Reg. Boustead
IRISH WALTZ	NAVY TWO STEP
SQUARE DANCE	
Adam and Eve	George Betts
When The Work's All Done This Fall	Alex Mulligan
Trail Of The Lonesome Pine	Jack Hayes
HEEL TOE POLKA	CROSS COUNTRY WALTZ
BLACK HAWK WALTZ	
SQUARE DANCE	
Cut Off Six	Fred Giles
Nellie Grey	Tom Wight
Canadian Breakdown	Herb Pollitt
CALL OF THE PIPES	MILITARY SCOTTISCHE
HOME WALTZ	
THE QUEEN	

COTSDCA & CFGM

Can you guess the year we advertised on radio?

I did not get one reply to this question from our last news letter so I will have to tell you it was 1965.

Web Sites Of Interest

If you have not checked out the Association's website recently, you might want to see what is new:

<https://sca.uwaterloo.ca/cotsdca/>

In particular, we have added some pictures of the sheet music for many of the couple dances. Fiddlers should be able to download them and learn the tunes.

If you have found any interesting traditional square dance web sites, please pass them along to me at cotsdca@hotmail.com

Bill Russell



Publisher/Editor

Articles and items for sharing or comments should be sent to:
Wallace Boustead 70 Willowridge Rd.
Toronto ON M9R-3Z4 416-249-0147
mj-wc_boustead@sympatico.ca

