

EOSARDA Board Meeting

Sunday January 17, 2009

Attendance

EOSARDA members:

David Western, Andy Himberg-Larsen, Gerry & Jim Sawtell, Billi & Chuck Langtry, Gavin Currie, Linda and Bruce Warner, Ann Christensen, Jean & Don Clingin, Bob Summers, Ziggy Segstro, Barbara & Paul Dennison.

Regrets: Carol & Bob Milne

1. Call to order – 1:30 p.m.
2. Approval of Agenda .
 - a. Changes in agenda
 - 2c. Resignation from the board
 - 5b. Board Meeting Frequency
 - 5c. May Meeting
 - b. Approval of the October Minutes Moved by Billi and seconded by Andy. Approval (discussion) of November Council of Dancer Minutes. Changes given and asked to be posted on website.
 - c. Carol & Bob Milne submitted their resignation from the Board. Members asked for representatives from Cornwall area to take their place. Dave Western to send out an email. Also Bob Summers and the Clingin's to inquire at their clubs to see if they can find a new representative.

3. Reports

a. Operations Committee Registrar's Report – Bruce Warner

No report

b. Financial Committee Report-

End of year report given in December. No new information for January as a result of the holidays -. Monies-in the bank 11,810.65.

c. Dance Committee- Gavin Currie

Fees for callers and cuers

Gavin Currie reported that, following receipt of a letter from OACA, the Dance Committee had discussed the issue of fees paid to callers and cuers for EOSARDA dances and had a proposal to bring to the Board for consideration. He noted that at present EOSARDA pays a caller \$125 for an event where there is only one leader in a hall; and that for a hall where there is more than one leader EOSARDA pays \$200 for

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the hall split between the leaders. In the case of cuers, the fee is normally paid to the RDTA which in turn pays the cuers. It was also noted that Fall Fest was an exception and that fees were typically negotiated between the dance coordinator and the individual leaders. In its letter, OACA asked that the fee for callers be increased to \$175. The Dance Committee reported that it had canvassed a number of associations in Ontario and in British Columbia and had found that the normal practice was not to pay leaders for association dances. The Committee did not, however, recommend this practice for EOSARDA and felt that callers and cuers should receive fair remuneration for their services. The Committee also recognized that EOSARDA dances are experiencing lower numbers and are becoming less financially viable.

After discussion, it was moved by **Gavin Currie seconded by Andy Himberg-Larsen** that:

- callers and cuers should receive the same remuneration
- EOSARDA should contract directly with individual callers and cuers and pay them directly
- the basic fee for an EOSARDA leader should be set at \$150 for an afternoon or evening event (normally 2-3 hours) where the caller or cuer leads for the full event, with normal pauses between tips, with the understanding that adjustments would be made for other situations based on this fee
- the current practice of paying \$200 (split evenly between the leaders) for a hall where there is shared leadership by two or more leaders should be continued

The motion was approved. Gavin Currie was asked to prepare letters to OACA and RDTA for the President's signature informing them of this decision.

Free list for EOSARDA dances

Gavin Currie also reported that the Dance Committee had discussed the issue of who should be allowed free entry to EOSARDA dances. After some discussion, he moved, **seconded by- Andy Himberg-Larsen**-that the following categories of individuals should be allowed free entry to EOSARDA dances:

- callers and cuers working the dance and their partners
- non-dancing volunteers
- invited guests

The motion was passed. It was also agreed that this information should be included in the letters to OACA and RDTA.

Fall Fest 2009 and 2010

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A report on Fall Fest 2009 prepared by Peter Courdin and Karen Remy is in Appendix A. As of now, there is still no coordinator for Fall Fest 2010.

Frosty Fling

Frosty Fling has as yet no support club for its dance in February. If no club comes forward, EOSARDA Board will have to do it.

d. Publicity and Promotions Committee Report-Dave Western

Looking at putting advertising into Leisure Guides in each area. Committee set up to look into it. Paul ? & Barb Dennison

Bob Summers ?

See Appendix C for full report.

Chuck and Billi say they are circulating 400 Square Times. This is down slightly from last year.

e. Club Liaison and Awards Committee - Bob Summers

The Riverside Gypsy Squares celebrated 15 years this past September. There was no EOSARDA recognition at that time. The Gypsy Squares have their Mid-Winter Dance on 6 March 2-4pm at St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Centre and Dibble St, Prescott, ON. We need a director to present a 15 year Certificate to them at that time. Potluck dinner to follow

The Swingin' Saints (Brockville) are celebrating their 45th Anniversary at their Spring Thaw dance on April 3, 2010. However the first graduation was in June 1964 so that makes 2010 their 47th year ???

Brockville Goodtimes and Gypsy Squares need a representative from EOSARDA to give out their 45th and 15 Yr Certificates.

f. IT Committee – Bob Summers

Nothing to report.

g. Festival 2014 Steering Committee

"In the absence of a National Convention for 2012, we have received permission from the Canadian Square and Round Dance Society to begin advertising Festival 2014 at the upcoming Halifax Convention. (We can already promote the Festival in our immediate region.)

We will have a table at that convention in Halifax and will also be putting on a promotional dance which will be an integrated Square and Round Dance.

The Festival 2014 Steering Group is in the process of assembling a Board to continue with the planning and organizing of the convention. People interested in serving on the Festival Board should contact Wendy VanderMeulen"

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Colors for Festival 2014 are Red/White/Gold."

h. OACA -Callers Report-Andy Himberg-Larsen

The Grey Cup Dance held November 28 was a big success this year. Over 150 dancers, callers and cuers were registered at the dance. The dance brought in \$2760.00 for the Ottawa Mission. There were only three teams registered for the half time show, so a new event will be thought of for next year.

Our new callers are doing very well, they are participating in caller show cases at open dances and doing one or day stands.

i. RDTA Report by Don Clingin

The RTDA had a successful Round Dance on December 5. There is a Valentines Round dance scheduled for Feb 13 for Heart & Stroke. For the next Fallfest there will be Rounds in the afternoon but square dancing in the evening only. There will be a Capital Caper (Round Dance Workshop) with the Cibula's At Parkdale United Church on March 20, 2010. Full Report Appendix B.

4. Old Business

The results of the club tests of the Hearing Assistance Devices were discussed. The test results have been largely positive but there has been some dissatisfaction with the cheap dollar-store ear buds that we provided for test purposes.

Dave Western provided some information that he received from the Mississippi Squares concerning a less expensive system.

We now need to decide what kind of equipment is required, how much it will cost and what our procurement strategy will be. A small Hearing Assistance Working Group consisting of Paul Dennison, Gerry Sawtell and Bob Summers was established to look into these issues. The Working Group will report back to the Board at our March meeting.

5. New Business

a. Promotion of Square Dancing to Younger dancers - Dave Western

Dave discussed the fact that our dancer population is aging and that we have not been very successful in recruiting younger dancers. We need to turn this situation around if Square and Round Dancing is to survive. Dave proposed setting up 2 working groups one to promote to the Teen-College years and the second to the 30-40 year olds. This issue will be discussed further at the February Board meeting

a. Frequency of board meeting-Dave Western

Dave pointed out that this was only the second Board meeting of the 2009/10 dance year. He opined that as a result of meeting too infrequently we are losing momentum. There was a general consensus that the Board needs to meet more frequently.

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It was agreed that on April 25, the Board will meet prior to the April Council of Dancers. The Board will meet from 11:00-1:00 and the Council of Dancers from 2:00 to 4:00. If this approach proves successful, it will provide two extra meetings a year.

Since the April meeting will be held in Kemptville, Dave Western will look into extending our use of the hall.

6. Other Business

- a. There will be a Capital Caper (Round Dance Workshop) with the Cibula's At Parkdale United Church on March 20, 2010.
- b. Dave Western pointed out that we are not attracting a significant number of younger dancers to either Square or Round Dancing. This problem is not unique to Eastern Ontario. It is happening across North America.

The President's Message in the next issue of Square Time will deal with this issue and there will be the first of a two part reprint of an article from the Wall Street Journal that talks about the decline in the number of Square Dancers in the United States and describes what one group in Washington State is doing about it.

Of course, this is not a new problem, its one that has been around for a number of years. It is one of the reasons that two years ago EOSARDA decided to organize our first Square and Round Dance Week. The hope was that by focussing our efforts across the region over a concentrated period of time, we would be able to attract more people to both Square and Round Dancing. And it worked. In 2008, we were the only region in North America to experience an increase in membership.

But when we tried it again in 2009, the results were a little more discouraging. We were successful in attracting new dancers, and some clubs did really well this year. But overall the intake of new dancers was not sufficient to compensate for the loss of experienced dancers. The total number of registered Square and Round Dancers in the region decreased.

Not only did our numbers decline, but our overall demographic did not change much. We continue to be predominately a 55 + group. As a result, Square and Round Dancing are often seen as A Senior's Activities - even by some of the people who run our clubs!

Yet in the middle of the last Century, Square Dancing was a young person's activity with an average age of only 35. The movement was hugely popular across North America, with more than 3,000 registered dancers in the National Capital region alone.

We have all heard the excuse that there is so much more to do now that it is just not possible to attract people to Square and Round Dancing in the same numbers. They are just not interested. Well, I remember the 60's, and it certainly was not a time when there was nothing to do! In fact, we were so occupied with things like Folk Music, the British Invasion, Vietnam, TV, Canada's Centennial etc, that I am surprised that we

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had time for anything else at all. Yet Square Dancing was very popular during that wonderfully exciting era.

Secondly, what about Dancing with the Stars? That program has inspired thousands of people to get off their butts and onto the ballroom dance floor. Yet those of us who have tried freestyle dancing know just how frustrating it can be. Unfortunately, Round Dancing, a much more attractive option in my judgement, has failed to attract a significant portion of this market

As for having too much to do, studies show that most people in Canada are under active and spend inordinate amounts of time sitting in front of either the TV or on the computer. These people desperately need to get out, get active and get a life. Where better than in a Square or Round Dance club where they are guaranteed to have fun and meet some really great people?

I remain convinced that it is possible to attract young people to both Square and Round Dancing. We just have to find the right way to go about it. I am also quite certain that to reach a younger demographic, we are going to have to shake off the AOld Folks@ image. We have to look cool and be cool.

Attracting younger dancers to the Square and Round Dance movement is not just going to happen, and its not going to happen overnight. Its going to take planning, organizing and just plain, old fashioned hard work. We are going to have to look for innovative ideas and solutions and proceed by a process of trial and error.

To get this started we need to focus on the issue and work actively to turn things around. To do this, I propose that we set up two small working groups each aimed at a different segment of the young dancer market.

The first working group, the Young Dancer Initiative would focus on people in their late teen and early twenties.

The second working group, the Adult Dancer Program would focus on people in their 30's and 40's.

These two working groups will be tasked with working with people in their target demographic to find out what it will take to get them up on the dance floor and then developing and implementing ways to meet these needs.

Both groups will need to be open to new ideas including among other things, the creative use of technology and introduction of innovative teaching techniques. Some of us might very well find some of these innovations to be somewhat disturbing since we will be breaking new ground. But the phrase "That's not how we do things" will have to be deleted completely from the lexicon of both groups if they are to succeed!

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The ultimate aim of both groups needs to be their integration into the existing Square and Round Dance fraternity. So things like standard Calls and Cues will have to be maintained. The only other limits will be those imposed by the need to operate legally and in a safe and socially acceptable manner.

Dave requested that Board members give this issue serious consideration over the next few weeks and be prepared to discuss how we can move this issue forward at our February Board meeting.

Next EOSARDA Board Meeting 3rd Sunday February 21, 2010

The meeting was adjourned at 4:20

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Appendix A

Fall Fest Report to Dance Committee:

November 1, 2009

FALL FEST 2009

Submitted by: Peter Courdin & Karen Remy

The 31st Fall Fest Dance was held on October 17, 2009 at Sir Robert Borden High School.

This year's Fall Fest attracted 214 dancers. It was good to see that numbers were up slightly from last year, although not quite enough to break even. The net loss for Fall Fest 2009 is \$200.28.

This year's Fall Fest was divided into 2 parts. The afternoon program was dedicated to Workshops in Rounds and Squares. Although the Squares workshop was low in numbers, the Round Dance hall was full and considered a success. The evening program consisted of Squares from Basic to A-2 with Rounds from level II to V.

The Program included Callers Jeff Priest, Paul Adams, and John Charman; and Leaders Peter & Chris Lawrence and Andrea Priest.

The highlight of the evening dance was the "Dance Off". This was a new Fun event at Fall Fest. As a matter of fact, this was the first time this type of event has been tried at any Eastern Ontario major dance. There were 9 squares that participated. Calling was at the Mainstream level with the object being to avoid breaking down the square. After a warm up, the squares were allowed to have one break down and then dancing continued with each square leaving the floor after committing the second error. This continued until only 2 squares were left on the floor. Both of these squares broke down at the same time. A play off ensued and the same call broke down the square again. (I think that we have to workshop "fold" versus "bend"). In any event, fun was had by all, and the last squares standing (a tie) were the "Mississippi Squares" and the "Gypsy Squares". Congratulations to both clubs.

Many thanks go out to the volunteers who helped with the Desk Duties (The Trackers Square Dance Club), and many other volunteers who helped out with the Refreshments, Set Up, and Take Down.

Recommendations & Options:

-Continue Fall Fest:

This dance should be continued with some changes accepting the fact that numbers are going to be reduced to around the 200 mark.

-Discontinue Afternoon Square Dance Workshop:

The afternoon plus square dance workshop only attracted 2 squares. Why? A plus workshop the following week attracted upwards of 16 squares.

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-If an out of town Round Dance Teacher is hired, then continue with the afternoon Clinic and Teach:

The Round Dance Clinic and Teach (28 couples) was a success, and could be continued next year. Also the afternoon clinic and teach helps to offset the cost of bringing in a RD leader. However, we should consider how will this teach impacts on the upcoming Round Dance workshop being hosted by a RD Club.

-Make Fall Fest an evening only dance:

Afternoon attendance, especially in squares, does not warrant an afternoon dance.

-Continue with Basic/Mainstream combined and a separate Plus hall, and discontinue the A1-2 hall.

The A-1 and A-2 dancers are not supporting the A1-2 hall. There were only one or two squares in this hall in the evening. The other 2 halls were well attended.

-Move the dance to another venue:

Moving the dance to St. Pats where we are not charged for workshops in the afternoon, and all the dancing is on one floor, which makes it easier to change halls and serve refreshments, and is a more central location.

Appendix B:

ROUND DANCE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION REPORT

By Jean & Don Clingin

We had a very successful meeting December 5th – lots of discussion on various issues – some resolved, some not! Afterwards we had a very nice lunch – Chinese buffet.

The RDTA discussed EOSARDA's Fall Fest and decided to approach the organization with this: RDTA offers to look after and run the afternoon & evening program for rounds at Fall Fest 2010 – the square dance part of the event would have to be run by someone other than this organization. (didn't feel we had knowledge concerning this)

As we all know the cuers are known for Frosty Fling (Gerry & Jean). We have settled the cuers for Jamboree as well Dorothy Tweed and Bill Burton.

Take-A-Step is back dancing and Rhapsody Rounds goes back this coming week.

Don't forget the RDTA is having a Valentine's Dance Feb 13th – please come out to support. Various Cuers phase 2 –3 & some 4 \$15.00 per couple at Parkdale United Church starting at 7:30 – refreshments – tax receipt available for donations of \$20 or more. All proceeds to The Heart & Stroke Foundation.

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Next meeting is January 30th at 10:30 a.m.

Appendix C:

Publicity, Promotions and Publishing Committee Report

17 January 2010

Dance Ottawa.com

In Early December, I received an e-mail from David Patte of Dance Ottawa.com advising me that our dance association has been listed on their web site.

I wrote back to Mr. Patte to provide him with some background material on EOSARDA and intended to follow up with him on this but have not yet done so. As of this morning EOSARDA is still listed as being based at Markdale United and there is no entry for Round Dancing.

I will follow up with Mr. Patte shortly.

Listings in Ottawa City Guides

In mid-December I was contacted by Adam O'Rourke from the City of Ottawa regarding the listing of EOSARDA as a Partner Organization in the Stittsville/Kanata City Leisure Guide.

Following up on this contact, I was able to have all of our west-end dance clubs listed in the Spring Guide along with their contact information and also to provide up-dated contact information for EOSARDA.

Efforts to extend this initiative to all of the various City Leisure Guides proved inconclusive as it appears that there are no similar listings in the other Guides. Or so I am informed by City staff.

Dave Western
Chair
P,P and P Committee

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