



Ballroom Dance Society

Silver Slipper

October 2008

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by Andy Mundy

I may be old fashioned, but I love the big band swing from the 40s and the rock'n'roll tunes of the 50s – it is so popular and still inspires dancing. But we cannot live in the past – music changes over time and inspiration to dance now also comes from a variety of artists from Rod Stewart to Katie Melua.

Dances change too: traditional steps are refined and revamped, and new figures are introduced as competition dancers strive to improve their skills and develop new routines. It is challenging to keep up with progress and some find it difficult even to accept. But without it we can easily become bored, stuck in a rut, accepting things as they are without question, and scared or uncertain of what might happen next.

One way to deal with this is to venture outside our own comfort zone which gives us more confidence. We all did that when we started to learn to dance. Remember your first dance class? No doubt there was apprehension but with perseverance we learned basic steps, attended social dances and built our confidence. Similarly, the NBDS must change and evolve, and move with the times. We cannot say “stop the world, I want to get off”. Although this is a Ballroom Society we play music for dances other than the 10 standard Ballroom and Latin ones including line dances, and people do enjoy it.

So where does all this lead? Simply, I challenge you all to come out of your comfort zone and experience the changes in music and dance. This will build your confidence, improve your dancing and also enable you to become more accepting of change in the future.

How? It's easy. Ballroom only dancers – try learning a Latin dance; and vice versa – Latin dancers should try some Standard. Those who do both try a different dance altogether – some already attend Hip-Hop classes and Flamenco. For sheer fun, try Salsa. For a completely different experience, try Argentine Tango. Others may prefer to try Old Time or Modern Sequence.

It is exciting to experiment even if we do not progress to proficiency or continue with it. It broadens our knowledge of dance in general and it helps us with the dances we already perform! The Viennese Waltz will help your Quickstep. Foxtrot, Waltz and Rumba are complementary – they all demand a high degree of control to perform properly.

So, in the forthcoming year of 2008-2009, make a resolution to do something different. You may be pleasantly surprised at the long term results.

Annual General Meeting

Forty-six members attended the annual general meeting held at Bowen Park on September 21, 2008. Reports on the past year were received and discussed, new directors were elected, and new business items were proposed.

Reports

President Stephen Gower noted that NBDS has 174 members, down slightly from the all-time high of 181 set last year.

Treasurer Barbara Yee presented the financial statements: while Bowen and Nanoose Dances lost some money, the IFB had a surplus so the club was ahead overall and in good financial position.

IFB Chair Stephen Gower summarized the direction being considered for the coming year, such as holding the IFB over 2 days and hosting additional senior events.

DanceSport Chair Nelson Wong highlighted the additional practice space provided this year which raised costs, and the new sponsorships and drop-in fees that helped to come in on budget.

Newcastle Chair John Maher noted that since the 2008 dance camp was held in August we did not have one in the fiscal year ending in July. Including the dance camp and Old Time Tea Dance we held 7 dances and 18 workshops at Newcastle Island in 2008.

Music Chair Fred Rockwell reported that in addition to all NBDS dances, our DJs supported the School District's Project Dance where over 550 students competed at Beban. Our DJs have responded positively to the feedback surveys collected from members at dances.

Bar Services made money at dinner dances. Regarding next year, Chester stated: “This will be the last year for sure – 16 years has been enough – I mean it this time.”

Silver Slipper Editor John Maher reported that five issues of the Silver Slipper have been issued to members since February. The target has been to have a new Silver Slipper available for the first dance each month.

Dancing with the Stars Chair Andy Mundy reported that preparation for our first charity fundraising event is going very well, despite a few glitches.

Bowen Chair Vicki Linfitt stated she has enjoyed chairing the committee this year and is considering different theme dances for next year. Members expressed appreciation for the effort put into decoration this year at both Bowen and Nanoose.

Nanoose Chair Sara Treutler thanked the many volunteers and especially Elaine for her inspirational decorating, and also thanked the **Phoning** volunteers who phone NBDS members who do not have email at the beginning of each month.

Librarian Bruce Joiner reported that we now have 36 VHS tapes and 17 DVD's used by 20% of members.

Webmaster Brian Gaines emphasized the importance of providing accurate and up to date information to the webmaster.

Elections

The Nominations Committee chaired by Brian Gaines had phones or emailed all members, and based on their input proposed a slate of candidates. With no additional nominations from floor accepted, the slate was elected by show of hands vote.

President	Andy Mundy
Vice President	Vicki Linfitt
Secretary	Barbara Barnett*
Treasurer	Stephen Gower
Past President	Keith Wilson
Director	Jerry Jagers
Director	John Maher
Director	Dave Stevenson
Director	Sara Treutler
Director	Barbara Yee

*Post-meeting note: Barbara has since withdrawn

Resolutions

Keith Wilson had prepared amendments to NBDS Bylaws 4.06 and 4.07 to remove a requirement that the Nomination Committee not reveal to others who has been nominated. After further discussion and amendment, the resolution was passed.

New Business

- The wearing of scent is still a problem; further efforts are required to enable some members to dance.
- Improvement of seating or use of a sound system is needed at future AGMs in order to improve hearing for all.
- The problem of getting volunteers to do refreshments was discussed and left to the individual committees.
- Nomination Committee's report on volunteers for Committees was deferred to the Board for its first meeting.
- There was a suggestion that NBDS consider holding classes similar to the practice of the Victoria society.

Instructional Workshops

The next NBDS pre-dance workshop will be on October 18 at Nanoose. Gwen Spinks will present an introduction to the beautiful Argentine tango.

More Practice Space for You!

Practices are scheduled for Tuesday and Thursday evenings at Nanoose, and starting at 5:00 on Saturday before the dance on October 18. Check the practice calendar on the web site: www.ballroomnanaimo.ca.

Video Library

Videos can be a very helpful aid when practising at home. Videos are available (two at a time) at no charge to current NBDS members for a three-week period. See the door people to obtain a list of video titles, or contact Bruce at 754-1735 for details.

MEMBER NEWS

Jane Walters Enjoyed Her Pro-Am Experiences

by Jane Walters

I had officially caught the competition bug after having so much fun at IFB, and having overcome the white-knuckled fear I felt leading up to IFB. So, I decided to go ahead and enter the open silver cha cha routine with Nelson at Dance Pacifica on June 14th. That day was much more stressful than IFB, which really surprised me! I think I was too busy with marshalling duties at IFB to get myself worrying, whereas I had time on my hands in Victoria and felt quite out of sorts. Still loads of fun though! It did give me a little insight into the ups & downs that the amateur competitors we watch on the floor go through at different competitions. Both Vicki Linfitt and I were invited to dance in the evening session, which was a bonus.

After IFB I had realized that I wanted to learn more than just cha cha, so Nelson and I decided to expand to samba/cha cha/rumba for the Rising Star category (silver level, 3-dance, group entry) at Pro-Am Fiesta on June 28th in Richmond. I learned SOOO much in that 6 weeks! Loads of technique and 3 more routines! Hard work, but so fun! The Pro-Am Fiesta was a really well-organized event and we danced well that day. I had been nervous that I'd stand out as a novice in comparison to the big city folks, but I felt like I fit in fine



Jane and Nelson at Pro-Am Fiesta (A Leung photo)

once I got there. I also feel very lucky that Vicki has been there at all the events. I really enjoy her company, and I hope she feels as supported by me as I do by her.

I don't know what this coming year will bring for my dancing as I've now done what I set out to do, which was to put myself out there on the floor (eek), to learn some better technique.....oh yes, and have some fun. Above all, it's about fun! I'd recommend the Pro-Am experience to anyone who wants to work hard, challenge their own dancing, and feel the fear. And do it anyway!

Question for the Board?

If you have a burr under your saddle or a bee in your bonnet about anything related to how NBDS dances, meetings or society are run, write to us! Don't get your knickers in a twist – get a load off your mind with a letter to the editor. We will publish your question or comment and the Board's reply next issue.

Old Time Dance Attracts Visitors From England

By Lynda Wuetherick

One of the highlights of the OT Dance year on beautiful Vancouver Island is the annual OT Tea Dance held on Newcastle Island. This event was even better this year, as our dancers included a party from the UK, and the Tea Dance was the culmination of a three day OT Festival hosted by the Nanaimo leaders, Dave and Norma Stevenson.

The story of the Tea Dance was published in the OT Dance Society Newsletter and piqued the interest of the OT Dance Society President, Fred Boast. In no time at all, Fred had a group of dancers interested in coming to Canada to participate in the Newcastle Island Tea Dance. This news excited Dave and Norma and they quickly decided to roll out the red carpet for the UK visitors and hosted an OT Dance Festival. Fred, his wife Joyce and their group of dancers arrived in Vancouver in early August. They then travelled to Victoria and enjoyed a mid week dance hosted by the Victoria/Mill Bay leaders, Willie McDermott Bruce and Hazen Best. Their next stop was Nanaimo where they had half a day of leisure before the Festival began.

The Nanaimo club dances in a Royal Canadian Legion facility which was unrecognisable the weekend of the Festival, festooned as it was, in Union Jacks, Red, White and Blue decorations and candles and many vases of flowers. A large banner read 'Van-Isle Welcomes UK OT Dancers'.

The weekend got off to a great start with a Social Dance on Friday. Nanaimo welcomed many OT dancers from Victoria who helped to swell the crowd. Refreshments were provided during the Interval. A cup of tea is always welcome and the Nanaimo Bars proved to be a favourite. Four Nanaimo couples wore Pearly King and Queen outfits and danced the Lambeth Walk. Everyone was invited to join in the second time around. The Victoria dancers entertained us with their version of the Royal Empress Tango. The ladies looking demure in frilly dresses and parasols and the men very pucker in top hat and tails and carrying canes.

You can't keep good dancers down and Saturday morning saw a large crowd participating in an OT Workshop led by Mike and Pat Cooper, finalists in the British Professional Championships. What a thrill! They were extremely patient and Mike's humour was a delight.

Saturday evening was a Dinner and Dance. Everyone dressed up for this auspicious occasion. The Coast Bastion Hotel catered a superb meal and we danced the night away.

Sunday dawned cooler than previous days with an overcast sky which in no way dampened our spirits as we headed to Newcastle Island for the Annual Tea Dance. This dance is held through the auspices of the Nanaimo Ballroom Dance Society and is open to the public. However, if you purchased a ticket in advance you got a discount on the 'pickle boat'. The Tea Dance was held in the large Pavilion a short walk from the jetty. The Pavilion's windows open onto a sea view which delights

the eye and they also provide a welcome breeze to cool the dancers. The dance got under way at 1.30 p.m. and we danced the old favourites like 'the Harry Lime Foxtrot', 'Gypsy Tango', 'Emmerdale Waltz' and 'Saunter Together'. Refreshments were again provided and the Nanaimo bars didn't disappoint.



After the dance, two Nanaimo couples escorted several of the UK dancers to the Dinghy Dock Pub. Here we enjoyed a sea food meal. Many enjoyed the fish and chips and one dined on crab. Dessert was discussed. 'Sex in the pan' was considered but the live music proved to be too loud for us so we travelled back to Nanaimo Harbour on the regular Dinghy Dock Ferry. We strolled along the Marina and sat outside a cafe sipping lattes and eating - you guessed it - Nanaimo bars. All too soon the sun was setting and it was time to say our farewells. We did this wistfully as we were sorry to see a great weekend come to a close but with promises to meet again soon we waved goodbye.

COMING EVENTS

Dancing With The Stars November 22

Tickets went on sale to the public on September 22 for a new fundraising event held by NBDS. Tickets are now over 75% sold so don't delay if you would like to attend this gala event.

The main idea is to have local celebrities learn to dance with our local instructors and experienced dancers, then compete for the top honours as judged by you – the people who attend. There will be professional demos during the evening as well as opportunities for general, social dancing, and there will be a catered buffet by Spice of Life. We also have a sponsored big prize raffle. It will also be the best fun dance evening for a long time.

Proceeds of the event will go to support for Haven Society. Haven Society provides services to women and children, youth, families and men who have experienced violence. Services include everything from shelter and food to emotional support, counselling, advocacy, court accompaniment and, most importantly, a safe place to begin healing from the abuse. Provision of these services is entirely dependent on charitable donations.

PYGMY PAVILION

1931 – 2008

The doors of the Pygmy Pavilion were opened by owner/builder Shelby M. Saunders on May 22, 1931. His intention was to build a large Dance Hall resembling one he had seen on Coney Island. The Chapel St. location was close to the heart of Nanaimo right around the corner from the new Malaspina Hotel. It is thought that the name Pygmy is also the name of a travelling fair or company in the amusement park business as dance halls and amusement parks went hand in hand in those days.

The Pygmy boasted the largest dance floor in Western Canada and was sprung with railway coil springs, not the usual horse hair. With over 7000 sq. ft. of danceable space it was more than double the size of the Newcastle Island Pavilion, which opened later in 1931. People came from everywhere. In the early days a passenger ferry would come from the mainland. Revellers would take the windy route up Commercial St. to the dance.

Marie Boulet met the father of her four children at the Pygmy in 1947. "He tapped me on the shoulder when I was dancing with somebody else. After that night we started going steady and went back to the Pygmy every Saturday night for dancing." About the building she said "The washrooms were large. The floor was wonderful! And the music was wonderful! It was all big band then you know."

The Pygmy was a jazz mecca featuring greats like Louis Armstrong and Harry James. The contemporary Nanaimo jazz scene with graduates like Diana Krall and Ingrid Jensen can be traced back to roots at the Pygmy. Musician Al Campbell remembers playing for crowds of over 1000 dancers.

The dance hall days were numbered as times changed. And the building began its second life in the early 50's as a bowling alley. Although the icon we will likely remember best is the F for Fiesta, it wasn't called that until 1969 when Mladen Zorkin bought it.

Any sadness felt over the loss of such a great venue is 50 years overdue. Still there is a note of finality to the piles of rubble and twisted timbers along Chapel Street this September. As you finish reading this try to imagine dancing all night without getting tired, negotiating your way through hundreds of other couples, dancing to hit music that we will still be dancing to in 2009 and for years to come.

That was the Pygmy Pavilion.

By Brian Hicks

ATTENTION SINGLES

We now have a moderated email list to assist singles to coordinate with each other. This may reduce the number of times we have 3 extra ladies at one dance and 3 extra gentlemen the next! Please email islanddancers@shaw.ca. If you wish get on this email exchange.

MONTHLY DANCES

Second Friday Dance at Royal Canadian Legion

1630 E. Wellington Rd., Nanaimo.

Next Dance: Friday, October 10

7:30 – 10:30 pm

Cost: \$5

Hosts: Dave & Norma Stevenson 751-8669

Email: evads@shaw.ca

NBDS Saturday Dance at Nanoose Place

Saturday, October 18, 2008

7:30 Workshop: Argentine tango by Gwen Spinks

8:30-11:30 Dance

Music: Latin and standard by John Maher

Oceanside Tea Dance

Nanoose Place, 2925 Northwest Bay Road,

Next Dance: Sunday, October 19

2:00 - 4:30pm

Cost: \$7.50 includes tea, coffee and goodies

Host: Ken Yung yungdance@live.ca

Salsa at Basque

Every Thursday, 489 Wallace, Nanaimo

Lesson at 8:30, dance 9:00 to 12:00

Cost: \$5

Host: Chris Wood salsananaimo@hotmail.com

Milonga at Norm's Place

6731 Aulds Road, Nanaimo

Next Dance: Sunday, October 26

4:30 - 7:00 dancing

Cost: \$7 with snacks and punch

Music: 90% Argentine Tango

Hosts: Gwen Spinks; wannadance@shaw.ca

NBDS First Friday Dance at Bowen Park,

Friday, November 7, 2008

7:30 Workshop: Waltz with Ted and Barbara Barnett

8:30 - 11:30pm Dancing

Cost: \$10 for members, \$14 for non-members with workshop; \$7 and \$11 after workshop

Music: Latin & Standard Ballroom by Andy Mundy

The Silver Slipper is published occasionally by the Nanaimo Ballroom Dance Society. The editor is John Maher (johnmaher@shaw.ca). Please send any dance related news that you think would be of interest to NBDS members and guests. If you don't send something, we may have to make something up about you, which could be worse than not sending something in your own words. Please share your stories! Thanks.

John