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TRIANGLE SQUARES

NEWSLETTER - October, 1993

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

This will be the last time I write as President of Triangle Squares. As I said in the May edition of the newsletter, after six years as President, I am resigning as of the AGM to be held on October 28 (more of that later).

In those six years, Triangle Squares has found a place on the map within the dance community, not only in the city of Toronto, and as Ontario's only gay and lesbian square dancing club, but across North America. Our dancers have shown their ability on television, at Gay Pride demonstrations and conventions. We've danced at fundraisers and at the C.N.E., and made history in the process.

Space and time don't allow me to say more, but I'm proud of the achievements of the club and of the individual dancers within it. We offer an important community activity that is building a committed core of dancers and we have built bridges between straight and gay dancers and their organizations. It's a great legacy and I'm sure that Triangle Squares will go on to greater strengths in the years to come. - Chris Homer

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING; OCT. 28

All dancers, including the new Basic Class should mark Thursday, October 28 in

your calendars. It will be a fun, Halloween **CLUB NIGHT**, to be held at the 519 Church St. Community Centre, so costumes may be worn. We hope to have a room available for changing. There will also be a **POTLUCK DINNER**, from 6:00 - 7:00. During the dinner there will be a short **Annual General Meeting**. Because this is our first AGM, in accordance with our by-laws, all the members of the Steering Committee are stepping down so that the General Membership may ratify their election and the official start of their terms from that date. General Membership with voting ability is defined in our by-laws by two criteria; "demonstration of successful completion of the Mainstream program" and "payment of membership fees". Associate Membership, usually with no voting privileges, refers to "Basic/Mainstream class members having paid their tuition". Another clause says that "The Committee may assign a voting privilege to any or all Associate Members for terms they [the Committee] shall specify. So ALL members of Triangle Squares will get voting privileges on this occasion.

Only two of the present Steering Committee, Andy Chong and Richard Stoveld, are putting their names up for nomination. They will be joined by John Bailey, plus the Basic Class Representative (still to be named) and two others. If those two others came from the Thursday night dancers, there would be an excellent representation from all our class levels. It would be great if women were represented on the Committee as well.

It might be easier if elections were to fill vacancies on the Steering Committee rather than for particular positions. The members of the committee could then divide up the duties accordingly. (I'm not sure if this is legal, but it would be easier!) If you want to know the duties of the officers on the committee, please speak to one of the present committee.

An added plus for this evening is that Tim Crawford will be the Caller. He is calling class-level Basic and all class levels above to full Advanced. So come out and have fun and vote for your representatives within Triangle Squares. Better yet, put your name into nomination to be on the Steering Committee; the club needs your input.

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SPECIAL DANCE: OCT. 15

Anne Uebelacker will call a special dance on Friday, October 15 at St. Luke's United Church (basement), 7 - 10 p.m., southeast corner of Carlton and Sherbourne Sts. Levels will be full Mainstream and all class levels up to full Advanced. Cost: \$5.00.

This promises to be a great evening, an opportunity to dance again to one of North America's most sought-after Callers and a great friend and supporter of Triangle Squares.

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From the IAGSDC Representative - Andy Chong

To our new dancers in Triangle Squares, welcome! While you have joined one particular square dance class in one particular club, you have indirectly joined a

whole network of lesbian and gay square dance clubs across North America.

Triangle Squares is a member of IAGSDC, the International Association of Gay Square Dance Clubs. The IAGSDC is an umbrella organization for close to 50 square dance clubs. There are two other clubs in Canada - in Calgary and Vancouver. In addition, there are some 10 "potential" clubs that may be formed this coming year.

The nearest clubs to us are in Cleveland, Detroit, Grand Rapids MI, Chicago, and New York City. Many clubs hold an annual special dance weekend (called a Fly-In), where out-of-towners are specifically invited to join in the fun. When travelling, you are always welcome to drop in on their regular dance nights as well.

The IAGSDC also oversees an annual convention (next year in Washington DC), which is the biggest event in gay square dancing. The last two conventions attracted over 1,000 dancers each. While straight square dancers seem to be dying off (literally), gay square dancing is booming. So you are part of a movement that is expected to continue to grow for some time.

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"Essay on Dancing"

This article is actually a book review, though it's about a book few of you will ever come across. I discovered it by chance when I was enthusiastically relating to our school *(Editor's note: George Brown Community College) librarian the events of a recent, rousing Fly-In, when he, in return, triumphantly produced what he had just discovered was the oldest book in the school's collection. It is a slim volume of some 126 pages entitled "Essay on Dancing" by J. Townley Crane, published*

in 1849! If this little book were reprinted and widely read, we'd have no need to recruit - they'd be coming to us in droves. Herewith a few quotes (and I swear to you right now that I'm not making this up).

Crane begins his Preface by pointing out that, in morals, dance is "a waste, howling wilderness, whose only fruit is the apples of Sodom". (Sounds delicious to me!) He describes dance as "twirling, interspersed with the affectionate clasp of a strange hand and with still more affectionate embraces....The object is to show off graces and lay trains for flirtation".

Crane takes us on a walk through the history of dance, starting with some festivities in ancient Greece. He says "...they were characterised by the most unblushing debauchery. ...Men, some disguised as women, others with only a goat-skin fastened around their loins, moved through the streets, dancing to the sound of flutes, cymbals and drums". Was this the original lace and leather crowd? In fairness Crane says "The women bore their full share of the rude and indecent merriment".

From Greece he takes us to Rome, where "the initiated indulged in the most unnatural vices. All modesty is set aside". Crane does spare us a few blushes by saying, "some things which have been spoken of are of such a character, that, to describe them would be bringing the mind into needless and therefore improper contact with vice".

He's only partially correct when picturing dancers as "gay devotees of fashion [who] love the dance as the means of bringing their charms to bear on the other sex." He is, however, right on the mark when he points out that, "dancing leads to expenditure. The dance, and the ultras of dress and fashion, are sworn companions". In this vein, he shows he is not unaware of

the import of a well-made fashion statement: "...dances are performed in loose, thin, flowing robes of the most voluptuous description...rakish, jaunty hats...all the splendors of ruffles, trinkets, and feathers."

He is even more precise concerning the addictive nature of this activity: "...by imbibing a love for the dance, you will almost necessarily acquire a distaste for the duties of every-day life...after the rustling of ball-dresses, the sounds of music, and the glittering lights in the dancing saloon, the quiet of home will seem lifeless...the current of thought will be turned into a new channel. Dancing, and your dancing companions, will absorb your attention; and the brief interval between one scene of soulless gayety, and another, will be given up to dreaming over the last, and planning decorations and conquests for the next one to come".

The author points out that while he has never actually danced, he is in the same position as an author writing on capital punishment, and argues, "It is not needful, either to dance, or to be hung, in order to be able to come to a conclusion touching the expediency of the performance".

Now that's worth framing, don't you agree?

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(Editor's note: our thanks to Don St. Jean for submitting this very thought-provoking and timely article...and now, as quickly as possible, on with the dance!)

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From the T+D S+R DA Representative - Andy Chong.

For our returning dancers, especially those who danced at the C.N.E. this summer, is there any interest in going to other dances hosted by the Toronto and District Square and Round Dance

Association? In this way we can keep a presence at their other events.

Every month from October to April, T+D hosts a FUNPLUS dance for Plus level and round dancing. It is usually the first Saturday of the month (except for January 1994 when it is January 8th.). It is held at Agincourt Collegiate on Midland Avenue in Scarborough from 8 - 10:30 p.m. with a price of \$8.00/couple. Proper square dance attire and SOFT-SOLED shoes are required.

For the November 6th. dance, John Kalthenhalter from Pocono Pines PA, will be calling. Let's make an effort to get up a square or more for this dance. Not only is he a wonderful caller from outside this area, he has previously called for an annual IAGSDC convention, the one held in New York in 1989. If he can support the gay community by calling for us, we can support him in return.

Another special event is a dance co-sponsored with the South-West Ontario Square Dance Association, featuring callers from T+D and SWOSA. This will be held Saturday, October 23rd. at the M.M. Robinson High School in Burlington. There will be Mainstream (and some Plus) square dancing 2:30 - 5:00 p.m. and 7:30 - 10:30 p.m. The \$8.00/couple admission covers both sessions. Maybe our Mainstream dancers might be interested? After all, SWOSA people might not even know we exist.

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TREASURER'S REPORT

As is usual at this time of year, Triangle Squares' bank balance is in a healthy position due to the recent influx of course registrations and membership fees.

However, for the first time we have

not only gone to three separate nights of dancing, but at the same time the Board of Education has implemented a policy of charging \$55.00 per permit event. We are therefore currently overspending on a weekly basis! This position may be allowed to continue up to the end of December, but the Steering Committee will have to consider whether to cut back on expenditures or find new methods of fundraising. If you have any suggestions about fundraising, please speak to a member of the Steering Committee.

As was our policy in 1992, the income from the 1993 Fly-In is being held in a separate bank account. Since Triangle Squares recently expressed an interest in hosting an annual IAGSDC convention, perhaps in 1999, a large amount of money would need to be accumulated in order to move forward on hotel contracts and necessary up-front expenditures for such an event. It's possible that income from Fly-Ins will be used for this purpose. More financial details will be available at the AGM. - Richard Stoveld

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OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS & EVENTS

11 - Herb Gloutney
11 - Arlene Lindfield
27 - John Bailey

6th. - Steering Committee: 62 Wellesley St. W., Apt 202, 7:30 p.m.

15th. - Special Dance: Caller, Anne Uebelacker at St. Luke's (Sherbourne & Carlton Sts.) 7:00 - 10:00 p.m., Mainstream to Advanced, cost \$5.00.

28th. - Potluck Dinner, Annual General Meeting and Halloween Club Dance; Caller, Tim Crawford, all levels, free.