



# TRIANGLE SQUARES

## Summer 2009



### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Well, summer is half over and I'm totally surprised at the amount of dancing that has been on offer. It all began with the German invasion on May 31st. Following that was Pride and our participation on the dance stage. Next on the list is the Fetish Fair in August, which leads into our intro nights in September.

Everyone should be thinking about who they can talk to about the intro nights in September. The life and vibrancy of our club depends upon bringing in new members. The Steering Committee spends a lot of time thinking about how to advertise the club, but the best advertising is word of mouth. Talk up the intro nights and bring a friend. I look forward to seeing you all there.

*Patrick Aubert*

### Club Dance – May 31, 2009

We welcomed the Schwäbisch Sweethearts, a group of square dancers from Schwäbisch-Hall, Germany, who joined us for an afternoon of dance at Winchester School! This group was touring eastern North-America, dancing with various square dance clubs as they travelled around. They even had their own club caller with them, Martin Kromer, who called a few tips for us during the Club Dance.



**NOTE:** If you'd like to submit an article and/or a digital photo for inclusion in the newsletter, please e-mail them to Don at [doncheff@hotmail.com](mailto:doncheff@hotmail.com).

### IMPORTANT DATES

August 16: Demo Square at Church Street Fetish Fair

Triangle Squares will be holding its Introductory Nights on September 10th, and September 17th. We need your help in getting the word out on these fun evenings to the community. We have a lot of advertising material, including business cards, post cards and pamphlets. If you have access to any place where these could be placed (like a local coffee shop or store) please let us know through the "Contact Us" tab on the Triangle Squares website (<http://trianglesquares.com/default.aspx>), and we'll get them to you!

### Upcoming Fly-In's and Events

**Follow Your Neighbor 14 – A Motown Celebration**, July 31 to August 2, Cadillac Squares, Detroit, MI. Callers: John Hughes & John Oldfield. [www.detroitcadillacsquares.com/registrations.html](http://www.detroitcadillacsquares.com/registrations.html).

**The Great Chicago Crossfire XX - Scoot Back Down to Chi-Town**, September 4-7, Chi-Town Squares, Callers: Sandie Bryant and Anne Uebelacker. [www.iagsdc.org/chitownsquares/html/GCCF2009/welcome.html](http://www.iagsdc.org/chitownsquares/html/GCCF2009/welcome.html).

**Load the Boat XVIII - Ghost Ship - Legend of the Flying Dutchman**, October 9-11, Cleveland City Country Dancers, Ohio. Callers: Bobby Poyner, Jack Pladdys, Drew Loutzenhiser, Jody Serlick. <http://cccdohio.com/lfb/lfb09.html>.

For all other events associated with the **IAGSDC**, please go to <http://www.iagsdc.org>.

If you need further reminders of the dates and events relating specifically to **Triangle Squares**, please contact our **Xtra** phone message service at 416-925-9872 (ext. 2014).



## DC DIAMOND CIRCULATE!

A large contingent of Triangle Squares members attended the 26<sup>th</sup> annual convention of the IAGSDC in Washington DC over the Easter weekend.



## Rochester Pride

by Don Cheff

A small group of us attended the Pride weekend celebrations in Rochester over the weekend of July 18 & 19. Besides having front-row seats for the Parade and enjoying a street fair, we took part in a square dance demo held during a picnic event on the Sunday, held at a nearby park. At the picnic, we 3 dancers from Triangle Squares joined those from Lilac Squares in a large gazebo-like covered space, doing several tips within the hour we were allotted. Matt, the coordinator and caller for Lilac Squares was very appreciative of our support for their club, and he hopes to organize more formal events with a professional caller, where he hopes to invite our club. Although they're a small group, there's much enthusiasm and collegiality among their members, and I look forward to supporting their events in the future.



## Fly-In 2009 – *Surviving The Recession*

Even though the theme of our 2009 Fly-in was Hard Times, it was not reflected in the spirit and energy of the dancers, both home grown and those who travelled here. Despite the current economic climate, attendance at the fly-in was quite good. Everyone seemed to enjoy dancing to Ett McAtee and Barry Clasper and they also worked well together when doing tandem calling.

As usual, the Friday night Pot Luck dinner was a hit and set the tone for the rest of the Fly-in. Thanks to all of you for your contributions to the dinner and to those who volunteered for the set up and clean up afterwards.

Despite being on a limited budget, the decorating team did an admirable job and stuck well to the theme of the fly-in. Many thanks to Sue Cox and her team for their hard and imaginative work.

Thanks to the 50/50 Draw and the auctioning off of other fly-in registrations, a small profit was made. Three of the registrations in the draw were not claimed by the winners and they will be made available as prizes at a forthcoming club event, probably in the form of a draw.

Our thanks go out to Holly Price and her (silent) partner, Joanne Laplante, for their hard work at putting this event together.

Bob Hails and his team of Sue Cox, Colleen Dodds and Lee Godfrey are currently working on the arrangements for our 2010 Fly-In, and information and registration forms will be made available as soon as more details are worked out.

*Submitted by Bob Hails*

Scout Across the Border 09, subtitled *Surviving the Recession*, was a low-budget, but well-received dance weekend, in which we discovered another good school location for such events, King Edward School at College and Bathurst. It was surrounded by affordable restaurants, was easily accessible by TTC, and was a more modern and brighter building than Jesse Ketchum. Over 80 dancers enjoyed the calling from Barry Clasper and Ett McAtee, and a great time was had by all.

*Submitted by Holly Price*





## VISIT TO JAPAN: written by Chris Homer

Towards the end of January, 2009, Osamu and I returned from a visit to Japan. Osamu had been spending eight weeks there, visiting family and calling for many local square dances. As well, just before we returned to Canada, he was one of two Guest Callers at the annual Challenge weekend in Gotemba, a town some way from Tokyo, within sight of Mt. Fuji.

I had joined him in Tokyo in December, staying there for five weeks. This was my third visit to Japan, though I'd never stayed such a long time before. I still find the country and the huge metropolis of Tokyo an exotic place; diverse, exciting, and physically different. Thin buildings are squashed in beside others and some are of quite an odd shape to our eyes. In Tokyo, you also see many crowded and intriguing little lanes, and suddenly there are shrines or temples where you least expect them; we found one in a busy, covered, cut-rate, shopping mall.

Since there are a lot of apartment buildings of various shapes and sizes in the city and they are quite small with less of the essentials of North American living, the small balconies are regularly festooned with clothes and laundry hanging out to dry. Indeed, we followed this pattern on the balcony of the tiny apartment that we were lent.

This visit, I was allowed out on my own on two of the days, since I now know enough about the subway system to be able to find my way around. So, on one of the days I went to three exhibits in three different museums in two different parts of the city. To get around in Tokyo, you buy the cheapest, inclusive subway pass you can find. Each subway line is assigned a different colour and letter, with each station on each line being numbered. So you don't really have to know the name of the station. Instead it might be a matter of getting on at S17, counting the number of stops so that you can change trains at S11 and then looking for signs directing you to E13 where you can take the subway line to connect at E08 to the Marunouchi Line, and so on... Perhaps the greatest difficulty in using the subway system is not so much getting into, or changing trains, but finding the right station exit. Since some stations might have fifteen or more exits, this can be a poser (for the local residents or visitors, too) but there are lots of lists, maps, and directions on the station walls. It's a matter of finding the information and then following the signs – maybe.

The Japanese don't make much of Christmas itself but they celebrate the New Year in a big way by going to the shrines. We also went to various shrines to celebrate, along with thousands of others in the same way. (Hillary Clinton, on her first visit to Japan as Secretary of State, was very careful to visit the *Meiji* Shrine – as we did - and not the *Yasakuni* shrine, which would have sent a completely different message around the world.)

If you're going to call on the gods for their favour, there is a special ritual involving the offering of a small monetary gift, the ringing of a gong or bell, two bows, two slow claps of the hands, a few moments in prayer, another bow and you're done. At these New Year shrine visits, a fair proportion of women were wearing traditional kimonos. This is lovely to see, but some outfits can look a little bizarre to Western eyes. On one subway ride I saw a young woman dressed in something that resembled a Little Bo-Peep outfit, with a mob cap on her hair which was set in ringlets.

During our time in Japan we were taken by Osamu's parents to a *ryokan*, a kind of traditional inn. Here your bedding is laid out on the floor, which is made up of *tatami* woven mats. This inn had its own hot springs, which was very relaxing, as well as superb food. We looked at a lot of shrines and temples with Osamu's parents and I also tried to learn a few new phrases this trip, but I certainly can't hold a conversation with any Japanese speaker.

Pretty well everywhere in Japan, the food is fresh and delicious; but the concept of being brought the whole meal to the table at once in a restaurant, in however many small dishes that might take, still seems a little strange to me. This visit I ate sea urchin for the first time as a condiment – delicious, *oishii*. In some restaurants you can cook the food by yourself on a grill built into the table as you can in Toronto. Osamu is very good at this.

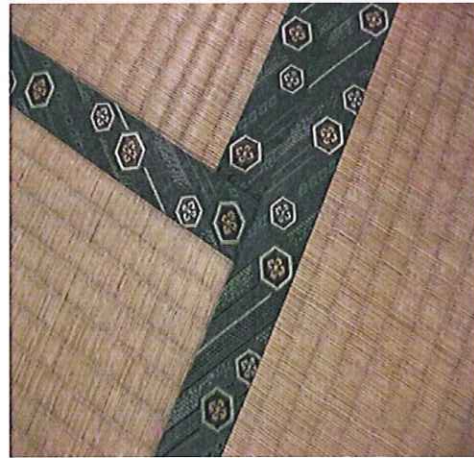
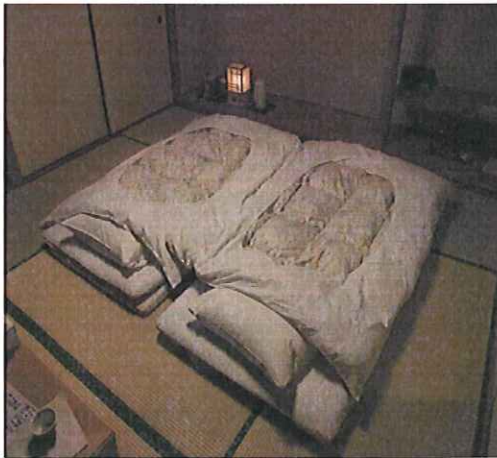
What about the square-dancing in Japan? I watched a number of classes for the lower levels: the teachers explain the definitions and walk the dancers through the moves a number of times, adding layers of information as they go. Then they try it with the music, but at full speed right from the start. This means the dancers have to focus on their position in the formation and keep their reaction time as short as possible. Since the callers are calling with the beat of the music, perhaps the dancers get to dance rhythmically and move with smoother flow quicker, leading to fewer square breakdowns at all levels.

There's definitely a social element to the club dancing in Japan; people have lots of fun. It's also an activity where each dancer seems to feel a responsibility for learning the definitions in order to help ensure the square will hold together while they're dancing. If the dancers know the definitions, it also allows the callers to use more and more interesting material. Although Canada is a different culture than Japan, do we have something to learn from their dancers in our approach to square-dancing here?











## TORONTO & DISTRICT SQUARE AND ROUND DANCE CONVENTION

*Off to the Brock Hop!* by Susan Cox

May 9, 2009 - A Saturday, and all over southern Ontario, square dancers were looking out their windows to see... torrential rain, golf-ball-sized hailstones, and skies so dark that streetlights were coming on. The perfect day for a trip to the Brock convention, by any reckoning. But who cares about the weather when there's a superb brunch buffet waiting? Off to Colleen's place, folks, and let's tuck in! The usual splendid array of yumminess was there for the lucky guests. Vast amounts of everything hot and cold, savory and sweet, and pot after pot of steaming, delicious coffee and tea with which to toast hosts and chefs extraordinaire, Colleen and Karen. Pure heaven, and the guests paid tribute to the feast by devouring everything in sight! That arduous task accomplished, and despite a strong inclination to lie down for a nap, everyone trotted out to the garden to have the annual photo snapped (between deluges). And then, it was out to the cars and vans for the trek down the highway, a trip that had a bit more drama than usual, thanks to the ongoing tempest!

As we arrived at Brock University, the skies cleared, rainbows appeared, birds sang, and tiny animals frisked about on the lawns. Time to dance! Folks dashed off to the change rooms and, whoosh! Team Triangle Squares emerged in all its sartorial splendour... although I have to admit that the Belles of Detroit, as I call them - one in her 80s, the other in her 90s, I'm told - put us to shame in the fashion department. Come to think of it, they sure could cut a rug, too. We danced until we couldn't dance no more. We paused for a quick dinner, and then found that we could indeed dance a bit more! And finally, we really, really couldn't move another inch, so we staggered back to the cars for the homeward journey, filled with laughs, stories, occasional snoozes, cheery farewells ... and nary a hail-stone in sight.

When shall we dancers meet again in thunder,  
lightning, or in rain? When the Acey Deucey's done,  
when the Chase Right has been run. See you at Brock  
2010!



## 2009/2010 Class Survey

*John Bailey*

Thank you to everyone that participated in the class survey that we conducted in May.

There were 64 respondents to the survey, with representation from each of the 5 classes. The survey was intended to determine the satisfaction that our dancers derive from our offerings, so that we can ensure that we're providing the best possible experience for all of our members.

Overall, virtually everyone is enjoying our club dances and class nights. Overwhelmingly, our members enjoy the social aspect of the club, and the friendliness of their fellow dancers is important to them.

In general, the members expressed satisfaction with our offering of club dances. Our new location at Winchester Public School is convenient for the vast majority of the respondents. According to the survey, few of our dancers base their decision to attend on the choice of caller, or the amount of dancing at their own particular level. The schedule of 1-3PM on a Sunday afternoon is a problem for some our members, with 3-5PM favoured by a small majority of the members. While the steering committee is aware of this issue, we are currently unable to locate a venue that would be available during this time slot. All of the other time slots that were suggested, including weekday evenings were less favourable to our membership.

In response to questions about the fly-in, the majority of members expressed little concern with the cost, and a strong majority of members would prefer to have a brunch as part of the event. Not surprisingly, the higher the class level, the more likely a dancer would be concerned about the caller choice, and amount of dancing available at their level.

Our dancers are generally enthusiastic supporters of our callers. In most of our classes, the pace of dancing is good, fewer breaks were preferable to more, the choreography is interesting, and the choice of music is generally satisfactory.

Overall, the survey proved to be a useful tool in assessing our offerings. With some small adjustments to the format and methodology, we hope to make this a part of our annual planning process.