



## Triangle Squares

Toronto's LGBTQ Square Dance Club

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- No contest in this month's newsletter; I'm still waiting for someone to answer last month's skill-testing question.
- **Everyone**, please reply to the survey by **March 20** ([details below](#))

### Upcoming

- **March 22:** Hogtown Hoedown, "old-time" square dance (8-11 pm, see [below](#) for details), adults \$15, students/underemployed \$10.
- **March 23:** [contra](#) dance at St. Barnabas Church Hall, SE corner of Hampton & Danforth, near Chester subway station. 7:30 - 10:30pm, \$12 pp, music by [Sheesham & Lotus](#). Terri and Niall have heard this band before, and say they are great.
- **April 7:** Free A1-A2 Funshop, 2-4:30 at 15 Maitland Place, please [RSVP](#)
- **April 12-14** [Grand River, Michigan fly-in](#)
- **April 20:** [Spring Spree](#) (Peterborough)
- **April 21:** ▲■ is hosting an "all level" spring dance - Floral Fiesta - at the 519, caller [Don St. Jean](#). Flaunt your floral fashions! In anticipation of a hot summer in 2013, we're serving ice cream at this dance! \$8 pp
- **May 3-5:** final year for [Toronto & District Square and Round Dance Convention](#), Guelph
- **May 23-26,** Toronto fly-in: It's not too late to register for ▲■'s annual Fly-In: [Weave the Ring in 2013](#). Pay only \$100 for a full weekend of great dancing, tempting food, and endless fun. Great calling by [Dayle Hodge and Tim Crawford](#). Basic/Mainstream dancers pay \$75, no matter when you register. Special offer for first-time attendees not able to attend the full weekend: half-price for any one session! Contact [Terri](#) for more info or see the [fly-in website](#). Convince your friends to come, too!
- **May 31-June 2:** Joe Uebelacker's [caller school](#) (Peterborough): emphasis on how to call, learning the mechanics of choreography – set ups and get-outs, lots of mic time and helpful critiques, how to practice to get better and more.
- **July 4-7:** Weave Your Heart in [San Francisco](#) (IAGSDC's annual convention). If you are attending convention for the **first time**, you are entitled to a discount rate, subsidized by All Join Hands. To qualify, you must obtain a cover letter from our club to send in with your registration. Please contact [Susan](#) to get your letter.



Sunday April 21, 2013 @ 2:30pm  
Floral Fiesta Dance - Triangle Squares



All level square dancing at 519 Church St  
No partner needed! Free ice cream!  
Flaunt your floral fashions!  
Caller Don St. Jean \$8 pp



- want more dance events? Check out Toronto & District [event list](#) as well as IAGSDC [event list](#).
- **July 17-19, 2014:** [Canadian Square & Round Dance Convention](#), Ottawa



## Survey

On March 1, we sent the following survey questions to all 60 members registered for basic, plus, A2 and C1 classes, and asked for responses by March 15:

1. **Classes:** What would make classes more appealing to you? Are you planning on coming back to classes next year? If you're not sure yet, is there something we could do to make it likely you'd return?
2. **Dances:** how could club dances be improved?
3. **One-level workshops:** What kind of instruction would you want?
4. **Grow the club:** how to attract new members? Retain more of our current members? Get our past members to rejoin the club? Any ideas on how to get our club better known in the community?

To date, we have received only **three** responses, which is disappointing. So we've extended the deadline to **March 20**, and encourage everyone to [send in your comments](#), suggestions, constructive criticisms. Your input will be kept confidential. We're looking for feedback, and some is better than none, so if you can take a moment to jot down a few thoughts and ideas, it will be most appreciated. If we get more than 5 responses, everyone's input will be summarized in the April newsletter, with responses from the executive. Some suggestions may be easy and quickly implemented; other ideas may warrant a special club meeting to

further discuss and/or formation of a larger committee to help implement them.

## Hogtown Hoedown



[Hogtown Hoedown](#) is a monthly [old-time](#) square dance held in Toronto on the 4th Friday of every month at 8 pm at the Christ the Saviour Russian Orthodox Church Hall (just to the left of the Church), [823 Manning Avenue](#), 3 blocks N and 2 blocks E of Christie subway station. Emma, Susan and Dan went to this dance last month, and had a blast! ▲■ does "modern western square dancing, so our dancers at any level can do "old time". Instruction is included, so your friends who are new to square dancing are also welcome to attend. Hope to see you there on **March 22**. ("[Hogtown](#)" ?)

## Club History

In March 1986, after participating in a NYC event hosted by [Times Squares](#) LGBT square dance club, a few members of Toronto's [Out & Out](#) club (Len Burke and ?) organized a Square Dance Intro Night at the Huron Street School which was called by Ron Masker, with a Hoe Down at the 519 the next day. Both events were well attended; Intro Night and Hoe Down were repeated in March 1987, once again called by Ron Masker and assisted by other dancers from Times Squares. Another success; over 10 squares of dancers! In August, Chris Homer, Len De Graaf, and Andrew Chow met to formally organize our club. Finding our first caller took a lot of effort; fortunately **Chris Homer** was able to contact **Anne & Joe Uebelacker**. A beginner class was planned, and advertised in [Xtra](#); 30 people showed up in September 1987. Anne taught for the club until 1992; Joe has taught for the club every year except one. There are a number of Triangle Squares (▲■) members who started with us in 1997 and continue to dance to this day, including Chris Homer, Don St. Jean, Kevin Seymour, Jeremy Vincent, and Don Cheff.

The club's first president was Chris Homer. Other members of the club's first executive were Don St. Jean, Andrew Chow, Don Cheff, Jeremy Vincent and and Richard Calvert. The club's name has several possible explanations; a pink triangle was often used to represent the gay movement. Our club logo was created in 1988 by Ray Mullen: 8 triangles forming a wreath-like dance square around a triangle and square in the centre (shown in issue #5 of the club's newsletter).

The summer of 1988 saw the graduation of our first Mainstream class and the start of a

second Basic class. As well, Chris Homer and **Don St. Jean** attended a July weekend caller school hosted by Anne and Joe. This embarked Chris and Don on the road to be among that special group of talented people: square dance callers. Starting in Sept 1988, Don taught Basic and Chris taught Plus. Since then, Don has taught for the club every year, except one. **Andy Chong** completed our mainstream and plus classes in time to dance in the club's first Fly-In in March 1989, and started calling A1 level for ▲■ in the fall of 1990.

**Costa Roussakis** has taught for the club on and off for the club since 1995. **Osamu Miyabe** started teaching for our club in January 2009.



*Peel The Apple, New York City, 1989*  
 Front Row: Alan Gottlieb, Andrew Chow, Anne Uebelacker, Chris Homer, & Les Holloway; Middle Row: Terry ... Joe Uebelacker, & Kevin Seymour; Back Row: Finisnet Punicello, Michael Piper, Terry Thorpe, Don St Jean, & Juana Doris

▲■ became a member of the [International Association of Gay Square Dance Clubs](#) (IAGSDC) in July 1988, at the annual convention in Arizona attended by Chris Homer and Barry Caven. ▲■ joined the Toronto Square and Round Dance Association in 2004; we had danced with them unofficially since the early 1990's. ▲■ hosted the IAGSDC 2002 convention that attracted over 1,000 participants. The [Gay Callers Association](#) (GCA) was founded in 1989; Joe, Anne, Chris and Don are among its founding members. Toronto holds the record for the most GCA members (6) present at a GCA meeting. Seven members of the ▲■ participated in the Fall 1988 Peel the Pumpkin fly-in. It marked our first return visit to the Times Squares club in NYC, that was so helpful in starting our club. More Toronto dancers attended the 1989 IAGSDC Convention in New York (see photo, above).

It was a challenge in those days to find callers for a gay square dance club, but as our club became known in the straight community as having good dancers who could dance at speed, due to the teachings and drillings by Anne and Joe, callers became more approachable. Initial resistance by some straight callers has now transcended into acceptance by many, and recognition that same-sex, sight-calling allows a caller a more stimulating and worthwhile exercise. Out & Out organized the 1986-1987 intro dances that led to the formation of our club, and we have attracted many dancers from Out & Out over the years. Don has led a square dance at their annual [Summer Jamboree](#) every year since 1991. At one of our club's basic class in early 90s, all 16 class members were recruits from Jamboree.

Promotion of the club began in the early-1990's with the assistance of a demonstration group of dancers. These demos have assisted the club in advertising itself and has helped raise our profile in the community. A very noteworthy demo was broadcast in 1993 on [CityTV's Breakfast Television](#). The club's Triangle Tarts also help with outreach, goodwill, fun and frivolity. This group of dancers in tacky drag, dress up at fly-ins and conventions, and march /dance in the Pride day parade. A crinoline in motion is truly mesmerizing when worn by twirling, bearded, burly man! **Congratulations to ▲■ on its achievements and successes during the past 25 years!**

This article was based on an interview with Don St. Jean and previous articles written by Chris Homer and Andrew Chow. Thanks to Andy Chong, Susan Cox, Chris Homer, Osamu Miyabe and Costa Roussakis for their input. Many thanks to Don Cheff, who has scanned in some of the club's earliest (typewritten!) newsletters from 1986-87; they are now on our [website](#).

## Next issue

Deadline for contributions to this newsletter is 10th of each month. This newsletter is emailed monthly to all current ▲■ members, and is posted on our [website](#). Hope you enjoy reading it. Links are all current at the time of newsletter publication. Previous issues:

2013: [Jan](#) | [Feb](#) | [prior years](#)