



Triangle Squares Newsletter

Autumn 2016



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NOTICE OF AGM

Our Annual General Meeting will be
Thursday, Nov. 24
at The 519,
followed by dancing.
Bring your issues to discuss. Also, we're looking for Treasurer and IAGSDC Rep.
If you would like to volunteer for the Executive, and help shape the future of the club, contact [Peter](#).



Costumes from the Halloween Dance, Oct 30, at The 519



trianglesquares.com

facebook.com/groups/trianglesquares

NOTES FROM SUMMER

Following the highs of the Maple Leafs Regroup Convention, the summer dance season suddenly became quiet. The fact that the temperatures were sweltering throughout July and August didn't help. Some of the club members convened at Peter and Tom's place for a Pond-side Picnic, which is almost as good as a trip to the country.



Our plans included hosting two community dances in August, which we dubbed "Summer Dance Parties." Despite renovations at The 519, and everything else going on in the city, we attracted about 30 dancers each evening. Still, it was nice to hear live music from the Sidewinder Stringband and for Susan to experiment with that format. More shots on pg. 5.



Crystal Chandelier and two Triangle Tarts led a small contingent to Peterborough's Pride Parade and Joe Uebelacker's "Square Dance for Everyone." It was nice marching and dancing with friends on a glorious, late-September day.



Daniela-Rose from Ottawa



Finally, although only a few club members attended Summer Magic in Cornwall this past August, we were happy to catch up with familiar faces from the Ottawa Date Squares.

RUNNING THE GOAT AT STRATFORD

~ ANDY CHONG

At the square dance convention hosted by Triangle Squares last July, one of the off-site trips was to the Stratford Shakespeare Festival to see *As You Like It*. For the brave or exhibitionistic, there was the chance to get on stage and participate in the performance.

As You Like It was set in 1985 Newfoundland. It had audience participation directed by Hymen, goddess of marriage. As in many Shakespeare comedies, it ends with a scene of multiple weddings. Just before that scene, Hymen calls for “wedding guests” to join them (with the code phrase “you know who you are”). Predetermined audience members go up on stage, watch the weddings, and help the celebrations by dancing the Newfoundland traditional square dance *Running the Goat*.

I did not manage to go with the square dance group. However, I had booked to see the play myself, and went back in September specifically to get on stage.

To participate, I booked and paid for a performance (8 pm), preferably in an aisle seat for easy access to the stage. I managed to book a seat one away from the aisle, but it turned out (not too surprisingly) that the person in the aisle seat was a fellow dancer — she was wearing a matching corsage and would be the opposite lady in my square. At the time of booking, I booked one of 16 spots in a free training session an hour before “curtain” (since this was performed in the Festival Theatre with a thrust stage, there was no physical curtain). I got an email with instructions to meet at a designated lobby spot at 6:45. An usher took us to a rehearsal hall nearby.

We were given a brief history of the dance, then arranged into couples, and then two squares of 8. Some women had to dance the man’s part, as there were more women than men participating. There were all-female couples, female singles, and at least one woman whose male companion didn’t dance. It would be useful to have had even one square dance

experience. The man is to the left of the woman; the four couples are numbered 1 to 4; the concept of “home” position. Time (and likely audience interest) constraints meant that the dance was abbreviated, with some moves that might be done by each couple or dancer in sequence, were done only by #1 couple or #1 man.

After rehearsal, we were given our assignments. “Men” got boutonnieres, while “women” got corsages. Flowers were colour-coded for each square. During rehearsal, I had ambitiously volunteered our couple to dance in the critical #1 spot, but it turned out that #1 would be danced by cast members, and we were split into three squares. The two couples (including me) who danced as #1 during the final run-through got sent to the balcony section of the stage to dance as #2 and #4 with two cast-member couples. When dancing on stage, our square did flawlessly, whereas an occasional peek I managed at the lower front squares showed them running behind.

After four or five minutes of dancing, we finished, took our bows, and were led down a back staircase / ladder to wait backstage while most of the audience exited. We then were led back out to collect our stuff and depart ourselves.

So if anyone asks if I have performed on a professional theatre stage, I can now say “yes”.



IN THE FRAME: THE TRIANGLE TARTS



The Honky Tonk Queen contest has been part of the IAGSDC Conventions since the first one in 1984. Crystal Chandelier recalled that the Triangle Tarts first formed as part of the 1992 Triangle Squares Fly-in, with the theme *Carmina's Cantina*, in honour of the club's first ever [Honky Tonk Queen](#), Carmina Putina. The Buxom Beauties from Cleveland also performed that year, which degenerated into a food fight as the Carmen Miranda headpieces began to fall apart.

Their flamboyance and colourful costumes make them a mainstay in our photos. During Pride festivities, they become instant superstars, and everyone wants their photo taken with them. Even Justin Trudeau has posed a few times. Paul's photo as Vesta Bule made the front page of the *Toronto Star* a few years back. They made a huge splash at the recent Pride Celebrations in Peterborough.



Cross-dressing has a long and ancient history. It's an almost universal phenomenon, usually within well-defined boundaries, often with religious connotations. In fact, English society is unusual in the strength of the taboo against cross-dressing. Even so, it has scope within traditions such as Mumming and Morris dancing. The prohibition against women performing on stage meant that for centuries, cross-dressing found legitimacy in the theatre. Whispers of the Molly houses occasionally made their way into print in 18th and 19th London.

In North America, cross-dressing was always an easy way for Vaudeville comedians to get a laugh. Full drag review shows probably date from World War II, if not earlier, where they formed part of a secret world not well-documented until the very late 60s and 70s. Michel Tremblay's play *Hosanna* (which recently played at Soulpepper) and Ken Russel's film *Outrageous* capture that milieu.

A highlight of our annual Fly-Ins has been the grand entrance of the Triangle Tarts on Saturday evenings, and their colourful costumes are a recognizable feature of the Pride Parade. Crystal Chandelier has referred to herself as the "Mother Hen" of the group, and her departure from the club this year will leave a large gap to fill. We hope the rest of the Tarts continue to surprise us with their creative costumes and entertain us.



GUERRILLA MARKETING

It's not just Triangle Squares or square dance clubs that are having difficulty recruiting new dancers. Theatre groups and musicians are all waving the red flag at getting people to go out to events. A change in modern working life has made work hours less predictable, and this means people are very reluctant to sign up for things like weekly classes that run four, let alone eight months. The traditional model, of running basic classes, and keeping levels segregated, no longer seems to be viable. There is an alternative model, which involves open community dances. We've experimented with a few of these last summer with our "Summer Dance Parties."

Let's take a brief look at what our sister club, the Chicago [Chi-Town Squares](#), has done. At a workshop on dancer retention during the Maple Leafs Regroup Convention, they announced they are no longer holding regular teach nights. Their structure is now as follows:

- They hold monthly Community Dances, which do not require lessons, but tap into forms like Callerlab's [Community Dance Program](#) and Old Time squares, which have repeated patterns that can be learned with a walk-through.
- They have two weekly dance nights, which feature mixed level workshops: full Mainstream/Plus, and A2/C1.
- They hold blasts once or twice a year, to help members who want to move from one level to another.

The strategy seems to be working for them. Their website claims over 100 members, and [photos](#) from the blasts show large participation.

Email me anytime: publicity@trianglesquares.com



Dive for the oyster, dig for the clam

Old Time square dance pattern from our Summer Dance Parties, Aug 2016.



Dance like no one's taking your picture and posting it on Facebook

Steve leading a line dance during our Summer Dance Parties, Aug 2016.

TRIANGLE SQUARES FLY-IN: MAY 26-28, 2017

RAINBOW

IS THE NEW BLACK

Toronto Triangle Squares Fly-In

May 26-28, 2017

Callers Barry Clasper

& Todd Fellegly

Mainstream thru C1

Jesse Ketchum School



trianglesquares.com/flyin

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Triangle Squares AGM**
Thursday, November 24
7:00pm, at The 519, followed by general dancing.
Please bring your issues to discuss.
- **Triangle Squares Holiday Dance and Potluck**
Sunday, Dec 18, Barry Clasper calling.
The 519: dancing 2:00-5:00pm, potluck dinner
6:00-8:00pm. Includes a special presentation to
Joe Uebelacker. [flyer](#)
\$10 members/\$12 non-members
- **Etobicoke Arrowhead Squares New Years Eve
Dinner & Dance**
Dec 31, 6:30pm-1:00 am, details in our [calendar](#).
- **Toronto & District Dances 2017**
Feb 5, Etobicoke
Mar 5, Guelph
Apr 1, Waterdown
- **Triangle Squares Fly-In**
May 26-28, 2017
Rainbow is the New Black
Callers: Barry Clasper & Todd Felleggy
See [details](#) here, then [Register Online](#)!

Click [here](#) for upcoming IAGSDC Events,
and [here](#) for T&D dances.

CONTACT US

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Stay connected to the dance scene

