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# *Folk Dancer Online*

The Magazine of World Dance and Culture



*Dancing after midnight at the OFDA New Year's Party. See p. 15.*

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# Folk Dancer Online

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**Cover Image:** from a photo by Bev Sidney.

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*(Click On Bolded Titles To Go Directly To The Page or Article)*

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### **Artist's Background, and Endorsement by folk dancer Vishwas Dhekney**

My young and very highly talented Kathak dancer friend, Bageshree Vaze, will be performing at the Harbourfront Theatre Centre April 23-25, 2015.

Bageshree was born in Nova Scotia. She was brought up in Canada and she learnt her Kathak in Canada and India. She is a marvelous choreographer, performer and musician. She is married to Vineet Vyas, also born and brought up in Nova Scotia, and trained in tabla in India. Vineet is a top class tabla player by all standards.

## Party! Party! Party!

by Dorothy Archer

Thank you to all who sent congratulatory messages about the first issue of *Folk Dancer Online*. Your comments were much appreciated. To those who were not quite as enthusiastic, I hope you got some help or will be able to talk to Bev Sidney or Helen Winkler at the next café (see Grapevine). Reading online takes a bit of practice but it does become easier. *Folk Dancer Online* is prepared completely online from submission of the articles, through the editing, layout, and proof reading stages.

As usual, folk dancers have been partying and travelling. Jane Aronovitch writes about her trip to Japan and the celebration of Atanas Kolarovski 88th birthday. As for parties, Hamilton folk dancers are always travelling or partying and in this issue Stefania Miller writes about two parties – one a Macedonian workshop and the other the 31st anniversary party for the group. Congratulations to the Hamilton dancers on this occasion. The group is an active and fun-filled part of the Ontario folk dance scene and makes a strong contribution to it. The successful Canadian step-dance café rates an article and photos and for New Year's Eve we thought photos would tell the whole story.

Those who have partied at Ev and Gib Whittamore's will be familiar with the Ugly Stick that Annette Lalonde writes about. One of the advantages of reading online is that one can easily access links and Annette has given several including how to make an Ugly Stick. So start saving those bottle caps! And when your stick is finished you can use it to keep the beat as you practice your Canadian step-dancing learnt at the February café and have yourself a party. Opportunities are boundless!

It hasn't been all partying though. Some people have hit the boards. Nora Brett played a spy in Arrivals and Departures, by Carol Shields and presented by

Act II at Ryerson University. Walter Zagorski was a cowboy in North Toronto Players' *El Mikado*, a takeoff on the more famous work by Gilbert and Sullivan.

Nancy Nies' hometown of Bakersfield is a fraction of the size of Toronto but has a good representation of different cultures. In this issue Nancy tells about attending a presentation by residents of Bakersfield who have Asian heritage.

As we come to the end of March we can look forward not only to warmer weather but also to more cafés and dance camps and parties, and later on, dancing in the park. See yah!



Rita Winkler with Walter "Cowpoke" Zagorski.

**CORRECTION:** In the first edition of Folk Dancer Online, Lemon Bucket Orkestra was incorrectly named as providing music at the BALfolkFEST noz #2. Emilyn Stam and Tangi Ropars, who started Balfolk Toronto, are musicians (and members of Toronto's Lemon Bucket Orkestra) and were joined on this occasion by others in entertaining the party goers.

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To all of you who tried your foot at the Step Dance Café (see p. 18), you may be interested to view a video of Gene Kelly tap dancing – on roller skates (see link below). How do you think we would have managed our lesson using that footwear?

[www.chonday.com/Videos/geskates2](http://www.chonday.com/Videos/geskates2)



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## *Showcasing Asian-Pacific Heritage*

by Nancy Nies

In May 2014, it being Asian Heritage Month in the U.S. and Canada, I had the opportunity to attend an Asian-Pacific Heritage Showcase, staged by the Asian-American community here in Bakersfield.

First on the program were three young women of Indian ancestry, dressed in brightly coloured saris, who performed the classical Indian dance Bharatanatyam. They explained the significance of the various parts of the dance, which originated in Tamil Nadu.

Then, local physician and poet, Portia Choi, in a flowing white hanbok (traditional Korean dress), read moving poetry from her book *Korean War Poems*, based on her childhood memories of her homeland. Next up was an energetic traditional drum performance by ten young Korean-Americans, students at the Bakersfield Korean Academy.

Two teen-aged sisters expertly played the Chinese zither. Young students from a local dance studio, in colourful costumes, then presented a Tibetan dance, a Mongolian dance, and a Chinese peacock dance. Four women followed, performing a medley of five dances from different parts of China.

The grand finale was a lively lion dance like those performed in southern China, meant to drive off evil spirits and bring good luck. A local kung-fu studio provided both the lions and the vigorous drum accompaniment. Each of the three large, eye-catching "lions" had a moveable mouth and swiveling eyes, one dancer inside its front half, and a second dancer inside its back half. Dramatic moments: when the lions stood up on their hind legs and confronted one another; when they tore lettuce leaves, symbolizing prosperity, and threw pieces at the audience; and when they nuzzled front-row spectators, of which I was one, in hopes of being "fed" a monetary reward!



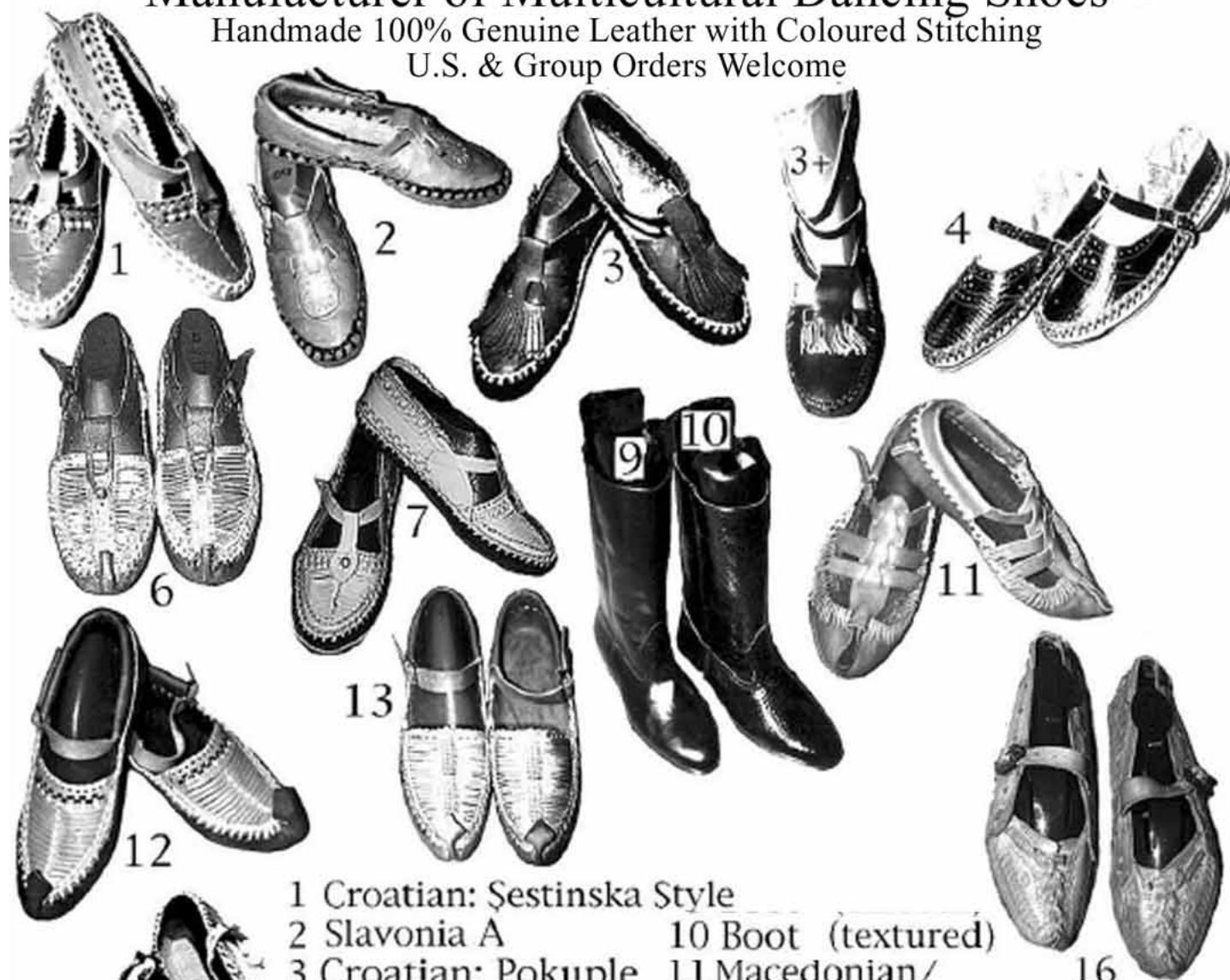
*A lion dance was the grand finale at the Asian-Pacific Heritage Showcase in Bakersfield, May 2014.*

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# *Atanas Turns 88 and Japan Celebrates*

By Jane Aronovitch



*Atanas Kolarovski*

It all started in the summer of 2014. Olga Sandolowich happened to mention that Fusae Carroll was taking a small group of folk dancers to Japan to join the celebrations for the 88th birthday of Atanas Kolarovski, renowned Macedonian folkdance performer and teacher. Fusae has been taking Atanas to Japan to teach folk dancing for over 30 years. The Japanese adore Atanas. They are devoted students of his dances. They learn every detail of every dance as well as many of the songs that accompany them. And you will see many participants in Macedonian folk costumes at the evening parties during Atanas' dance workshops there.

When I heard that Fusae would be leading a small group of folk dancers from her current home town of Sacramento on a trip to Japan I was eager to join. I have wanted to go to Japan for a long time and this seemed like the perfect opportunity to see some of the country with a friend—who also happens to be Japanese—and celebrate with Atanas. I had thought it had been about five years since I last saw Atanas. It was in Chicago at the annual Balkanske Igre Spring Festival. (They are celebrating their 50th anniversary this year and Atanas is on the list of guest teachers, as he has been for many, many years.) It turned out that it was probably more like 10 years since Atanas and I last met. I was thrilled to see him. He has always been one of my favourites.

The trip started solo for me. I flew to Tokyo and then made my way by train to Osaka where a friend had taught ballet at the university for four years. He was back in Canada by this time but spoke highly of Osaka as did my osteopath, who also is Japanese. So even though Fusae's tour only used Osaka as a starting point, I decided to go ahead and spend a day or two in Osaka on my own. I was fortunate to have met someone from Osaka at a Gyrotonic workshop (Gyrotonic is a movement system that I teach along with Pilates). During the day I toured the city with the help of a wonderful guide, but at night my friend introduced me to some wonderful restaurants in different parts of the city.

After a couple of days in Osaka I met up with Fusae and the group of four from Sacramento. We took the train to Hiroshima and among other things spent some time at the war memorial and museum. We then travelled to Kyoto and Himeji. In each place we saw various sights. Travelling with Fusae made moving around in a country where I didn't speak or read the language so much easier! And because she grew up and spent much of her life in Japan she was able to add anecdotal

information that went beyond the guide books.

In Himeji, a city of approximately half a million between Kyoto and Tokyo, we met up with folk dance friends of Fusae's who treated us to a fabulous home cooked meal. As an added bonus we got to watch videos of Atanas' 85th birthday party which our hosts had organized. Olga had attended that event and had returned raving about the parties, the people and their love of Atanas and his dances. We then travelled to Tokyo where we had a few days to tour around the city, see some of the sights—and shop (the Japanese love to shop!). Speaking of shopping, there were five huge building-sized department stores all within walking distance of each other near our hotel!

Atanas arrived on Thursday. And as a surprise so did one of his daughters, Liliana, who, unbeknownst to Atanas, flew from Mexico to help celebrate. He was delighted! She had heard how much the Japanese love her father for years and decided to come and see for herself!

Taeko, Fusae's daughter, who has known Atanas since she was born, arrived the same day and we were also joined for the parties by Olga and Helen Kirkby who started their trip by visiting Helen's son and daughter-in-law who live in Tokyo.

The actual birthday festivities started on Saturday evening with a sumptuous dinner and dance party. Complete with a variety of delicacies, cake and dancing, the evening was a wonderful celebration of the esteem with which the participants held Atanas. One of the highlights was a concert by the organizing committee. They played and

sang a variety of Macedonian songs with great pride and enthusiasm. Very impressive! And much appreciated by Atanas. Incidentally, 88 is a significant birthday for the Japanese. The written character for 88 is considered a sign of good luck and longevity.

The following day was devoted to an all-day dance party with well over 100 people in attendance. There was a dance program consisting of 100 of the dances Atanas had taught over the years. And the group remembered and danced every single one! We did take a break at one point for another cake as well as some speeches by the organizers, Fusae and others in attendance.



*Fusae Carrol and her daughter Taeko.*



*Fusae and Jane.*



*Dancing one of 100 Atanas dances.*

the best part was seeing Atanas' face as he watched over 100 people dance his 100 dances. The outpouring of respect, love and devotion was overwhelming for this man who brought the culture, dance and music of Macedonia to so many people around the world, and most especially to this lovely group of Japanese who went to such great effort to honour their teacher.

*Adorning our adored teacher. ►*



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# *Playing an Ugly Stick*

By Annette Lalonde

If you suppose that I'm referring to a stick that is truly ugly, you're right. However, if you're asking yourself what an ugly stick is or wondering if I meant playing « with » an ugly stick, then you haven't spent much time in Newfoundland.

Ever since the early colonial days, Newfoundlanders have had to find ways to entertain themselves especially during the long cold winters. Isolated in each of their small fishing villages dotting the coastline, they came up with an unusual percussion instrument called an ugly stick. Each ugly stick was unique and hand made with available material.

During a vacation in Newfoundland last August, I visited Prime Berth Twillingate Fishery & Heritage Centre, a private interpretive fishing center and craft studio created by David Boyd as a tribute to his fisher forefathers. It's located not far from Bonavista and really worth the visit. At the back of the gift shop, you'll find all sorts of memorabilia from the early fishing communities in the area. David, himself, sings Newfie folk songs interspersed with anecdotes of customs and folklore. It was fascinating.

He also introduced us to the ugly stick, a popular percussion instrument in Newfoundland. He demonstrated how it is played and explained how it is constructed. You can buy some at gift shops or order one on-line (could be close to 100 dollars) but no self-respecting Newfoundlander would ever consider buying one when it's so much more fun to make your own.



*Annette playing the ugly stick.*

At the end of his presentation, he asked if anyone would like to try it so I volunteered. We became a two-piece band with David accompanying his songs on his guitar and me, providing the beat with the ugly stick. I don't know when I last had such an uplifting experience. At the end of our song, David said "Let's do another one." I was all for that! We were a hit! Maybe I could get a part-time summer job there...just wondering.

Now that I've returned to Toronto, I'm collecting the necessary material to build my own ugly stick. I even got some useful pointers from a Newfoundlander with whom I chatted at a Tim Hortons in St. John's. I also brought back a CD that I'll use as my inspiration to play along. Can't wait!

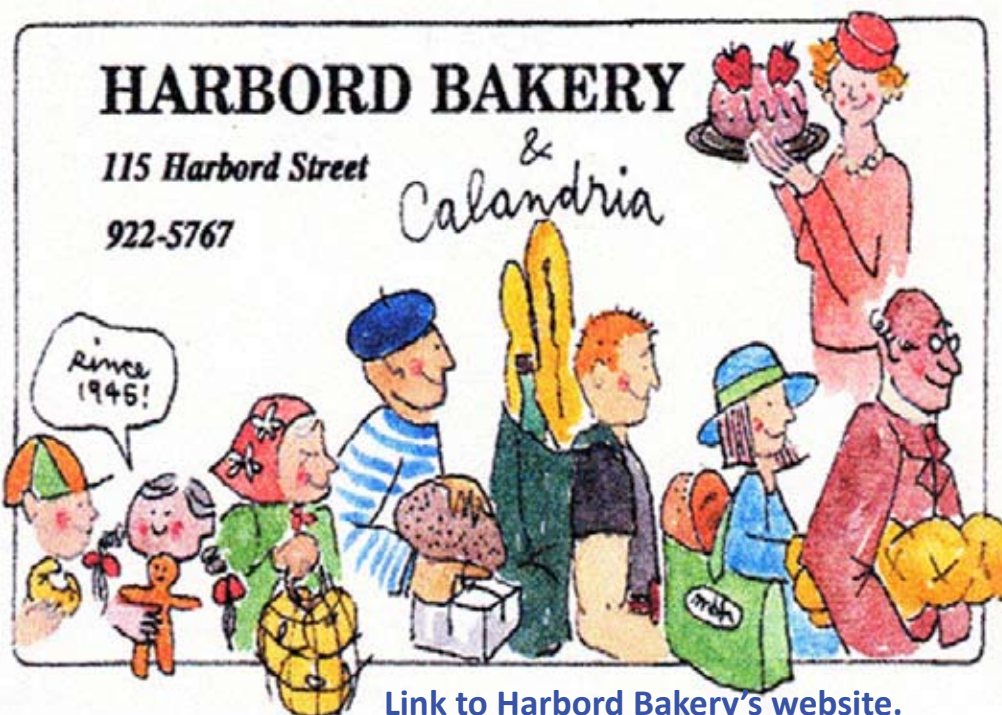
If you want to try to make one yourself (or with your grandchildren), there are many web sites that can help. It's not hard and it's a very creative project for all. You could even build a percussion group with your extended family. Go for it!

**How to make an ugly stick:** [www.youtube.com/watch?v=C8Mgzzr-kwnw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C8Mgzzr-kwnw)  
or <http://pirates-landing.com/ugly-stick-workshop/>

**To buy an ugly stick:** [www.uglysticksarei.com/newfoundland-ugly-stick](http://www.uglysticksarei.com/newfoundland-ugly-stick)

**To watch the ugly stick in action with a band:**  
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**For info on Prime Berth Twillingate Fishery & Heritage Centre:**  
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[Link to Harbord Bakery's website.](#)

# *Vlasto Petkovski: Macedonian Instructor, Choreographer and Dancer*

By Stefania Szlek Miller

Photo: Karolina Petkovski.



The Hamilton International Folk Dance Club (HIFDC) welcomed Vlasto and Karolina Petkovski to the group last fall. Vlasto also taught three Macedonian dances at the Friday evening session in Hamilton on January 16th of this year. His many years of experience as an instructor and choreographer were very evident at the workshop.

Vlasto studied Macedonian folk culture in school, and began his performing career with Cvetan Dimov in Skopje. From 1977 to 1995, he danced with Tanec, the Macedonian national folk dance ensemble. Aside from dancing and singing in the ensemble, he also worked as a choreographer for the folk dance group, Grigor Prlicev, in Skopje. Since emigrating from Macedonia to Canada with his family in 1995, Vlasto has shared his love of folk culture with Canadians, and has directed many Macedonian folk dance groups including: Ilinden in Mississauga, Vezilka in Ajax,

and Zdravec in Markham. He is also the director of SunStage Company in Brampton.

At our workshop in January, Vlasto's teaching style was easy to follow even for less experienced Balkan dancers. He introduced the following dances: Jano Janke, a relatively easy and energetic dance; a lively version of Berovka with three variations; and Kopatchija, a very stately dance choreographed to nice dramatic music. His wife, Karolina (also a very good dancer) videoed the teaching portion of the workshop which made it easier for me to write dance notes. His dances enrich our Macedonian repertoire.

Vlasto and Karolina have also danced with Olga Sandolowich's group in Toronto. We are delighted to welcome them into our international folk dance circles.



Photo: Jack Evans.

# OFDA's New Year's Eve Party

See lots more photos, check out the OFDA website: [www.ofda.ca/photos.html](http://www.ofda.ca/photos.html).



*The table decorations, which added an elegance to the room, were compliments of Beverley Steinf.*



*Alan Katz with the bounty of the Potluck tables.*

Photo: Bev Sidney.



*This year's party was held, once again, at the Kimbourn Park United Church and 35-40 people celebrated the dawn of a new year in the best possible way – by dancing!*

*The potluck offerings were delectable and we were treated to one of the Harbord Bakery's beautiful and delicious cakes.*



Photo: Alan Katz.

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## Session Two, Aug 23-29

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[www.mainewoodsdancecamp.org](http://www.mainewoodsdancecamp.org)

# *Hamilton Folk Dancers' Anniversary Party*

By Stefania Szlek Miller



The Hamilton International Folk Dance Club (HIFDC) celebrated its 31st anniversary January 30, 2015 with over 40 participants including many guests. Olga Sandolowich and Ginger Northcott surprised us with their visit, and it was great to see Olga leading Shar Planina with other Macedonian participants by her side - Carl Toushan as well as Vlasto and Karolina Petkovski. Vlasto also reviewed the three dances that he taught at our group's workshop on January 16th. Rexi (Rexhep) Ferati came from Toronto where he now resides, and Leslie Minacova joined us along with other London dancers. It was good to dance with three strong Balkan dancers who at one time danced in major performing groups: Vlasto in Tanec (Macedonia), Rexi in Shota (Kosovo), and Leslie in Lado (Croatia).

To commemorate Robbie Burns' day, Sheila Scott from London taught two very nice Scottish dances. Sheila's teaching is very clear, and we all tried to copy her graceful Scottish styling. Everyone enjoyed the dances including the lively Strip the Willow to the music of Fred (Fredrick) Moyes. Some 25 years ago, when Fred was still a professor at McMaster University, he made a cassette for us of Mairi's Wedding, and we still dance to his version. He has recorded a number of CDs of Scottish country dances as well as a CD commemorating the 25th anniversary of the Tokyo Bluebell Dancers, an international folk dance group in Japan. Fred's e-mail is [fmmusic@sympatico.ca](mailto:fmmusic@sympatico.ca) in case other dancers wish to procure his music.

Thank you to Halina Adamczyk, Anita Millman, Karen Walker and many others for co-ordinating the social side of our celebration, and to all participants for bringing delicious food to share during the break. I also very much appreciated the birthday wishes from the group, and Joan Tressel's gracious presentation at the end of the evening. When I first joined HIFDC in January of 1984, I knew that I had found an exceptional circle of fine friends and dancers.

The continuing success of HIFDC very much depends on the loyal support of its members - we have 32 members this year with many others joining us when they can. Many of our members also contribute to our dance programme. They include two very young dancers, Léa Chauavigné and Arnaud Dubra, who will be leading a French workshop at HIFDC on 20 February. Dale Hyde will be our illustrious instructor and caller at our 27 March Regency Ball with the Steve Fuller Band. Last November, Adam Kossowski led a very successful workshop of international dances, and has also taken on the task of converting the club's massive collection of tapes and CDs into digital format. OFDA has been very helpful in assisting our club with that process. Thank you to the OFDA executive for its continuing service to the folk dance community, and congratulations on the very impressive first issue of the Folk Dancer Online magazine.



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# *OFDA Canadian Step-Dancing Café*

By Dorothy Archer

When Sherry Johnson's mother was looking for an activity to suit her sons in Stratford, Ontario, she chose step-dancing. So the four brothers and Sherry and her sister started lessons and eventually learnt to play the fiddle also. In the summers, the family packed into a motor home and travelled Canada and the U.S. dancing at competitions. Today only Sherry and her younger brother compete.

Step-dancing is done from kitchen parties to competitions. The styles differ – there is Newfoundland, Cape Breton, Acadia, Quebec, Ottawa Valley, and Metis Jig which is done on the Prairies. It is not popular in B.C. Sherry taught us the Ottawa Valley style which is danced on both sides of the Ottawa River and has spread throughout Ontario.

Dancers learn basics and their teacher's improvisations and then add their own. Sherry taught us three steps: basic, "Slam, Slam" and "Train". Having learnt these we were in a position to add our own improvisations. That is, until Sherry did a demonstration of the steps at regular speed and we realized how much she had slowed the process. So while we might not be ready for competitions, it was good fun and gave us an idea of that type of dance.

Sherry rarely teaches step-dancing anymore. She is Associate Professor of Music in the Fine Arts Department at York University. There she leads a Celtic Ensemble and they have all learnt to step-dance.

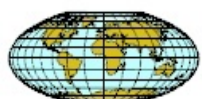
It was a pleasure to meet Sherry and nice that she joined us for the usual delicious pot luck and stayed until the end of the evening and tried out folk dancing.



Photo: Alan Katz.

[Link to Jim Gold's website.](#)

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## *Upcoming OFDA Dance Events...*



*The Ontario Folk Dance Association's*

***AGM and Camp Review***

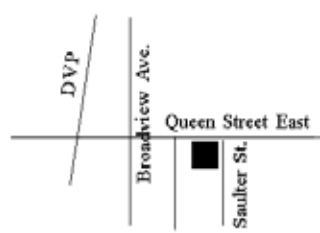
Sat. June 6, 2014 from 6–10 p.m.



This evening is **Free** and open to all.  
*Non-members are welcome to attend, but cannot vote at the Meeting.*  
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## *The Grapevine*

Mary Crow died February 8th in Toronto. She danced with Scottish groups and at IFDC. Mary helped blind children and their families adapt to their surroundings and co-authored the book *Living and Learning with Blind Children*.

Nancy Leslie took a Caribbean cruise visiting Aruba and other islands at the end of January. Sandy Starkman, Thelma Feldman and Merle Kravitz were in Cuba for a week in February.

Janis and Jack Smith spent a couple of months in Florida this winter but returned earlier than usual to await the arrival of their first grandchild. Peter and Paula Tsatsanis are back in Toronto. They also spent the winter month in Florida visiting their grandson and other members of the family.

Not everyone soaked up sunshine. Shirley Kossowski went skiing in the Principality of Andorra in the Pyrenees mountains between Spain and France.

Hans Sanders recently sent in this note, giving some perspective on how much things have changed over the years: "Just to rehash history; I was the publisher when the magazine first started 46 years ago. Preparing and printing the very first magazines on electronically cut mimeographed stencils (Gestetner). Soon thereafter we contacted "The Printing House" and developed the folded 8-1/2 by 14" format that has been used up to the end of 2014."

### **ONLINE VIDEOS, INTERVIEWS, ARTICLES: CLICK ON THESE LINKS...**

**Dancing in the Third Act** is a successful show created by Randy Glynn and made up of 12 amateur dancers in their 60s and 70s. For the interview of Randy Glynn by Jian Gomesi visit [www.cbc.ca/q/blog/2014/09/03/dancing-in-the-third-act-randy-glynn/index.html](http://www.cbc.ca/q/blog/2014/09/03/dancing-in-the-third-act-randy-glynn/index.html). Paula Citron also interviewed Randy and it can be accessed at [www.thedancecurrent.com/feature/randy-glynn-dancing-third-act](http://www.thedancecurrent.com/feature/randy-glynn-dancing-third-act).

Terri Taggart sent a reference to an **article on folk dancing** in the Dayton Daily News. To view it, visit <http://www.daytondailynews.com/news/lifestyles/fitness/folk-dancing-for-fun-fitness-and-friendship/njxF2/>

Other items of interest to dancers are found in two TED talks: **Dance, Thinking, Hormones** by Peter Lovatt, a research professor in dance psychology, at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=-kCZZp3u\\_xE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-kCZZp3u_xE) and **How Schools Kill Creativity** by educator Sir Ken Robinson at [www.ted.com/talks/ken\\_robinson\\_says\\_schools\\_kill\\_creativity?language=en](http://www.ted.com/talks/ken_robinson_says_schools_kill_creativity?language=en).