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Editor Dorothy Archer
Production Bev Sidney
Advertising Paula Tsatsanis
Dance Calendar...Terri Taggart

To contact the Editor, or to send calendar items, articles and other magazine content:
folkdanceronline@gmail.com

Proofreaders
.....Rachel Gottesman
.....Carole Greenberg
.....Adam Kossowski
.....Shirley Kossowski
Distribution.....Judy Deri

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Web Design: Noemi Adorjan
friendlyweb@gmail.com
Web Maintenance: Helen Winkler



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Cover Image: *Yves Moreau, Lucette Lepage, France Bourque, Sonia Dion, and Cristian Florescu celebrate the 50th anniversary of the International Folk Dancers of Ottawa. Photo: Marcel Pronovost. See p. 11.*

In This Issue

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

FOR THE DANCE CALENDAR

See <http://ofda.ca/wp/calendar/>

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.....

- | | |
|--|--------|
| 1. Editorial | ... 4 |
| 2. Notices | ... 5 |
| 3. Our California Correspondent | ... 7 |
| <i>Folk Dancing on Everest and K2</i> | |
| 4. IFDO's 50th Anniversary | ... 11 |
| 5. OFDA Hungarian Café | ... 15 |
| 6. More than just a Teacher | ... 17 |
| <i>A Celebration Honouring Dale Hyde</i> | |
| 7. A Trip Through Macedonia – Part II | ... 22 |
| 8. Grapevine | ... 28 |

[RETURN TO OFDA WEBSITE.](#)

A Time to Rejoice

by Dorothy Archer

The folk dancers in Ottawa did just that along with many friends from across Canada and some from the States. Stefania Miller has brought the story of the happy event to us and, along with Terri Taggart, supplied photos. Soon we'll be able to rejoice with the celebration of OFDA's 50th anniversary on October 19th – keep the date.

Maybe you have a hard time finding something to celebrate. Some days, months, years are like that. Fortunately we have dancing. How often have you felt too tired to move, or felt like sitting down and crying, or yelling over some injustice, but you went folk dancing instead and after a while, things were back in perspective and you were enjoying yourself? The music and the movement and the camaraderie do that. A long walk might do the same thing but dancing is more fun. Come to think of it, we should try to get folk dancing on the agenda of some world-class meetings not to mention some closer to home. That might shake things up a bit and rearrange tempers to make better decisions.

In this issue we continue some themes from October. As promised, we keep travelling in Macedonia starting with a visit to Pece Atanasovski's home. Mirdza Jaunzemis writes about Pece travelling to North America. Were you at Greenwood Public School in Toronto in November 1992 when he visited and played the gajda?

Also, continuing from the last issue, is a moving tribute to Dale Hyde by his students. His influence on them was profound and, now as adults, they recall their classes with him and how he affected their lives.

Just to show that folk dancing is ubiquitous, Nancy Nies tells a story of Sherpas dancing at a base camp in the Himalayas and provides a link to a video of them. This dance is before they climb – I wonder if there is another when they have completed it?

There were parties too the last few months of 2018 as highlighted in photos of the Hungarian café and New Year's Eve. Both occasions were times of frivolity and rejoicing.

A folk dancer who has had two major upsets this fall, sends the message, "live life to the fullest." So do that, look back at the good things in 2018 and plan to enjoy 2019. And dance your blues away and your sillies off.

CONDOLENCES

To folk dancers and their families.
Donations have been made by OFDA

- to the ALS Society in memory of Mirdza Jaunzemis' sister, Aina Pavlovics
- to St. Michael's Hospital in memory of Janis Smith's husband, Jack
- to Sinfonia Toronto in memory of long time folk dancer Helen Barron
- and to the Canadian Liver Foundation in memory of Roz and Allen Katz's daughter, Miriam Vella



OTEA SCHOLARSHIP

Each Year, OFDA offers the OTEA Scholarship to support a member who wishes to attend a course or workshop or other enrichment activity related to folk dancing.

Applications can be submitted before May 31, 2019. Details on the OFDA website:

[2019 OTEA Scholarship Ad](#) and [OTEA Scholarship Rules](#).

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Photo: Agnes Bleiwas.

This year's New Year's Eve party, held at Riki and Stav Adivi's home, featured live music. Members of the ad hoc band were (left to right) Judith Cohen, Walter Zagorski, Kevin Budd and Cathy Campbell. For more photos of the event, see: <http://ofda.ca/wp/photos/>.

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Folk Dancing on Everest and K2

by Nancy Nies

When you read the above title, you may have done a double take. If you're like me, you'd never have associated folk dancing with the highest and second-highest mountains in the world – but more about that shortly. First, here's a bit of background.



Photos: courtesy of John Stenderup.

John on the summit of K2, “the Holy Grail of Mountaineering”, 22 July 2018.

In the past two years, thanks to modern technology, I've had the experience of following an intrepid young man named John Stenderup on his successful climbs of Everest (8,848 m, or 29,029 ft.), neighboring Lhotse (the world's fourth-highest mountain, at 8,516 m, or 27,940 ft.) and K2 (the second-highest, at 8,611 m, or 28,251 ft.) John's mother, whom I have known for years, told me the dates he would be attempting to conquer the world's tallest peaks, and I began reading his posts. Vicariously transported to Nepal and Pakistan, I was riveted, moved and inspired by his story. For information about John, as well as his journal entries and photos, visit his website: <http://johnstenderup.com/>.

John's seven-week K2 odyssey began June 18, 2018, when he flew to Pakistan to meet his climbing team, including Nepali Sherpas who had been on his 2017 Everest team. Twelve days later, from the base camp, John posted an account of his team's observance of a traditional Nepali ceremony, the *Puja*, which had also played a role in his climbs of Everest and Lhotse. John explains that the *Puja* “is meant to ask the mountain for safe passage and to bless the climb.” He goes on to say that “it is held in very high regard by the Sherpa people, and necessary before they step foot on the mountain.”



Siddhi, Geoff, and John, teammates on climbs of Everest and Lhotse (2017) and K2 (2018),.



The Puja altar, where climbing equipment is placed to be blessed.

Early on the morning of the *Puja*, the Sherpas had begun constructing a stone altar, where the climbers would place their gear – axes, helmets, crampons, and other climbing essentials – to be blessed. The prayer ceremony began after breakfast, with the climbers forming a circle. A senior Sherpa led the team in a traditional chant. Colourful prayer flags were raised from a pole at the center of the altar, and everyone shared food and drink. And here’s where the folk dancing comes in.

“There, at the elevation of 5,400 m (17,700 ft.),” writes John. “The Sherpas formed a line, shoulder to shoulder, and wrapped their arms over one another as the dancing began. Soon, they pulled in the climbers and we tried to learn the steps on the fly. Not to be outdone, our Pakistani staff soon formed a circle and began their own traditional singing and dancing. I found myself looking around at our diverse team and swelled with pride, knowing that this type of camaraderie was what would help us find safety and success on this mountain. It was a truly special event, one that I will never forget.”

For local news coverage of John’s K2 climb, and a video interview with John, go to:

<https://www.kget.com/news/local-news/local-man-becomes-21st-american-to-set-foot-atop-k2/1356326724>.

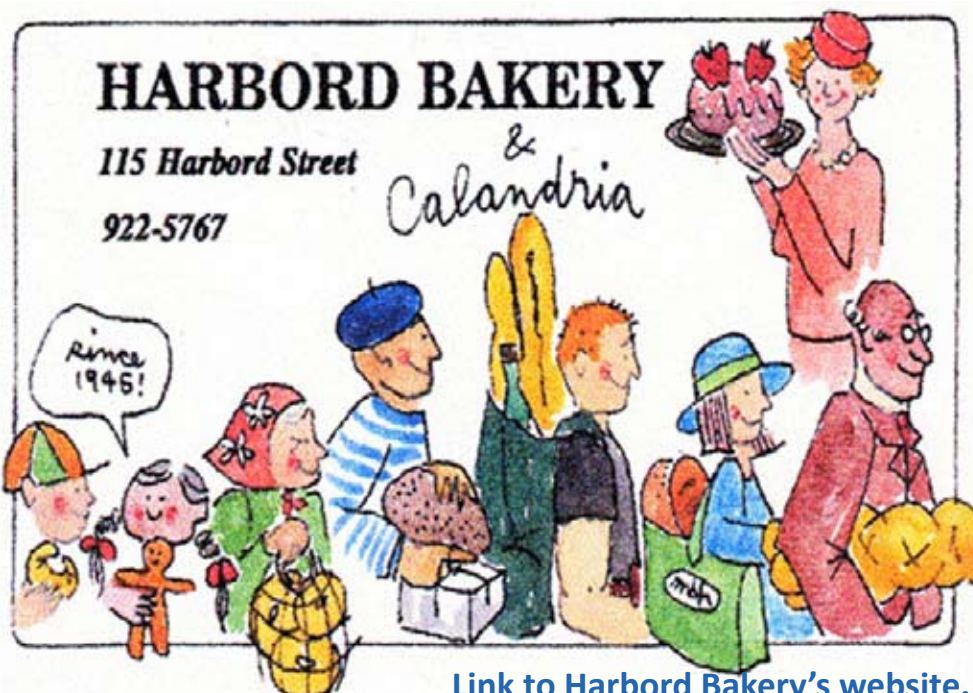
For a two-minute National Geographic video explaining a 2009 Puja (minus the dancing) at the Everest base camp, see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XHiCWF1U27g>.



John (just right of center, wearing red cap) and his fellow climbers at their K2 Puja, 3 July 2018

To watch a short video of Sherpas singing and dancing at a Puja on Everest in 2018, go to: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KVgzqZle6Uk>.

[Author's note] Mount Everest has been climbed approximately 4,500 times; K2, only 350 times. John Stenderup, one of only 15 Americans to have scaled both peaks, was the 21st American to climb K2. John was born 14 February 1986, so this month's column is in honour of his 33rd birthday.



[Link to Harbord Bakery's website.](#)

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International Folk Dancers of Ottawa: IFDO's 50th Anniversary, 20 October 2018

by Stefania Szlek Miller

Congratulations to Lucette Lepage and the IFDO organizing committee for a superb anniversary event. Over 100 participants registered with many more attending the evening party. The Ontario Folk Dance Association was well represented and this included ten members from the Hamilton International Folk Dance Club, as well as participants from Quebec, New Brunswick, Alberta and the United States.



Photo: Andree Junéau.

Seymour Shlien (in foreground) ran the sound system for the event. To his left, three of the Hamilton contingent: Stefania Miller, Mirdza Jaunzemis and Devi Caussy.

Holding all the events at the Ottawa Conference and Event Centre was ideal, though we were overwhelmed by the number of dancers who more than filled the available dance floor area.



Photo: Terri Taggart.

Alene and Charles Boyar and Sarada George (centre) came from Rochester.



Photo: Peggy Warren.

Kevin Budd and Terri Taggart, attendees from Toronto.

Yves Moreau with France Bourque and Cristian Florescu and Sonia Dion were the ideal bilingual animators throughout the morning and afternoon workshops. Yves introduced some relatively simple Bulgarian dances, and then popped a more complicated Dâlgopolska Râčenica from Dobrudža



to keep us on our toes. Christian and Sonia introduced a good mix of Romanian dances, from the haunting harvest dance, De Secerat, from Maramureş to a lovely couple dance, P-a Lungu ,from Lăpuş. The teachers sold DVDs, CDs and dance notes – much appreciated for those of us who plan to bring the new dances to our home clubs.

The evening banquet held in the adjacent area of the dance floor was excellent with a variety of good food, wine, and scrumptious desserts, and provided a chance to catch up with friends that one only meets at special events. After the dinner, Lucette Lepage and Marcel Pronovost welcomed participants, acknowledged some of the people responsible for the thriving Ottawa club, and gave copies of the workshop DVDs to the club's in-house group of dance instructors. Following the presentation of flowers to Lucette in appreciation for all her work organizing the event, the Pinewoods Band from Boston started to play and it was party time.

Under the artistic direction of Tom Pixton, the band's repertoire of music is impressive with a wide variety of folk dance favourites. While the band took a break between sets, Yves, France, Cristian and Sonia led dances that had been taught during the day as well as favourites from their vast collection of dances. It was a spirited and memorable party.



Pinewoods Band with Yves, France, and Sonia. Tom Pixton in foreground.

one centred at Carleton University under the leadership of Roger Wells; Gilles Lasnier's group in Vanier; and Marcel Pronovost's group at the University of Ottawa. Marcel was also the founder of the Ensemble Folklorique de l'Outaouais, a group that performed at national folk dance competitions. IFDO first met at the Jewish Community Centre and some of the international folk dancers also performed with the Amihai Israeli performing group. Subsequently, IFDO met at several other places until finding its current home at the Jack Purcell Community Centre. IFDO was one of the first tenants of the Centre and the group continues to meet there every Thursday evening throughout the year. Having a location in the heart of Ottawa, easily accessible by public transport, is an important factor in the group's success.

From its founding as a non-profit community group, IFDO's mission has remained the same: to promote international folk dancing and multiculturalism in the Ottawa-Hull area. According to Marcel, the emphasis is on enjoying international folk dances within a social and friendly environment, rather than on performance. IFDO periodically hosts workshops and special events with guest teachers but is also fortunate in having its own large roster of talented teachers. Some of the teachers focus on teaching challenging dances to more experienced dancers, while others, in particular Judith English, teach beginner dances to integrate newcomers into the group. Other members help with programming, setting up and playing the music. It is the co-ordinated effort of so many participants that gives the group its vitality and staying

Why has this club thrived for so many years? I asked that question before the anniversary event, and what follows is largely based on Marcel's e-mail response to me.

IFDO was formed 50 years ago by the merger of three groups:



Marcel Pronovost, one of the original founders of IFDO.

power. According to Lucette, membership numbers in recent years are in the range of 60 to 70.

Watching IFDO videos on YouTube, one is impressed with the dynamism of the group as well as the community spirit. Seymour Shlien does a terrific job of videoing the group dancing. I particularly recommend watching Edwidge Munn lead Opa Cupa. The vocalist in the video is Brenna MacCrimmon from Toronto. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ztTF2NVkGQA>.

The club has had its challenges over the years. Michèle Roy, in the June 2018 issue of the *Folk Dancer Online*, wrote: “A few years ago, attendance at IFDO was so low it was scary, the future of the club did not look too promising, but lately you can count 35-40 dancers on the floor most evenings. New teachers are stepping in and there are a number of talented young people who have recently joined the group – what a breath of fresh air. They have the love of dance and they will be the new leaders.”

Michèle, who has been dancing for many decades, has had her own recent challenges to overcome. Now dependent on a wheelchair for mobility, she continues to teach with the help of a “body double” and is also the club’s decorator for all events. What a wonderful testament to folk dancing and the folk-dance community.



Photo: Terri Taggart.

Michèle Roy.

Congratulations to IFDO for reaching a major milestone. We wish the Ottawa folk dancers many more happy years of dancing.

IFDO’s website <https://ifdo.ca/> has more details about the club and its activities.



Photo: Sophie Roy.

OFDA Hungarian Café, November 24, 2018

by Dorothy Archer.

Photos: Allen Katz.



A happy crowd gathered on a Saturday night in November for the usual tasty potluck supper and request dancing. This evening, Hungarian dancing from the Moldavian region was an added attraction.

Peter Horvath leads the Csángó Unchained musical group which provided the music for the dancing as well as a member to teach us dances for their music. Of interest, was a showing of their instruments.

The dances were community dances, some quite easy and some with a difficult twist. We learnt: Kezes (Dance with Hands), Tanuló (Learner's dance), Hojna (Dance from Brassov), Erdélyes (Dance from Transylvania) Serény (a Hungarian dance) and Bolgáros (a Bulgarian dance).

The energy created from learning and dancing the Hungarian numbers carried over for the rest of the evening and a merry time was had until the closing dance.



See other photos of this event on the OFDA website:
<http://ofda.ca/wp/photos/>.



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<http://socalfolkdance.org/statewide.htm>

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More than just a Teacher: A Celebration Honouring Dale Hyde

by Erika Loughran and Carly Cohen

Introduction by Ruth Ostrower

On Saturday, November 17, 2018 the Canadian Dance Tapestry Alumni got together with friends, family, folk dancers, fellow students and teachers from Claude Watson School of the Arts (CWSA) to share their memories of Dale Hyde, a highly respected and clearly much-loved former teacher and dance director. There were over 150 people of all ages present. It was wonderful to reconnect with these young people who now are grown up and have families of their own.

There were tributes from two of his former students/Canadian Dance Tapestry members, which you will find below. As well, Heather Mitchell, a Canadian Dance Tapestry 'mom' gave a lovely speech describing how Dale first began his research about Canadian dancing. Music (an important part of the Tapestry's performances) was represented by two of the group's singers presenting one of the songs from the Underground Railroad Suite. We also all sang Song of the Myra together. Of special note, of course, was the dancing. A group of national* dancers, currently studying at Claude Watson under the direction of Helen Cherry presented two dances. Then the Canadian Dance Tapestry dancers showcased two of their original pieces - which they managed to recreate after only one rehearsal. Truly a tribute to Dale's skill as a teacher that



Photos: Cameron Hood.

after almost 20 years have passed, they can still recall these amazing steps. In addition, the artistic director of the school announced that they are naming their dance studio for Dale, so his memory will always be with them. Here then are Erika's and Carly's words about the afternoon and their memories of Dale and the time they spent together

Carly Cohen



Carly Cohen, MC.

"Good afternoon everyone. Thank you so much for joining us today and celebrating the life of a great man – Mr. Dale Hyde. My name is Carly Cohen and I will be your MC for today.

Dale was truly special to me. Moreover, a mentor who showed me the world through the eyes of culture and compassion. He gave me memories that became the fabric of who I am and as a teacher I can now see how many gifts he gave us daily in the classroom.

As I browsed through the comments of past students and teachers, one can see the clear impact he had on so many lives. Here are their words:

- I admired his intricate and creative choreographies
 - My artistic life would have been less enriched and less diverse without his classes
 - His passion for dance was contagious
 - His talents and endless patience astounded me. His passion for dance, its culture and history was so evident in the students he taught. He has left a legacy that will be kept alive by all those he has instilled with his knowledge and respect for dance.
- I cannot begin to quantify the impact Mr. Hyde's classes had on my lifelong love of music, dance and history. For me his classes were truly a perfect representation of a society that had respectful, open, cultured citizens who celebrated differences. What a way to see the world and teach about its beauty. Each week we learned a dance from a different culture and more importantly we were taught to honour that difference and celebrate it. What a powerful message! He didn't just teach us to dance, he taught us tolerance and how to be good humans.
- Thank you everyone. Mr. Hyde would have loved this. All of us

reconnecting and building dances together again. He also probably never realized the level of impact he had on all of our lives. We can now pass onto our children his teachings of tolerance and honouring diversity, and they can live his legacy through their actions. I'm sure he's looking down and with his warm smile under that mustache, with his sweatshirt and dance shoes saying "don't cry – let's just dance". Mr. Hyde, we will do just that. Please join us in a circle to learn a dance, Ma Na'vu that is about optimism and equality."

Erika Loughran



Erika Loughran.

"Some people leave a handprint on our heart, while others leave footprints in the sand. Dale Hyde was a teacher who had the capacity to build both emotion and memory in his students, long after they have left his dance studio and grown out of their character shoes.

I was a member of the first grade 5 class at Claude Watson and Mr. Hyde was my grade 6 teacher in 1982. After graduating from Claude Watson, he asked me if I would be his assistant director for the Canadian Dance Tapestry, and I immediately accepted. Being part of a folk dance group was a unique and incomparable experience that none of us would ever forget.

Dale's choreography was thoroughly researched and authentically reconstructed. He always took the time

to explain the origins of the names, the steps and the formations, in order for us to bring validity to our performances. His enthusiasm for the cultural and historical context of each piece was contagious, and his dedication to the costume details and stylistics was astonishing.

He and Alice Brass worked tirelessly to bring traditional Canadian dance and music to the stage, and to engage our audiences in live performance. Their efforts brought our country's rich heritage to life so we could share it with the rest of the world. We travelled throughout Ontario at first, and then with the assistance of the Ontario Folk Dance Association (OFDA), we were brought into the international spotlight by invitation to participate in folk festivals in the States, France, Italy, and Holland. We even got to dance at Walt Disney World on the Epcot stage in Florida. We met folk groups from all around the world, sharing the stage, learning dances and

making music with people we would never have otherwise encountered.

The Hydes, the Brasses and various parents and staff members chaperoned our young group, caring for us as though we were their own children, fixing costumes, making sure we ate properly and got enough sleep, getting us through customs, and helping us deal with jet lag, homesickness and stage fright. The opportunity to travel and participate in these multicultural events gave us a broader perspective like no other, and it was all made possible by one man's vision of bringing people together to learn dances that transcended all language barriers and political boundaries.

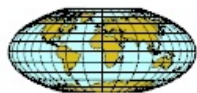
I'd like to acknowledge some very special people from our Tapestry family who are here today: Helga Hyde, our dance mom, her sister, Heidi, and Ruth Ostrower, our dance examiner, as well as members of OFDA who are here to help us celebrate Dale Hyde's contribution to our dance education. It is impossible to quantify the impact he had on our lives, but the legacy he leaves inside each and every one of us, the dances he taught and the music we recognize, will remain with us forever.

I'd like to close with a quote recently shared with me: 'Legacy is not something we leave with people. Legacy is something we leave in people.' Gathering our dance company now, after a 20 plus years hiatus, has been one of the most cathartic processes I have ever experienced. Being connected to people with whom you have such a deep-seated connection built on a lifetime's worth of memories, hours of rehearsal and international travel, is one I hope each of you has the opportunity to share. Muscle memory only carries you so far - the dynamic we have, even after all these years, is incomparable and timeless. I want to thank all of you for being here, for celebrating with us, and for honouring Mr Hyde's legacy. May it always live inside our hearts and minds so it may be passed on."

In recounting the special evening, Erika later wrote, "We learned a dance called Ma Na'vu, and it was the perfect closure to our celebration of Mr Hyde's teaching. It is an Israeli dance which means 'How Beautiful' and was created to celebrate the beauty of the earth. Helen Cherry brought a group of current students to perform La Vinca and Noriu Miego which we also learned when we were students at CWSA. She is the current national dance teacher and she uses all of Mr Hyde's repertoire based on the notations he left her when he retired. Mr Hyde loved to bring people together and teach them new dances, so it was fitting for us to end the day dancing all together, family and friends, children and seniors, sharing the music and space."

* National dance, or international folk dance, is a program given at CWSA.

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A Trip Through Macedonia – Part II

by Mirdza Jaunzemis

The next morning we went to Dolneni, the birthplace of Pece Atanasovski, a famous folk dancer, choreographer and gajda player. He died in 1996 at the age of 70, and his house now contains his memorabilia, with a statue of him standing in his front yard. In 1950 he joined Tanec, first as a dancer, later as a gajda player, and toured with the group. He also visited North America to instruct in Macedonian folk dances.

We drove through the Pelagonja valley, where Philip Morris and other tobacco-producing companies have large tobacco fields, and stopped to visit the Tobacco Institute, the biggest such museum in the world. This establishment was opened in 1921, and now focuses on seed development. 1973 was the 100th anniversary of tobacco production in Macedonia but the plants have been here for about 400 years. Our guide had a lot of interesting facts about the history of tobacco and smoking. He spoke of the evolution of the pipe. Some rich people had pipes that were several metres long, with “pipe-holders” who would carry them for their masters. In the 19th century the pipe, as we know it, was devised and Meerschaum pipes became popular. They are made of sepiolite, a soft white clay which is easy to carve, and allows the smoker to enjoy a cool, dry flavourful smoke. Other



Statue of Pece Atanasovski.



Display of pipes at the Tobacco Institute museum.

pipes were made of amber, or ersatz ivory. There were also pipes for women. The best snuff boxes were made of turtle shell. The first lighter was made in 1929. Cigarette-rolling machines were devised in 1880, which revolutionized the fabrication of cigarettes, allowing for mass production.

We stopped at St. Michael Archangel Monastery complex, dating from the twelfth century, which is built into the side of a mountain and its church

Photos, except where otherwise noted: Mirdza Jaunzemis.

is right next door. Lunch was at a lovely open-air restaurant where we were served *širden*, a Macedonian specialty made of the lamb's stomach lining stuffed with three types of spiced chopped meats and onions. In the evening Dime Bileski came to our hotel with some musicians to teach us a few more dances.

On the way to Strumica the next day, we visited Popova Kula (Priest's Tower) winery. One million years ago there was a lake in this area, and when it dried up, the soil was good for vines. As a result, since the thirteenth century there have been vineyards here. This winery was established in 2004, and about 700 surrounding families who have small vineyards bring their grapes here for processing. It produces Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc wines, and also some Macedonian varieties: Vranec and Stanushina; this latter grape is found only in this area.



St. Michael Archangel Monastery.

Lunch was at Dojran Lake in the southeastern part of Macedonia – on the western shore of the lake is Greece. It is about ten metres deep and 148 metres above sea level. Many tourists come here for swimming and fishing and to help themselves with some health issues: bronchial, cardiovascular, rheumatic and dermatological. Much of the fishing is done with trained cormorants. The bird has a tether tied around its throat so that it cannot swallow the big fish it catches, only the small ones; the fisherman scoops the fish out of its throat. Between November

and February these birds bring in about one ton of fish.

Next was Vodoča Monastery, home to ten nuns. Our guide had been living here for twenty years, a soft-spoken, enthusiastic person, who gave us a lot of information. The oldest church on this spot was built by Sts. Kyril and Metodij in the fourth and fifth centuries, and from here Christianity was spread throughout this region. These buildings have withstood two earthquakes and a fire; thus there



Vodoča Monastery.

has been lots of reconstruction. There used to be frescoes on the walls but now they are replicas and the originals are in Skopje. In the twelfth century the Romans built baths here, which are still present today – a very unusual spot for baths of this type. During the 1970s there was a flood which caused a landslide and 1000 graves were discovered on the hillside behind the complex. During the Ottoman era it was a mosque, and later the Christians reclaimed it.



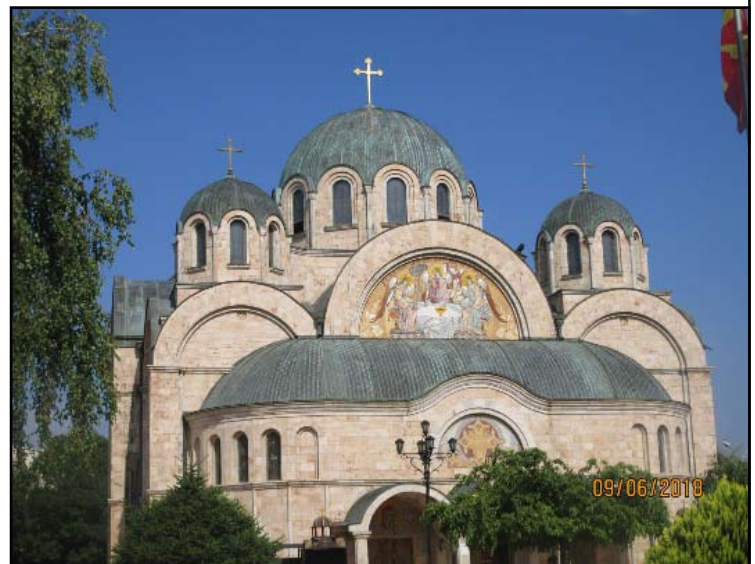
Example of a tempera painting.

Our guide showed us the tempera paintings that the nuns create. The paints are all natural materials, and contain crystals and pigments; many layers of paint are required to achieve the desired effect. After this process the paint is allowed to dry for one year, then sealed with varnish, and sold to surrounding churches or towns.

After stopping to enjoy the beautiful Kolečino Falls, we arrived in Strumica, Carl's mother's birthplace, and the agricultural centre of the country. That night, Vlasto taught us some more of his dances – a good way to unwind after our day of touring.

We stopped for coffee the next day at Aurora, a five-star resort and spa in a spot sometimes called Little Switzerland. It guarantees absolute privacy and charges \$500 CAD for two nights. Berovo, a town situated about 800 metres above sea level with about 6,700 people, is said to have the best dairy products in the country because of the clean air in the mountains. Our next stop was Radoviš, the birthplace of Carl's father. Here we visited Holy Trinity Church (St. Troika), a very impressive and newly constructed building by a Macedonian businessman, with frescoes in the interior painted by a Ukrainian professor. We then returned to Skopje for the last few days of our tour. That evening we were again taught some interesting dances by Ljupčo Manevski with whom we danced the day we arrived.

Skopje has a population of about 700,000 people: 70 percent Christian Orthodox, 29 percent Muslim. The Varda River, spanned



Church in Berovo.

by the famous Stone Bridge, separates the Muslim population from the Christian. In the past there was a Jewish area which acted as a buffer between the other two religious groups. In 1550 a document was signed by the leaders of the city that all cultural groups must work together.



Skopje's old railway station, its clock, stopped at 5:17 p.m. during the earthquake of 1963.

On the 26th of July 1963 at 5:17 a.m. there was a 6.1 earthquake in this region. Its epicentre was Makedonija Square in the heart of the city. Many old buildings were destroyed, except for those that had been built during the Ottoman era. Thus, many of the historic edifices have been rebuilt with an effort to restore them in the “old style”. One thousand people were killed, and 200,000 were left homeless. We visited the old railway station; its clock still reads 5:17. Part of the station collapsed and the remainder was left as a museum and memorial to the quake. During its aftermath, all communication with the outside world was lost, but slowly other countries came to help. Afterwards Skopje became known as the City of Solidarity: streets and buildings were named after the countries that came and assisted in its recovery.

The fortress, Kale, in Skopje dates from the fourth century BCE and functioned as a military fort during the reign of Tsar Samuil. In the eleventh century, Vikings entered the picture – archeological digs have unearthed their crossbows. The Turks destroyed the town and its ramparts in 1391 but they were rebuilt. Between 1921 and 1930 the Austrians utilized this fort and built many military structures. However, the 1963 quake destroyed a large part of Kale; only a 121 metre rampart is left and three towers. Archeologists have uncovered remains of churches, craftsman workshops, and household items and coins, the oldest being a bronze coin from the reign of Alexander the Great. The Church of the Holy Saviour is the oldest church in Skopje. Its main building is dug deep into the ground because during the Turkish occupation Christians were not allowed to worship openly.

We visited the Museum of Macedonian Struggle, which outlines the history of the Macedonian people to gain autonomy, beginning in 1878 during the Ottoman period. Finally the Declaration of Independence was signed on September 8, 1991, and Macedonia became a sovereign parliamentary democracy. In this museum there were 109 very lifelike wax figures of the various people who took part in the resistance movement, and many sections were devoted to its various aspects.

However, the interior was dark and foreboding, with huge gruesome paintings on the walls, and some displays that were upsetting.

That evening we had a dance workshop with Snezana Balkanska from Tanec followed by a demonstration of various Macedonian folk instruments by Stojanče Kostovski, also from Tanec. He is a musician

with the group and an instrument maker and designer. Some of the instruments he makes are: the caval, a shepherd's instrument somewhat similar to a long wooden flute but with the mouthpiece at one end; the gajda, the folkloric bagpipe made of lamb or goatskin; the zurla, a woodwind oboe-like instrument; the šupelka, a shorter shepherd's flute, similar to a recorder; the duduk, or cavalduduk, a double-reed woodwind instrument; the tapan, a folkloric drum, formerly made from lambskin and wood from the walnut tree. Students come from all over the world to Stojanče to learn how to play these instruments properly. In 2003 he made a documentary about them.

Mother Teresa was born in Macedonia, and we went to visit her memorial. Her mother was Macedonian and her father was Albanian, thus both cultures claim her as their own. She was born Gonxha Agnes Bojaxhiu in 1910, and after some time spent in Ireland, she went to Kolkata, India at the age of 21. In 1944 she started to live on the streets and in 1948 she founded her own mission to help the poorest of the

poor. She received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979 and after her death in 1997 Pope Francis proclaimed her a saint in 2016. The memorial house in Skopje was built after her own house was destroyed in the 1963 earthquake.

Another tourist attraction that we visited was the Millennium Cross on the top of Vodno Mountain. It was built in 2001 to celebrate 1,000 years of Christianity in Macedonia. That night we danced again with Ljupčo Manevski.

The next day we visited the headquarters of Tanec – its official name is The National Ensemble for Dances and Songs of Macedonia – which was formed in 1949. Tanec means two closed circles, one male, the other female. At first there were only 40 dancers/singers and their dances were quite simple, with men and women dancing separately but now there are 90 performers with a repertoire of 200 choreographed dances, with both genders dancing together and sometimes singing while dancing. They have 4,200 hand-made costumes from all the different regions of the country in a large cold storeroom. Two colours are dominant, red and



Stojanče Kostovski.

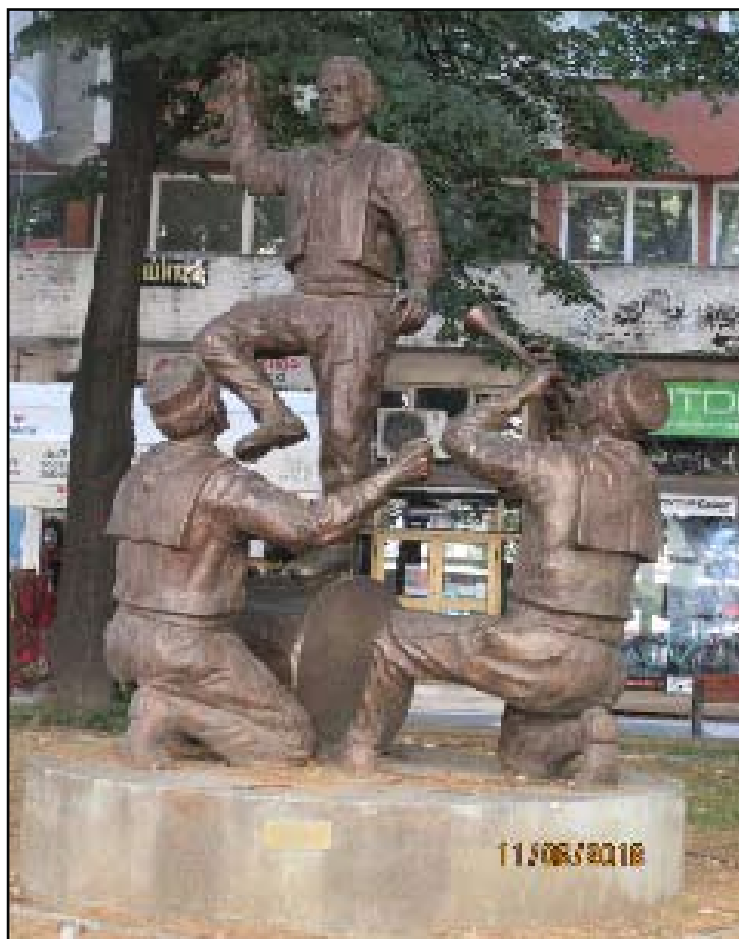


black, to symbolize the loss of lives during the many wars. A bride is often featured in the dances where she shows off her wealth – the heaviest bride's costume is sixteen kilos. The weight symbolizes that she will have a hard life. The western part of Macedonia has heavier costumes and the dances are slower, whereas one finds the opposite in the costumes and dances of the east. On becoming a member of Tanec, the first thing one must master is to change one's costume in three minutes; there are no dressers or helpers backstage.

Our last stop on this tour was at the Matka Canyon on the river Treska. It is also called the butterfly canyon, because of the 259 species of nocturnal and diurnal butterflies found here. Matka Lake is formed by a dam used to generate hydro. The area has 10 caves one of which is said to be the deepest underwater cave in the world. Another feature of the area is St. Andrew Church, the oldest in Macedonia. One can also visit five monasteries in the region.

During our free time we had many opportunities to visit parts of Skopje: Makedonija Square, the bazaar nearby, the walkway of sculptures made by many renowned Macedonian sculptors. Our last night in Skopje, we were treated once more to a lively and energetic performance by Studio Folklor. Again we joined the dancers at the end. It was hard to say our goodbyes to the various people we had travelled with.

I was happy to have made this trip with the many sights and sounds that we experienced. This country has a complicated history, and it has a strong religious base. Our meals were delicious, but with very large portions – this seems to be a cultural trait. Since it is very mountainous, distances on the map can be misleading but we covered a lot of ground in the twelve days of our trip. The countryside was lovely with wild poppies dotting the fields in many spots. Our weather was good with only two days of rain – while we were in the bus. Vlasto and his driver looked after us and made sure that we were able to enjoy ourselves with free time, and many good activities that would build lasting memories.



Skopje, statue of musicians and dancers.



The Grapevine



Doina Ensemble in Cambridge. Shirley Kossowski in front row and Adam in back..

Last fall, Hamilton folk dancer and teacher, Adam Kossowski, was invited to teach some new Romanian dances to the Doina Romanian Folk Dance Ensemble in Hamilton who had lost their Romanian teacher/choreographer some time ago. Adam taught the ensemble some dances known to recreational groups, such as Cimpoi, La Bordeuil cel din Vale and Floricica Oltenneasca. The ensemble included these dances in performances in December in Hamilton and Cambridge during celebrations to mark the 100th anniversary of Romania's independence.

Paula Tsatsanis fell and broke her shoulder in late November, hence she didn't vacation in Florida, didn't dance, and couldn't drive. As you read this, she should be in therapy and participating in more activities.

The North Toronto Players have begun rehearsals for *The Gondoliers, or, the King of Rock and Roll*. It will be onstage at the Papermill Theatre, Toronto, in the middle of March.



Marion Newlands.

Ruth Belick was featured in the *Canadian Jewish News* in November. Ruth has been knitting toques for soldiers in the Israel Defense Forces since 2011 and to date has sent 580 to Israel. To read the article, [click here](#).

OFDA received a card of thanks from Helga Hyde for the memorial donation on behalf of Dale.

Marion Newlands and her husband returned to Ontario (from Nova Scotia) in September to join their daughter and family who had moved earlier. At present they are living in Markdale but are hunting for a permanent home in the Owen Sound area.



Helen Barron.

Helen Barron died December 27th. She danced with the performance group, Folk Fest Dancers, in the 1980s. More recently she attended IFDC on Friday nights. Our condolences go to her partner, Ed Thompson. There will be a celebration of Helen's life on February 3rd, 2-5 p.m. in the Music Room of Hart House. Please RSVP acceptances to Ed at ethomps@rogers.com

Judith Cohen is always a whirl of activity. January 26 was her first official solo gig as a storyteller, for the StoryFusion Cabaret. She performed "The King got up one Monday Morning: Sung Stories and Tales from Sephardic and Pan-European Traditions." She also is doing, as solo sets, concerts

for the Aga Khan Museum's "Pop-Up Performance" series: these are half-an-hour each on January 30th at 5, 6 and 7 p.m, and February 3rd and 4th, both days at 12 noon, 1 and 3 p.m. Judith notes they don't require an extra ticket if one is already going to see the exhibits or another concert at the Museum. And advance notice for March 16th, at the Alliance Française, "Judith Cohen et ses invitées." Judith will be leading a concert following Women's Day, with guest musicians to be announced. You can now follow Judith's professional activities on her new website www.judithcohen.ca.

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Session One, Aug 18-24

Caspar Bik, Georgian
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Sonia Dion & Cristian
Florescu, Romanian
MerakKef Express, Musicians
Plus English, Contrabass & Squares
with **John McIntire**

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Iliana Bozhanova with Todor
Yankov, Bulgarian
Miroslav "Bata" Marcetic,
Serbian
Jacqueline Schwab, English
Ajde, Musicians
Plus Scottish Country Dance
with **Patricia Williams**