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Folk Dancer

The Magazine of World Dance and Culture

York University Balkan Ensemble plays at AGM event (see p. 5).

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Viewpoint

Ethnic Action Figures

By Kevin Budd

During a university course in drama I was taking, a group of students presented a version of "A Doll's House" by Henrik Ibsen. In this production, they actually used a doll's house as a small set, and the characters were all portrayed by actual dolls manipulated by the students. A young black woman in the class asked why they had used a black doll for the role of the maid. Surely that was a stereotypical choice, no? Or were they making a statement? The student operating the maid doll, also of African-Canadian heritage, replied that in fact, she had borrowed the doll from her sister, and her sister only had black dolls.

A few years back, some of the Toronto area folk dancers were involved in the making of a film for Warner Brothers. Under the direction of Karen Millyard, we prepared several English country dances for a production of "Felicity: an American Girl Adventure." (2005) This made-for-tv movie was set in a cleaned-up pre-revolutionary America, and our part featured a few dances performed in a decorated local mansion. Complete with live music, and my favourite addition, an "atmosphere" machine, spewing artificial smoke into the room, our bewigged and costumed selves danced into cinematic obscurity. (see October 2005 Issue of Folk Dancer)

The company American Girl started as the Pleasant Company, now owned by Mattel. They produce a variety of ethnic dolls, (female action figures) designed to reflect the immigrant experience in the United Sates. Thusly, we have a Native girl doll, a Latino one, an African-American representative, and eleven more. Each can be outfitted with a wide range of pricey clothing, furniture and useful items. The dolls are a form of modern politically correct Barbie, and they sell like hotcakes on a cold morning. Fourteen million of them have been sold, and the books are a major further merchandising opportunity. A couple of times a year, purchasers, (or purchasers' daughters) can receive a catalogue of all the goodies available. The movies are available on DVD, and if you are in New York, Chicago, or Los Angeles, you and your doll can dine at an American Girl official restaurant. Trying to maintain her slim figure, she is a light eater.

Well finally, after much research and focus group activity, there is finally a Jewish American Girl doll. Let the bells ring out and the people sing, (or dance). The birth of little Rebecca Rubin is the result of tremendous research and high level decision making. She lives in the lower east side of New York City in 1914 with her Russian-immigrant parents, siblings and grandparents in a row house, a step up

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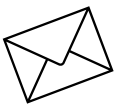

The OFDA has established an e-mail list in order to communicate timely information of interest to folk dancers. If you would like to add your name to the list, send an e-mail request to: ontariofolkdancers@gmail.com

Please do let us know about special events!

from the tenements of Orchard Street. They struggle and save to afford the boat fare to bring more family members over from the Old Country. Her family is poor, although ironically, purchasing the doll requires serious outlay of cash, at $95 US, (with one book about her adventures) Can someone get it for me wholesale? No offense is intended in the production of this plaything, and in fact, it seems to be offered in hopes that many descendants of immigrant Russian Jews will not deny their past, but using a modern turn of phrase, will honour it. Thus is one's heritage turned into a historical pastime, and an item for mass marketing. In another year, perhaps Rebecca will begin to make an appearance at garage sales near you.

Will we see a folk dance doll at some point?

One little note. You may have noticed, and I hope, enjoyed our full colour cover, last issue. Interestingly, the June issue of SIFD news, that is, Society for international Folk Dancing, from England, also has published with a colour cover, in the current issue. It is a comment, on how accustomed we are to better and better quality print media, I suppose, and also on the cost of colour copying, which has dropped greatly over the years. And as far as I can tell, the SIFD was not celebrating a special anniversary, as we were. And how old do you think colour "photo-copying" is? Ten, twenty years? Well, believe it or not, according to our usually reliable Wikipedia source, the Englishman, Joseph Grego, (1843-1908) "invented the 'Colour Photo-Copier', a system of reproducing 18th century colour prints in such exact facsimile that they have often been mistaken for originals."

Enjoy your summer, y'all!

Photos by Rachel Gottesman

Recognize these costumed dancers? - all suited up in ethnic costumes,at the AGM & Balkan Café, compliments of Karen Bennett

OFDA APPLICATION/RENEWAL FORM

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International Dance Day

Compiled by David Yee

International Dance Day (World Dance Day) has been celebrated since 1982 through promotion by the International Dance Council (CID), an umbrella organization within UNESCO for all kinds of dance. April 29 was chosen to commemorate the birthday of Jean-Georges Noverre (1727-1810), "The Grandfather of the Ballet."

Among the goals of Dance Day are to increase awareness of the importance of dance among the general public, as well as to persuade governments all over the world to provide a proper place for dance in all systems of education, from primary to higher.

While dance has been an integral part of human culture throughout its history, it is underprioritized by official establishments in the world. In particular, Prof. Alkis Raftis, President of the International Dance Council, in his 2003 Dance Day Message said: "In more than half of the 200 countries in the world, dance does not appear in legal texts (for better or for worse!). There are no funds allocated in the state budget to support this art form. There is no such thing as dance education, private or public."

The 2005 focus of Dance Day was on primary education.

The 2006 message of the President of CID addressed the reluctance of dancers to join collective organisations, expressing an opinion that this is a major reason for the lack of due recognition (legislation, financing, visibility) of dance in society, and suggested: "Dancers of the world, unite!"

The 2007 Dance Day was dedicated to children.

In 2008, Alkis Raftis circulated an e-mail which said, in part: "Governments, sponsors, and the media are our main concern this year."

This year, April 29 fell on a Wednesday. Toronto folkdancers were invited to dress in folk attire and attend Sandy Starkman's class and about forty dancers, including some novices, came out to mark the occasion .

Other groups will get their chance to host the celebrations. Next year, April 29 falls on a Thursday; in 2011, it's on a Friday.

A group in Pittsburgh, PA wants to create a "National Dance Week" around the same time. This year from April 24 to May 3.

And June 27 is Multiculturalism Day here.

Photo by Bev Sidney

Dancing at Ontario Folk Dance Camp 2009

The Rikudiyah 2009

By Leon Balaban

The 39th Rikudiyah (dance event in Hebrew) children's Israeli dance festival was held on Sunday March 29, 2009 at the Tanenbaum CHAT-Wallenberg Campus in Toronto. The Rikudiyah is an annual Israeli dance event for children that was created and is directed by Teme Kernerman all these years.

Although the Rikudiyah is a one day event, it is the culmination of long planning, practices and behind the scene efforts by students, teachers and many volunteers. The first meeting and workshop was held in December. At that time the dances were taught to the teachers and their assistants from all the participating schools. The session was recorded on video so the teachers could practice the dances with their students in the schools.

Usually the Rikudiyah is held at York University which allows one performance by the hundreds of students and seats for their families in one venue. However this year the York U gym was not available, so the Rikudiyah had to be split into two performances to accommodate the hundreds of children from 14 Hebrew schools and their families.

The theme for 2009 was "Olam Hayeladim" (a Childs world in Hebrew) and included eight dances based on children's songs and some other well known songs. In addition to the dance performance by the children, there were three additional dance groups:

Chai Dancers ("Life" in Hebrew) - The performing group from the adult services department of the Bathurst Jewish Community Centre - directed by Teme Kernerman.

Nirkoda Israeli Dancers ("We'll dance" in Hebrew) - The performing group of the Koffler Centre of the Arts - directed by Ronit Eizenman.

Dor L'Dor (Generation to generation in Hebrew) - Grade 2 students from Toronto Hebrew schools and their parents - directed by Ronit Weinrauch.

The dance choreography was adapted to elementary school children and included movements and steps that were fun to do, a lot of hand clapping, partner and line dances. Teme Kernerman was joined by veteran Israeli dance instructors Ronit Eizenman, Ronit Weinrauch and Sofie Azen who contributed with their choreography to some of the songs. Teme introduced also a dance with audience participation where the children and their families in the bleachers took turns clapping and singing with the music. Each school had its spot in the gym, with 2-3 teachers for every group of students. From talking to the teachers I found that a few of them participated as children in previous Rikudiyah festival years ago and are continuing the tradition with their students and their own children.

It was evident that people enjoyed this interaction which got them involved and ready for the last dance of the show, "Abanibi" - a very well known song which won Israel first place in the 1978 Eurovision song competition. The Rikudiyah is a good opportunity for children and their parents, to get to know and enjoy Israeli folk dance in an exciting and fun filled event.

Pictures from the Rikudiyah 2009:

http://www.flickr.com/photos/28083051@N05/sets/72157617596136015/

http://www.flickr.com/photos/28083051@N05/sets/72157617596136015/show/

Video from the Rikudiyah 2009:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vtaVGD4mYVg

Dor L'Dor - grade 2 students ▲

Chai Dancers ▶

Teme Kernerman, Director

Nirkoda Dancers

Photos by Leon Balaban

AGM 2009 Highlights

The following details are taken from the 2007-2008 Year-End Financial Report that was presented by Treasurer Janis Smith at the AGM on May 2, 2009.

ASSETS	**2008**	**2009**
Total Assets	**$30504.63**	**$31549.92**
Includes..... Current	$18596.50	$19553.31
In Trust for OTEA	$10196.02	$10334.50
REVENUE		
Total Revenue, excluding Events	**$ 5718.82**	**$ 6337.67**
Includes..... Membership	$ 4314.15	$ 5159.02
EXPENSES		
Total Expenses, excluding Events	**$ 4696.87**	**$ 4327.49**
Includes..... Magazine - Printing	$ 1919.94	$ 1888.61
- Postage	$ 1171.34	$ 1287.27

EVENTS

Dancing in the Park, Toronto -$ 395.01; Dancing in the Park, Burlington -$ 125; Picnic in the Park -$ 143.84; Latvian Café -$53.49; Romanian Workshop -$208.23; New Year's Party -$25.28; Bulgarian Café -$4.79; Spanish Café -$1.73; St. Martin in the Fields -$16.00

OTEA Scholarship Awarded	$ - 460.00	$ - 150.00
Excess of Revenue over Expenses	**$ 167.22**	**$ 956.81**

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- Mirdza Jaunzemis presented the following **Membership Report**: Current Membership (May 2, 2009) is 217, up from 216 this time last year. During the past year we gained 7 new memberships. However, 6 members did not renew. Geographical distribution: Canada: 170; US: 45; Overseas: 2
- There was discussion about the large amount of money that has accumulated, and questioning what is to be done with it. The Executive Committee will continue to use funds in an effort to promote the activity of folk dancing, and to benefit its membership. This will include special events/celebrations in this 40th Anniversary year.

Dancing at the AGM - from a photo by B.Sidney

AGM & Balkan Café

- The Executive Committee for the 2009-10 year was elected as follows:
  Steering Committee: Beverley Sidney, Helen Winkler, Karen Bennett
  Members-at-Large: Adam Kossowski , Adrienne Beecker, Arlene Lindfield, Gilda Akler Sefton, Janis Smith, Judith Cohen, Ken Cowan, Kevin Budd, Marylyn Peringer, Maya Trost, Mirdza Jaunzemis, Paula Tsatsanis, Riki Adivi, and Shirley Kossowski. Kevin Budd remains an Ex Officio member by virtue of his position as Editor of the Folk Dancer magazine.

- Naomi Fromm brought attention to a move on the city's part to discontinue multiple use park permits, replacing them with per use permits only. It is anticipated that this will result in significantly higher costs for our summer park dancing; there was discussion about how we might go about objecting to this change that will take effect in 2010.

Karen Bennett and Anita Millman sporting garments from Karen's great costume collection

The York University's Balkan Ensemble, directed by Irene Markoff, contributed much energy to the evening with their music and song. Folk dancers, with capable leadership by Judy Silver, Walter Zagorski and Helen Winkler were able to enjoy the experience of dancing to live music, and at least one dancer declared this to have been the best AGM ever!

Photos by B.Sidney

For many more photos of this and other events, see the ofda website: www.ofda.ca/photos

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SHANGHAI*NANJING*THREE GORGES DAM*LESSER GORGES*XIAN*BEIJING*HUANGSHAN*YICHANG

Ontario Folk Dance Camp's 50th Anniversary

By Judith Bourke

(with contributions from at least half of the camp's participants)

Wow! Nearly one hundred dancers showed up at the University of Waterloo over the Victoria Day Weekend to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Ontario Folk Dance Camp. This makes it the fifty-first camp and the thirty-first at Waterloo with its wonderful wooden dance floor. As a permanent reminder, we were all given a beautiful blue water bottle suitably inscribed for the occasion.

Dancers from many years back came to share memories and reminisce about camps gone by. Before cutting the anniversary cake at snack time, Florence Shulman and Kitty Cohen, who were at that first camp, spoke of the friendship and joy they had received in their lives from folk dancing. Kitty said that she had discovered it at the age of 46 and was still enjoying dancing now at 96.

Long-time campers Kitty Cohen (left) and Florence Shulman

Earlier in the evening, there were short presentations of memories from earlier camps. Sandy remembered the year of Canada's 125th Birthday in 1992. At snack time, a cake covered in blazing sparklers was carried into the room and unknowingly placed on a table under the smoke alarm. Immediately, the smoke alarm kicked in, triggering the fire alarm. Sandy hastened to the office to explain, but it was too late to stop the alarm down at the fire station. Sirens wailing, the trucks arrived, the fire fighters came in to be greeted by a crowd of embarrassed folk dancers singing "Happy Birthday" to Canada. They were somewhat appeased by offerings of birthday cake before they left.

The tale of the "Sisters'" checked gingham dresses was presented by Dale and Olga. Back in 1970 at Dale's first camp, he had mistakenly thought that Teme and Olga were sisters and was embarrassed when they laughed, telling him they were not related. To confuse him, they wore the same outfit on alternate days and the next year appeared together in the little gingham dresses which then reprised at camp for the next fifteen years, often hilariously worn by sundry men. Dale's innocent comment began a wonderful tradition. Those dresses should be framed and hung at each camp!!

Chris Linge remembered her first time at camp when she didn't even own a skirt. Her memories came to life as she reminisced about dashing instructor, André Stegman, and her obliging roommate, Joy Alpert, who lent her the needed skirt and petticoat. Several people brought photographs taken at camps long gone that were enjoyed by many, remembering "the way we were" in years gone by.

As always, the artwork of Jean McAdam and the late Gordon Melamud decorated the dance hall. For many years, their talent combined to produce posters which illustrated annual party themes: Greek, Scandinavian, Scottish, Canadian, anything and

British Bobby (a.k.a. Mary Zaleta) joins Saturday night partiers

Monique Legaré

everything, they painted them all. Jean has continued alone since Gordon's death, and this year a showcase of their art from the past was displayed.

Tony Parkes

In the early years, there were always three teachers at the camp, so this format was revived for this special 50th anniversary celebration. Roberto Bagnoli came from Reggio Emilia, Italy, to teach Italian dances. There were very easy circle dances but we learned several more demanding couple dances. Some of these had moves similar to those in Tony Parkes' dances. From him we learned ten different contras, squares and sets, from the smooth-flowing Hills of Habersham in waltz time to the more military Lancers, danced to the music of Gilbert and Sullivan. Monique Legaré was wonderful to behold as she switched from teaching the graceful women's roles to the macho men's roles in the Hungarian dances. As well as several new ones, Monique refined our styling in several old favourites.

Roberto Bagnolio (standing)

Before dancing began on Saturday evening, we were entertained at Culture Corner with Roberto, who showed videos of folk costumes and music of various Italian regions, and a slide presentation of a colourful festival in his own region of Emilia. For something completely different

Chris designating groups to sing in rounds

on Sunday, many people enjoyed singing along with Chris Linge and Karen Bennett.

Late-night dancing brought in a new crowd this year. On Sunday night, eleven first-year engineering students showed up around 1:30 am. Shy at first, then a bit curious, encouraged by Judy Silver, two of them tried a couple of easy dances. More and more of them joined in, and imagine, about half of the group were boys! Walter Zagorski changed the request program on the spot and played some more manageable dancers for beginners. The students stayed until after 3 am when Walter played the last dance. They must have enjoyed their time with us 'oldies' as we enjoyed their enthusiasm and fun. Judy and Walter did a marvellous job with picking the right dances and teaching them the steps as we danced. Before we said our good-byes they left their e-mail addresses to find out about other folk dancing events. One of the guys even said, "We are your future folk dancers!" Well, who knows!

The camp was a huge success, and Sandy and her friendly committee are to be congratulated on a job well done.

For many more photos of this and other events, see the ofda website: www.ofda.ca/photos

First-time folk dancers!

Photos by Bev Sidney

The last dance at 3 a.m. Monday morning

Photos From Recent Dance Events....

The following photos were taken by Kevin Budd at the Annual Concert in May of Miroslav Marcetic's Academy of Serbian Folk Dancing

A great multitude of brightly-clad children dance on the Ryerson University stage, in this impressive display of both traditional Serb culture and of the interest shown by so many children in dancing. Note the projected background of musical notes, and what may represent a fence. As usual, there are far more girls than boys here, an imbalance not so pronounced in the older groups.

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Ingredients:

1 lb dried white beans (navy or cannellini)
2 onions, chopped
3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
3 bay leaves
2 tb. chopped parsley
2 tb. tomato paste
1 large carrot, sliced
5 whole peppercorns
1 lb. Kielbasa or similar sausage, thickly sliced
1/2 tb. salt

2 tb. olive oil
1 ts. paprika
2 tb. flour

Saucy Talk

Directions

Rinse beans in cold water and place in a large saucepan. Cover with 2 inches of cold water; bring the water to a boil and then turn down to simmer for 30 minutes.

Drain beans and rinse in cold water. Cover again with water, bring to boil and then turn to simmer again. Then add in the onions, garlic, bay leaves, parsley, tomato paste, carrot, and peppercorns. After 45 minutes, add the sausage. Simmer until the beans are soft, about 1 hour more. Fifteen minutes before you are ready to serve, add the salt.

Now make this paste/liaison and add it to the soup.Heat the oil until it is almost smoking, stir in the paprika, followed by the flour. Mix to a thin paste. Add this to the soup, stirring well. Enjoy!

Upcoming OFDA Events

The OFDA will present a

Folk Dance Workshop

Balkan Rhythms & Dances
with Judy Silver

- *Learn to recognize musical time signatures*
- *Learn to identify common Balkan dance rhythms from Greece, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Serbia, and Croatia*
- *Learn the basic steps that can be danced to music with a particular rhythm*
- *A great follow up workshop for those who've taken the folk dance leadership courses*
- *Everyone welcome to participate*

Date**: Saturday, **September 12, 2009
***Time**: 2 p.m. - 5 p.m.*
***Location**: Ralph Thornton Centre, 3rd floor*
***Fee**: OFDA members $0 ; non-members $15*

Please register by September 5th
so we'll know how many to expect.

Registration & Info:
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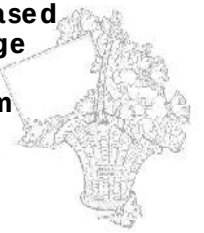


The Ontario Folk Dance Association's
POTLUCK PICNIC

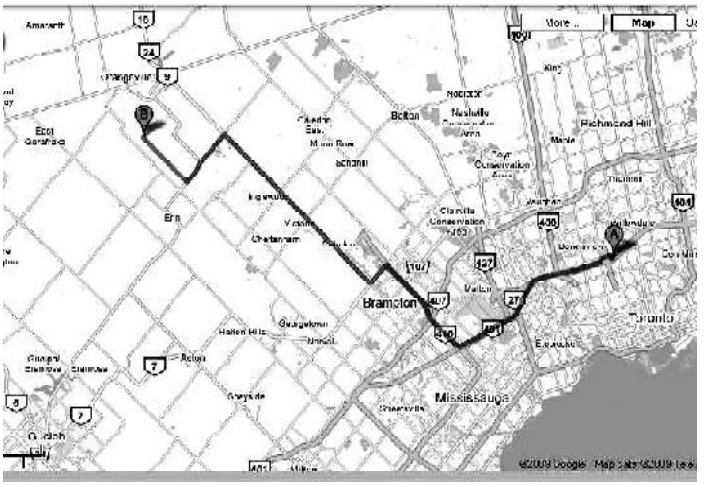
Saturday June 20, 2009
2 - 7:30 p.m.

This year's OFDA Picnic will be held at the Whole Village in Caledon, which is the site of an ecovillage and biodynamic farm on 190 acres. (Address: 20725 Shaws Creek Rd, Caledon, Ont.).

There'll be:

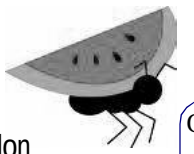
- a tour of the farm, weather-permitting
- folk dancing for all, rain or shine, with some teaching for beginners
- a Potluck Picnic Supper - indoor accommodation if necessary

*Come to enjoy a fine afternoon in the country. Bring a blanket/chair, sun screen, bug juice, friends, family, ... **and a dish to share** for the potluck picnic!*



Carpooling will be the order of the day, and Marylyn Peringer will help to connect those who have space in their vehicle with those who are looking for a ride.

Please contact Marylyn with your offers/requests



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