

Presidents Report 2016

I know I have said this before BUT... **WOW** what a year! **2015....** I knew it was going to be a banner year, but it was a stellar year on so many levels. We accomplished and did so many things.... FYI this is a report, but it also from the heart.... I am **SO PROUD** to be a member of, and represent this Club, thank you and Congratulations..... 25 years and going strong! It is fun to be part of this club. Fun to be part of an organization that is busy and doing things in the community.

Having been involved in the formation of the club, and seeing it boom in the 90's, I can honestly say that those years were good, but what we are doing now is even better. More shows, great lessons, dances, and involving more people. We are reaching out and touching the community like never before. 2016 marks our 25th anniversary as a non profit organization in Red Deer. Over that time we have touched so many peoples lives on so many levels over those years..... You truly are part of something special.

As President

I struggle to give you an overview of the last year, and accurately convey all the passion, & effort of so many people that contributed to this club behind the scenes. The great experiences people have with the club can sometimes be taking for granted. We have so many people that have bought into the vision of what this club stands for that it will never die. The City, other community groups, our executive, and our members care about the future of this club. For those of you that know me you know I have a passion for dance... but I also have a passion for what dance can do for others as it has done for me.

I really wish there was an organization we could emulate and copy, but to my knowledge we are unique. I don't believe there is another dance club like ours that exists in Alberta, Canada.... and perhaps in the whole of North America. I know that is bold statement to make, but as non profit dance club with our mandate, doing all we do.... I do not know of any other. Having said that. We are all part of something very special. Not only for ourselves, but for our community, the City, the Province, and beyond. Our responsibility to be that example for the community with the values, goals, and responsibilities we are as a club. To be that example to inspire others, and provide that environment to help develop people.

To encourage and help develop people to make the club grow. This starts with the executive and then committees in the community, and our members, everyone that attends lessons, and the public at large that we can inspire through dance. We encourage people to become involved, do thing they didn't think they could do.

In 2015 we also focussed on building relationships with other groups, such as the Town and Country Dance Club, Red Deer Swing Club, singles club, the Red Deer College dance club & others. Working together and helping each other helps the community as a whole. I am on the board for the Red Deer Arts Council and newly elected as President of the Red Deer Culture and Heritage Society (responsible for Canada Day, Cronquist House and Festival Hall). In 2015 working with and building relationships with these other groups has given our club a wider reach and focus to touch the community.

Community Involvement

Teaming up with the Arts Council, The Culture and Heritage Society, and the City of Red Deer, and other groups (dance and others) has helped us connect with the community like never before. Serving as President for the Red Deer Culture and Heritage Society, and Owen heads the committee to over see Festival Hall. This gives us a voice with Festival Hall with our use of it and involvement. I also represent the club for dance and sit on the board for the Red Deer Arts Council, and the Performing Arts Committee. Marraine Lee represented us with the Red Deer Bingo Association.

I always knew we could not do this alone, and if we were alone and island onto ourselves was not the right approach to help dance grow....

The Family Dances are a great example.... with the help from the partners, and our Sponsor Peavey Industries has become a sustainable project, and we look forward to continuing them. The partner groups have taken ownership of the dances and help with manpower and promotions to make them viable.

- By building these relationships we have been invited to participate in 2019 winter games, stockholder meetings for the new development in Glendale, renovations for Festival Hall, planning for Red Deer Arts Council strategic plan, planning for Canada Day, and assistance with the Red Deer Culture and Heritage Society that oversees Festival Hall and Cronquist House.

- Becoming a member with the Red Deer Culture and Heritage we partnered with them for Canada Day and Owen co-ordinated working with their food booth and made over \$1,300 for the club, he also organized putting in the dance floor in Festival Hall after we negotiated an agreement for storage and Hall rental for the future.

- We moved our storage unit from the north end of Red Deer (not handy, cost us \$100/mnth), to Festival Hall (VERY HANDY, and FREE). Owen heads the committee to oversee Festival Hall, and is Representative for the RDCHS for their Bingo

The sponsorship/partnership with Peavey Industries has been a very good fit and we are looking forward to growing that relationship. From sponsoring the family dances, to booking the dance team to perform at their grand opening for 2 stores, we have broken new ground with a corporate sponsor. We received \$1,000 sponsorship in 2015 and \$2,000 in 2016 and they are supplying door prizes for our dances.

Year in review

Executive - Strongest we have ever had, everyone chips in and helps out. I am so proud of everyone on the board, the way we have worked together. Monthly board meetings are always productive and action orientated. Strategic Planning meeting. - We developed a written plan for the club over the next 5 years that will be revisited regularly. We also developed a policies and procedures in plan for board positions as guidelines.

Financial

- We were under budget again for 2015, as we have been for the last 7 years. This is in part due to under spending and increased income from many areas.

- One of the MAJOR increases in revenues has been due to Bingo. In 2010 our Bingo revenue was under \$6,000. Partly because we only worked 1/2 slot, and did not receive a full share from the event, because we did not supply enough volunteers. In 2011 we changed our membership guidelines to offer a free \$150 membership if you worked 3 bingos for the year. We also tried to further incent members to work bingo by offering to reimburse expenses to attend festivals to a max of \$250 per event. The result was a drop in membership dues from appox \$3,400 per year to a low of appox \$1,900/yr, however over that same time our bingo revenue went from less then \$6,000/yr to over \$28,000/yr. Membership income have remained around \$2,000/yr because some people choose not to work bingos, but the next result has meant more funds to the club.

- The results for 2015 was our biggest year ever in Bingo income! To put in perspective years ago we would be lucky to make \$6,000 per year. In 2015 we made over \$28,000. This has given us the ability to so much more as a club. Our Cash reserves have continued to grow from appox \$30,000 in 2009 to over \$80,000 at present..... and we are doing more now then we ever have..... These are the new golden days for Country Pride.

- Marianne Lee as our Fund-raising director has done more financially to this organization then anyone else has in it's history. Not only did she help raise more funds, but also helped build a better relationships with the Red Deer Bingo Association then we have ever had. She is stepping down as our fundraising director and will be missed terribly. however she will be back.

- The Club has been VERY dependant on Casino funds (appox \$28,000 appox every 3 years), we started to diversify income streams.

- Received \$2,940 from city in Fee for Service grant, and over \$500 in grants from members (\$3,250 in 2016)

- Received the most funds from doing performances, over \$2,000

- Corporate sponsorship from Peavey Industries of 1,000

Summary: We received more funds from other sources then we made from Bingo's 5 years ago. This gives us the ability to do more as an organization.

- We set our **biggest budget ever for 2016 at almost \$60,000 for the club**. Doing more in the community then we ever have. This is a real accomplishment as non-profit especially with as few grants/government funding we get.

- Diversity of income sources - Bingos, Casino, lessons, memberships, grants, sponsorships, and shows.

- Not 100% dependent on Bingos, or Casinos

- Received grants, a sponsorship, more paid shows then ever before.

Admin

- Biggest accomplishment - A STRATEGIC PLAN developed by a 2 day workshop by our board members.
- Some thought they could not do it, or make a contribution... EVERYONE on the board has done so much and helped us accomplish things we never dreamt was possible.

The board has been the strongest ever, at our first ever strategic planning meeting we set our new Vision and Mission Statements.... to clearly define our purpose, and why we do what we do. Yes we teach dance, but we are an important piece of the fabric of the community. We provide an environment for people to learn and grow, experience things they would not do on their own, and connect with people in the community they would not have if we did not exist. We are a unique organization, not only in dance but for non-profits in Alberta. Having the planning meeting galvanize the executive to our purpose and what we do. We not only captured our values and what we stand for as an organization, but set long and short term goals based on what everyone believed was our future/purpose.

- Social Position terms of reference established, financial policies and procedures adopted.
- Identified we need a Marketing plan, a business plan, and a succession plan.

I personally want to thank ALL our board members... I am so proud to represent this club in the community. THANK YOU.

Lessons

- Working on a standard syllabus for 2-step and Jive and more
 - Attendance is strong some of the biggest classes ever.
- Workshops - hosted 2 workshops - one local, & one big name.

Dance Team

- In 2015 we put a competition routine on the floor for Calgary Festival, first time in over 12years.
- Participated in the International Flashmob Westcoast Swing and put Red Deer on the map by being one of the 170 cities worldwide. Planning for it again in 2016.
- Added another segment to the team routine, now over a 15min show that many promoter/venues want.
- Added to the practice time to help start more new people. Continuous development and training.
- Routine is the best and longest we have ever had to perform, more shows then any year since we form the team again in 2011 - more paid gigs. Grand opening for Peavey Mart stores - did a road trip.

Social

- We now have a dedicated position, and guidelines with a focus to build this area to offer more to more people.
- Defined rolls and responsibilities to help build relationships and keep a personal touch Family Dances, socials, birthdays, etc

Promotions & Press

- We have been in the paper, interviewed by the press, had TV coverage, and more PSA press announcements. More recognition in the community then ever before, helping us to inspire others
- We are running youtube ads, advertise in the community guide, sponsor events such as the Dance Off, sponsor Heritage Bowling Lanes, and release PSAs and free ads with the City, RDAC, and RDCHS.

Vision and Projects for 2016

25yr reunion and Dance Celebration

Maintain and expand our Family Dances by working with more community groups

2 Dance Workshops

Greater participation for members to Festivals/workshops with revamping of reimbursements

Growing our membership by having all inclusive levels

Development of social dance Syllabus for 2-step and Jive / Develop a system to train teachers/certify

More levels for lessons

Involvement with the 2019 Winter Games

Chairing the committee to oversee Festival, with the RDCHS. Discussions with the City on Hall renovations.

Membership and Development with World Dance Sport for Canada, WCLDSP, and the Olympics

Revisit our Strategic Plan, develop a business Plan, and develop a Marketing Plan

Membership Benefits

For 2016 we want to continue to build the social aspects of the club to be able to offer something to everyone no matter what level of involvement. We want people to feel part of the club if they want to come out to the dances, take lessons, perform, compete, or teach..... be able to offer something to everyone, and have fun.

Challenges I See ahead....

- Manpower... we need to always be inviting people to become more involved. The Team, the executive, the committees.... with more help we can accomplish more.

- We don't have all the answers and fresh eyes make a difference. People Get tired.... I did. I was not even part of the club for 4 years. (Really missed it...). It was a new relationship with fresh energy got me back involved (Thanks to KATHIE ...)

Vision for 2016

The idea of this club started over 25 years ago on a drive to a dance workshop in Calgary with some friends. If you had told us then, that this is what the club would look like today I would not have believed you. To say that I am proud is an understatement. It has been with the hard work, and dedication of so many people over that time that we are where we are today. There has been lots of ups and downs, but the end results has been so worth it.

Think Big and Make a Difference... we have the people, the means, and the vision to establish CW dance as an art form not just here in Red Deer, but for all of Alberta. What do we want to do for dance? In my opinion 2016 will be a pivotal year. We have so many positive results to build on over the last 5 years. After having our strategic planning meeting I have been so excited to help the club, it's members, the community, and dance in general in Alberta to grow. We now have the people, the means, and I hope the vision to establish dance in Red Deer and beyond for years to come.

You may not realize it, but you are involved with something very special that you will look back on with fond memories. It is only dance..... but.... The experiences you have had or will have with this club is what community is about. It is what is really important. You have heard me say it is just dance or it is only dance but... it is everything else that surrounds it that matters the most. It is the friend you made here you can call when you have a flat tire, the friendly face at the bar, or at the dance so you feel part of something, not feeling alone. Being part of something, part of a community, the support for the challenges you face is everything.

When I talk to our members, students, dance team, and friends we are all proud to be associated with the club and that means something. I think we all want to make a difference in this world and what a great way to do it by impacting others thru dance & friendship.

I see Country Pride becoming a leader in the community and Arts & Culture. We are part of the fabric that makes up this community. Events like our 25year reunion and Dance Celebration, family dances, and lessons will help bring dancing to a new level in the community. It is exciting to be part of it all..... Keep on Dancing.