



The Town Crier



VILLAGE GREEN ENGLISH COUNTRY DANCERS, April 2006

CALENDAR FOR 2006

April 19*	After-class social time, for the Queen's 80th birthday * New date
April 23	Challenge class
April 26	Last class of 2005/2006 season
May 3	Annual General Meeting, Harrow United Church
May 6*	Tropical social, St. Paul's Anglican Church, 7:30 p.m. * New date
May 7	Last challenge class
May 10	Spring classes begin, Harrow United.



Don't forget the Annual General Meeting. A chance to review the year just ending and prepare for the year to come. Wednesday, May 3rd, 2006, 7:45 p.m., Harrow United Church, Lower Hall. Refreshments and social time after the meeting

VILLAGE GREEN EXECUTIVE 2005/06

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PRESIDENT'S MUSINGS

These are my last Musings; this Pres becomes Past Pres at the upcoming AGM. It has been a busy two years for Village Green with the influx of many new dancers and the inauguration of the teacher training course. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time as your president.

And our season is not yet over. Regular Wednesday classes continue for the remainder of April.

The AGM will be held Wednesday, May 3 at 7:45, our usual dancing hour. One of the agenda items will be discussion of the start and finish time of Wednesday dancing next year. The meeting will be as efficient as possible so that we can enjoy a social time provided by the Executive. Do come with your ideas and be prepared to make merry.

Our closing social for the year will be held Saturday, May 6. With an Hawaiian theme we will honour Liz Bennett's love of fun and dancing.

Note - it's still too soon to hang up your dancing slippers for the summer!

Budding teachers are hoping you will keep the four Wednesday evenings of May 10 to 31 free, to be dancers for them to develop their teaching skills. You can look forward to some review of steps and figures and lots of dancing! May 10 and 17 will be held at Harrow at the usual hour of 7:45. Location of May 24 and 31 classes will be announced.

Once again Margaret Taylor has generously invited us to her cottage (on Saturday, August 12) for an afternoon of dancing on the grass followed by pot-luck supper.

I hope to continue to see you dancing.

Maureen

VILLAGE GREEN WISH LIST

We have a web site at www.villagegreenenglishcountrydancing.org. This is a great promotional tool and resource for members. Now you can even read the *Town Crier* online, starting with the issue of March 2006. Thanks to Jeannie and Jonathan Gilbert for their work on the site. Would anyone like to become the VG web master and keep the site updated?



In the interests of Hawaiian ambience, the Tropical Social is BYOL - Bring Your Own Lawn Chair! For more info on the social and raffle, see page 7.

Highlights of April Executive Meeting by Sandra Johnston

The executive met April 4, 2006 at the home of Sandra Johnston.

Highlights are as follows:

- ❖ A ten-minute break during class has been well received and will continue. It provides an opportunity to socialize, rest and/or have a drink of water.
- ❖ The bank balance as of March 31st was \$6476.50.
- ❖ We are closer to having a Village Green logo! It will be used on correspondence, brochures, and perhaps a t-shirt.
- ❖ Workshop pictures have been developed and organized into albums. The albums will be available at the Hawaiian social on May 6th. Information regarding Scott Higgs's accomplishments will be included.
- ❖ In honor of Queen Elizabeth's 80th birthday, our last after-class tea will be held on April 19th. Some of the dances that night will be chosen in the Queen's honor.
- ❖ At the Hawaiian social, we shall be selling raffle tickets on a gift basket of items with a tropical theme. The social will be held at St. Paul's Anglican Church. Don't forget to bring a lawn chair!
- ❖ The AGM will be held at Harrow Church on May 3rd at 7:45p.m. The executive hopes to entice dance members to attend the meeting by offering "goodies". Please come to provide us with a quorum and to meet your new executive.

Executive Nominations for 2006/07

The following members have agreed to let their names stand:

Voting rights:

President:	Marilyn Armstrong
Past President:	Maureen McIntosh
Vice-President:	Anne Morton
Treasurer:	John Groen
Secretary:	Sandra Johnston
Publicist:	Marion Tetrault
Archivist:	Terry Armstrong
Social Convenors:	Frances Harris, Zyna Boyes

Non-voting rights:

Editor:	Judy Valenzuela
Assistant Editor:	Joan Baragar
Member at Large:	Jane Hoag
Demonstrations Co-ordinator:	Virginia Stevens
Teachers' Representative:	[Not yet known]

Submitted by the nominating committee: Marilyn Armstrong, Anne Morton, Marnie Zdriluk. Thanks to those who served in 2005/06.

STEP LIGHTLY WORKSHOP

March 24-26, 2006

It was a typical spring weekend in Manitoba and the reality outdoors was wet socks and muddy boots. But inside the Churchill Park gym shoes were objects of beauty, displayed on banners and on tables. There was live music all weekend long, lots of food and drink (*for a couple of recipes, see p. 8*), a céilidh Saturday night, and above all dancing and lightness of heart, if not always foot.

The name ‘workshop’ may suggest a weekend of toil and stress. Far from it – to me at least ‘workshop’ brings to mind ‘workshopping a play’ – it conveys a sense of a time and place where we can try out new dances without worrying too much about outcomes. The atmosphere is quite different from a ball, where a lot of emphasis gets placed on learning the dances.

Scott Higgs made this workshop a joy. He himself moved so lightly that I suspect the soles of his shoes must always look like they’re just out of the box. He taught us lots of new dances – and each one was my favourite until the next one came along. But perhaps even more delightful than the individual dances was his overall approach. Scott emphasized that dancing is for fun – let’s not forget ‘It’s just a dance.’

I was too busy dancing to take many notes, so what follows is a paraphrase of what I think Scott said: Don’t get too invested in doing it right or worried about doing it wrong. If you’re not sure what to do in a hey, don’t freeze the dance by standing still - at least move *somewhere* and trust the other dancers to accommodate your wayward path. Dancing is about communication and community. We shouldn’t miss opportunities for eye contact; we should always take a hand if one is offered. In the course of a dance we can all have occasion and opportunity both to give and receive help. He suggested we not employ arm waving, pushing, or frantic commands when things are going wrong. They don’t always work and may slow up the dance even more. We could adopt a subtler and kinder approach. For example, if the second corners realize that the first corners have forgotten to cross, the second corners can cross, the idea being that the others will then follow and all four dancers will end up where they should, without anybody feeling flustered or embarrassed. When things go awry in a longways set, there is the cheering thought that a fresh start is always awaiting – and we can try again. In a triple major, where we are stuck with each other for the duration, we should think of ourselves as a little community of six and try to help each other – graciously.

If anyone is left out of the thanks, it’s my memory, not your contribution. Thanks to the others on the workshop committee: Jackie (chair) Gail (food and drink) and Margaret (registration). Thanks to the decorators: Jackie, the mastermind and shoe designer in chief, and also to Frances, Sandra and Zyna for shoes, and to those who put the decorations up and the chairs out and then took them down and/or put them away on Saturday night, with special thanks to Terry Armstrong for dealing with the ladder. Thanks to Roger for being the airport taxi service and to Virginia ...*cont’d. on page 5*

Step Lightly Workshop – from page 4

for putting Scott up (for three nights, not two, as his journey home was delayed because of a snow storm). Thanks to the musicians who played for the dances and workshop sessions: Mary Louise Chown, Liz Goossen, Jeremy Hull, Mark McLearn, Art Quanbury, Roman Soble, Virginia Stevens, Joan Stevenson, Mike Wahn, Barrie Webster. Thanks to those who cooked and baked and worked so hard in the kitchen serving and cleaning up. Thanks to those who entertained on Saturday night: the Village Green Morris Men, Hell's Belles, the Village Green dem dancers (with our really new 'New Forest'), to Caroline and Anne for stories, and to Anne Adkins, who volunteered an impromptu performance of Goethe's 'Heidenröslein', as we had danced a Pat Shaw waltz to the tune earlier. Thanks to Jeannie for hosting the brunch on Sunday morning and to Margaret for arranging the dinner at the East India Company on Sunday evening. And...

.... thanks to our
we couldn't have



hardworking feet –
done it without you!

... by Anne Morton. Visit Scott's web site at www.scotthiggs.com



SUMMER WITH VILLAGE GREEN

Wednesday classes will carry on at the usual time from May 10 to May 31. Classes on 10th & 17th at Harrow; location of classes on 24th & 31st TBA. Drop-in fee is \$3.00. See 'President's Musings' on page 2 for more details.

The **dem dancers** will be appearing at The Gathering of Nations, St. Claude, Sunday, July 16. The web site is at www.echoesandlegends.com/nations. A week later it will be the Lily Festival, Neepawa, Sunday, July 23. Their web site at www.lilyfestival.com describes VGECD as "British Ladies"! Does that mean they expect hats and gloves?

Dancing at the Cottage – at John and Margaret Taylor's cottage, that is, on the Pinawa Channel. The date is Saturday, August 12, with August 19 as the rain date. Further information – and maps – at the AGM and Wednesday classes.

Roger Palsler

On a rainy day at the end of March Roger and I met for lunch at One Night in Bangkok. He's a man with a variety of interests and the conversation ranged from tomography (explained by positioning the water glasses) to the best woods for building harps and, of course, English country dancing.

Roger was born and grew up in Birmingham. (He and Zyna Boyes have discovered they lived about half a mile from each other.) He came to Winnipeg in the early '60s. He had visited eastern Canada three years previously and decided Canada was the country for him. With a degree in physics he wanted to pursue further education and a career in medical physics. He applied to various Canadian universities; the decision came down to Simon Fraser and the University of Manitoba and the U of M offered him more money. The move to Winnipeg seems to have worked out well. It was here he met his wife, Lynne. And soon after leaving university he started working for CancerCare Manitoba (as it is now called) where he was employed for over 30 years. Roger worked with computers and then with tomography machines, such as CT [computer tomography] scanners and mammography machines. He still works for CancerCare one day a week maintaining machines, mostly the ones used for mammograms.

At his primary school in England he had some experience with country dancing at the age of 8 or 9. He doesn't remember much about it, other than that it was mostly round dancing, and at that age he probably didn't enjoy it, since it involved girls! Roger started dancing with Village Green about 12 years ago. He and Lynne used to attend the Mug Pub at Folklorama. As Lynne remembers it, Roger used to say, as he watched the Village Green dancers, "That looks like fun – I'd like to try it". One year Lynne pointed out that he kept saying it looked like fun and never doing anything about it – maybe this year he should? So Roger approached Jackie and asked her about joining.

It is the challenge of dancing which really makes it fun for Roger. Even if a dance is simple or you have danced it many times, there is always the challenge of improving and doing it better – getting the phrasing just right, dancing to the music, keeping the flow, having everybody dance the dance as it should be danced. Waltzes are a favourite because they can be so dynamic. The night before we had done 'Silver Thread' in class. This dance is a favourite of Roger's because if all is going well the number one couple need never stop moving.

Roger first got involved in teaching some years ago when he was asked to call a couple of dances – he thinks as a role model for men, since there were even fewer men dancing with Village Green than there are now. Teaching offers similar challenges to dancing, except they arise from a lot more people, at different stages in their dancing. Before teaching a dance in class, he dances it from every position. This is helpful to some extent but the ghosts, of course, always dance perfectly – not necessarily the case on Wednesday nights. One of the challenges for someone learning to teach, Roger finds, is knowing the traps in a dance and how to help people get out of them. It's obvious when a dance breaks down; it's not always obvious what caused it. *Cont'd. on page 7*

Roger Palser, cont'd. from page 6

Roger's father was a keen woodworker and Roger has very early memories of sitting in their garden shed and watching him at work. Roger and his older brother would ask for woodworking tools as Christmas and birthday presents. They still give each other tools as gifts. Years later, in that curious way life unfolds, woodworking was to lead Roger to another musical venture. His older brother had taken up wood turning and passed on a lathe to Roger when he upgraded. Roger used to make bowls and vases which he sold in local craft shops. Knowing of his skill with wood, Liz asked Roger to help her when she wanted to build a harp from a kit. She thought this would be a good way of obtaining an inexpensive instrument for her harp pupils to rent. That first venture was a success; then she asked Roger to work with her on building a harp from scratch. Since then they have built about 15 or 16 harps and plan a visit to a harp conference in North Carolina later this year.

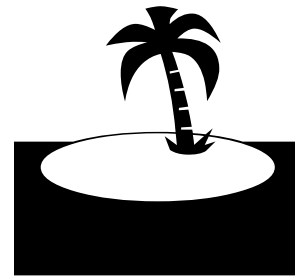
Tropical Social Fun(d) Raising Raffle

Make your porch or patio a tropical delight with our fun and fabulous themed raffle basket.

Enjoy the colourful tableware and candle holders, a fanciful fish mobile and a paperweight to hold down your napkins. We've even included something to discourage the bugs!

At a retail value of over \$150 this can all be yours for just one ticket. Tickets are priced at \$2 each or 3 for \$5.

Draw will be held at the Tropical Social on May 6, 2006 at St. Paul's, doors open at 7:30, dancing starting at 8:00. The winning ticket must be presented at the social.



P.S. You'll have a chance at three door prizes too!

COOKERY CORNER

...Marion Tetrault served the delicious coffee cake at an executive meeting on January 17. And we also have a couple of recipes from the Step Lightly workshop....

Cranberry Streusel Coffee Cake

Streusel:

3/4 cup brown sugar
1/2 cup flour

1 tsp. cinnamon
1/4 cup butter

Cake:

1/2 cup soft butter
1 cup white sugar
2 eggs
1 tsp. vanilla
2 cups flour

1 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. baking soda
1/2 tsp. salt
1 cup sour cream
2 cups cranberries (fresh or frozen)

To make streusel: mix together sugar, flour and cinnamon; blend in butter until crumbly. **To make cake:** cream butter with sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in eggs, one at a time, then vanilla. Sift together flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt. Add to creamed mixture alternately with sour cream. **Spread half the batter** in a greased and floured 10-inch springform pan. Sprinkle with half the streusel mixture, then half the cranberries. Spread with remaining batter. Sprinkle evenly with remaining cranberries, then remaining streusel. **Bake in a 350 oven** for about 1 hour or until skewer inserted in centre comes out clean. Cool in pan 10 minutes, then remove from pan. Serve warm with whipped cream. Makes about 12 servings.

Note: Freezes well. To reheat cake: defrost, wrap in foil, heat about 20 - 30 mins. in a 350 oven.

Gail Matiation's Punch

1 can frozen limeaid concentrate , 1 can frozen raspberry concentrate , 1 can cranberry concentrate (you may substitute for the last two juices), 2 litre bottle soda water. Add water to fill the punch bowl (about 2 litres). Add ice and frozen fruit or berries if desired.

Janis Platt's Ginger Snaps

Cream together:

3/4 cup shortening or margarine
1 cup white sugar
1/2 cup molasses
1 egg
1/2 tsp. salt.

Add:

2 cups flour
2 tsp. soda
2 tsp. ginger
1 tsp. cinnamon
1/4 tsp. cloves

Roll into balls and dip in white sugar. Bake 12-15 min. in a moderate oven at 350.