



# The Town Crier



## VILLAGE GREEN ENGLISH COUNTRY DANCERS, AUGUST 2006

### CALENDAR FOR 2006/07

#### 2006

September 6	Opening 'Bring a Friend' Social, Harrow United
September 13	First Class, Harrow United
October 1	First challenge class, Norberry Community Centre
October 28	Workshop & Masquerade Social, Churchill Park United
December 13	Last Class before Christmas, Harrow United
December 16	Christmas Social, St. Paul's Anglican

#### 2007

January 10	First Class, Harrow United
February 10	Valentine Social, Workshop, St. Paul's Anglican
March 10	English/Scottish Social, St. Paul's Anglican
April 26	Last class, Harrow United
April 28	Spring Ball, Vasa Lund
May 5	Annual General Meeting, Harrow United

#### VILLAGE GREEN EXECUTIVE 2006/07

President	Marilyn Armstrong	475-6591	<a href="mailto:tarmstrong39@shaw.ca">tarmstrong39@shaw.ca</a>
Vice-President	Anne Morton	284-2235	<a href="mailto:anmorton@mts.net">anmorton@mts.net</a>
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Secretary	Sandra Johnston	889-8780	<a href="mailto:wjohnsto@mts.net">wjohnsto@mts.net</a>
Treasurer	John Groen	889-0425	<a href="mailto:jgroen@shaw.ca">jgroen@shaw.ca</a>
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	Frances Harris	257-4938	<a href="mailto:frances.harris@gwl.ca">frances.harris@gwl.ca</a>
<u>Other Working Positions:</u>			
Teachers' Rep.	Liz Goossen	489-2752	<a href="mailto:elizago@shaw.ca">elizago@shaw.ca</a>
Dem Co-ordinator	Virginia Stevens	832-1769	<a href="mailto:virginia@ilos.net">virginia@ilos.net</a>
Editors	Judy Valenzuela	475-6666	<a href="mailto:jhbval@mts.net">jhbval@mts.net</a>
	Joan Baragar	488-9195	<a href="mailto:jbaragar@mts.net">jbaragar@mts.net</a>
Members-at-large	Jane Hoag	895-7850	<a href="mailto:janelynnh@yahoo.com">janelynnh@yahoo.com</a>

*Social ad [p.8] – Make copies and hand them out to your friends, stick them up on the bulletin board at work, or your place of worship, or the corner store, and one for the fridge so you don't forget!*

## PRESIDENT'S MUSINGS

As President of Village Green this year, I am very excited about helping to plan events & hope to see as many new & regular dancers as possible. I have been a member of Village Green for 12 years & have enjoyed learning all aspects of dancing including English Country, Morris & Challenge Classes. I would like to welcome new executive members: Joan Baragar, Terry Armstrong & Judy Valenzuela & say farewell to outgoing executive: Monica Hultin & Dale Kane (who held the position of Archivist for 10 years).

I hope everyone has had a fantastic summer, what with the beautiful hot weather & little rain. Hope you have all your travelling done & are looking forward to an exciting year of dancing, meeting new people & catching up with members of last year.

Village Green has had an interesting & busy spring & summer since regular classes finished the end of April. After the Hawaiian social, extra classes were held in May at the Ft. Garry Community Club, taught by teachers-in-training so they could bone up on their teaching skills. Demonstrations of English dancing & Morris dancing were done by various members of Village Green: at the Festival of Nations in St. Claude & in Neepawa at the Lily Festival. Well done everyone!

August 12th saw about 25 people show up at Margaret & John Taylor's cabin at Lac du Bonnet for what has become an almost yearly event. Margaret must have done a lot of praying because even though the day started out beautifully at the cabin (although it was pouring in Winnipeg), rain started falling during the ride out to the cabin, but eventually the sun came out again & dried up the grass well enough to get a few dances underway taught by Jeannie & Jackie. When the pot-luck was over & everyone headed for home around 6:30 the rain started up again. Perfect timing! Thank you to everyone who showed up (including a few new people who seemed to learn the dances quickly), to teachers Jeannie & Jackie for putting up with the weather & sloping grounds, and to musicians Roman Soble & Virginia Stevens. Special thanks to Margaret & John for allowing us the use of their cabin & yard for the afternoon.

Just a few of the exciting events coming up this year are: Opening Social (bring as many friends as you can, hopefully we can have a record number out for this event); Workshop & Masquerade Social; Christmas Social; Ball (spruce up your old costumes or get your sewing machines going)

Hope everyone has an enjoyable summer (what is left of it) & hope to see everyone on SEPTEMBER 6th.

Marilyn Armstrong

### ***VILLAGE GREEN BULLETIN BOARD***

**Minnesota Country Dance Weekend**, October 13-15, Sokol Hall, St. Paul. Workshops and three big dances. Contras, Squares and English Country Dances called by Joseph Pimental. Music by Linda Breitag & Contratopia, Coleraine and Guest Musicians. Cost \$70 before September 12.

**Christmas Country Dance School**, December 26-January 1, Berea College, Berea Kentucky. Traditional dance, music, song, folk drama, storytelling & crafts since 1938.

*Further info will be available at the Wednesday classes.*

## **Highlights of May & August Executive & Teachers' Meetings** by Sandra Johnston

- The AGM was a success! The thirty-one members present provided the necessary quorum.
- Village Green T-shirts with a VGECD logo will be available for sale to members.
- Pictures taken at the Hawaiian social will be on display. Enjoy!
- The raffle held at the social was a great success.
- A committee may be formed to work on updating and amending the VGECD constitution.
- VGECD still requires a web master. If you can assist us with this, please inform one of the teachers or executive members.
- A Community Dance Group social will be held again this fall. As yet, the date is unknown.
- Thanks to the kindness and hospitality of Margaret and John Taylor, dancing at the cottage was a treat as usual. Guidelines will be produced to aid in the coordination of this event.
- As of July 31<sup>st</sup> the bank balance is \$5487.92.
- Marion will be happy to provide you with brochures and notices to attract new members.
- A DVD of the VGECD dem group at the Lily Festival in Neepawa is available for viewing. Please see Frances if you wish to borrow it. Terry plans to put all VGECD photos on CD.
- The popular after-class teas will continue this year at Harrow starting in October.

### **Meet the Editors**

**Joan Baragar:** "Are you sure you have taken Scottish dancing lessons?" the instructor asked as I tried to keep up with the flying feet at the practice. The University of Manitoba was producing "Finian's Rainbow" and a well-meaning friend had told the instructor that I should be included with the dancers because of my background. True, I had taken some folk-dancing lessons in high school, but I was no expert, and had to confess that my friend had got it wrong. "But if you'll let me stay," I ventured, "I promise to get all those Irish dance steps right." She did. And I did. Even on a raked stage. That was the beginning and the end of my performance dancing career. After that, it was mostly moving around the kitchen to music from the radio. But the dancing spirit stayed with me – all the way to VGECD! I have done some interesting things in my life, including writing, singing, teaching, counselling, wife-ing, mothering and grandmothering – but when my heart says "you go, girl!" ... I still dance!

**Judy Valenzuela:** It took a lot of patience from Anne Morton, who kept reminding me about the socials even when I missed many times - but I am grateful to her for persisting. I loved Scottish Country Dancing, but my feet gave up on it. Sometimes the different terminology is a bit confusing – I joined halfway through the year, so missed the introductory lessons – but I thoroughly enjoy the company, the music and the dancing. And since I have always been one of the tallest wherever I have been, I have been well-trained to dance the man's position! Working with Joan on the newsletter is a great opportunity to get to know her better, and I look forward to our year together. We are both retired, with travel plans and far-flung families to visit, so we figure it will take both of us to cover the events and report on them. We will also need a lot of help from all of you, so please send us your news.

## **Interview with Dem Dancers Virginia Stevens and Jackie Soble** by Joan Baragar

“Loved that Virginia Reel!”...That’s how our own Virginia Stevens explained her beginnings as a dancer in her native Wisconsin. With a major in English and a minor in Music (Choral Conducting), she taught music in twelve grades along with school and community dancing. She recalls *Rufty Tufty* as a favourite dance in those days - along with the reel that bore her name, of course. As a teacher of dance, she found that the young boys in her classes required the greatest patience. “Boys don’t skip,” she sighed. (Do the gentlemen of our current dance group agree?)

When Virginia moved to Winnipeg, she noticed groups dancing in Old Market Square – which led to a meeting with Liz Goossen and an introduction to Village Green English Country Dancing. In 1983, she entered the beginners’ class and soon graduated to the regulars. Since her first love is music, she also joined the band in 1986 and has been an active member ever since.

How did she get into Demonstration dancing? Virginia claims she created a fancy dress which made her easy to recognize. Of course, she was already recognized by this time for her musical and organizational skills. And who knows? Maybe the dress helped! At any rate, she became a valuable part of the Dem troupe.

Meanwhile, long before she met Virginia, Jackie Soble could say, “I was born with dancing in my soul.” In her home town of Portage la Prairie, young Jackie took dance lessons until she was about thirteen years old. She remembers learning the Can-Can! She also took ballet, and when she spent a year in England as a young teen, she discovered English Country Dancing which was part of the school curriculum. As a young woman in England, her mother had been an accompanist for similar dance classes.

Fast-forward now to Winnipeg, around 1975: Jackie responded to a poster advertising VGECD classes which were then held at St. George’s Church. Again, as with Virginia’s experience, it didn’t take long for Jackie’s fancy footwork to be recognized. After one year, she started doing Demonstration Dancing. And of course, she got to know Virginia...

In time, Jackie became a dem teacher and Virginia, a dem co-ordinator. Demonstration dancers, they agree, need most of all to look as if they’re having a good time! From the teacher/co-ordinator perspective, what’s needed most of all is an understanding of the kinds of dances that will work well visually as well as musically. Choices of dance and variety of music are important. Jackie has found that simple dances are sometimes more visually interesting for the spectator than ones with more complicated patterns which would be most impressive if viewed from the ceiling or a helicopter!

Following Liz Goossen’s lead, dem teacher trainees took classes at the Duckworth Centre, U. of Winnipeg. These led to practice teaching with supervisors such as Liz or Sue (Stanton.) Once Virginia and Jackie started talking about joint planning sessions, it was easy to tell they were having a lot of fun remembering. They would get together at nine a.m. one day to plan classes from September to December – and after eight hours of discussion and practice they would have settled on *three dances!* Virginia was most impressed by Jackie’s memory for all the steps – and Jackie counted on Virginia’s knowledge of suitable music. A fine resource, they both say, is the *Country Dance and Song Society* in Massachusetts. Village Green is a member of this society.

What are the highlights of Demonstration work for Jackie and Virginia? Jackie loves the feeling of confidence that can make her comfortable dancing with different groups in different places. Virginia loves planning with Jackie and continuing to play in the band. Their enthusiasm is contagious.

Together, they are a tough team to beat!

## CHALLENGE CLASS

Attendance at the challenge class is made on the basis of self-selection. Every year the teachers ask that members who would like to attend this class reflect on the following criteria:

### DO YOU

- 1) feel comfortable and confident dancing a straightforward dance (3 or 4 basic figures) with only a talk through or one walk through (no need to walk through from each position)?
- 2) enjoy working on the technical aspects of a dance (phrasing, handing, covering, dynamics of dance, awareness of others in the set)?
- 3) feel confident dancing an intricate, complex dance after working through it from each position and recall such a dance in a subsequent class after a briefing?
- 4) hear the music and move in a manner which suits the music?
- 5) have a desire to grow in your dancing, to become a better dancer?

IF YOU ANSWER YES to the above questions, challenge class would be an enjoyable experience for you this year. If you have questions about this class please call Jeannie (269-6012) or Liz (489-2752).

Class will be at the Norberry Community Centre (St. Mary's Road and Molgat St.) October 1, 15, 29; November 12, 26; December 10; January 14, 28; February 11, 25; March 11, 25; April 8, 22; May 6.

## A Long, Hot Summer on the Village Green

by Frances Harris

We ended our 2005/2006 season with a Tropical social on May 6<sup>th</sup>. It seems the theme was prophetic, and presaged our wonderfully long, hot summer. *Hot* seems to me to be an ongoing theme in dance! We carried on with classes during May. The weather was fine and already quite warm for the time of year. The space was a little small, but adequate, and so was the attendance! We were ably led by our teachers-in-training, who had us fired up with some great dances.

We then moved into high season for demonstration dancing, and I was lucky enough to be involved. On May 18<sup>th</sup> six dancers performed for the Jane Austen Society. We were greeted very warmly, and they admired our Regency-style costumes. Our men looked particularly dashing in their collars and breeches (move over Mr. Darcy!). Jeannie had organized several period dances including Wakefield Hunt and Shrewsbury Lasses. We encouraged some participation dancing, and hope that we might see one or two new faces from the Society at this year's classes. After the dem, Jeannie gave a spontaneous dissertation on dancing in the Regency period that was much appreciated.

On June 2<sup>nd</sup> we were involved in the celebrations of the centenary of Wellington School in the West End. We did Morris, garland and English dancing out on the tarmac playground, in full sun and 30 degree heat. Apart from flinging a few Morris bells randomly into the crowd, it went well and we finished flushed with success.

Sunday morning rehearsals followed for the next few weeks in preparation for our two main events of the summer season – the Festival of Nations at St. Claude, and, for the first time, the Lily Festival in Neepawa. Our rehearsal facility at Greendell Community Club does not come equipped with air conditioning, and those of us dancing with Hell's Belle's began to think that the temperature was getting a little too close to home!

We arrived at St. Claude curling club on a very warm morning, hot to trot. Unfortunately the ice had melted already and had been replaced by a very springy particleboard floor. We danced on a relatively small raised stage that bounced and sagged and made alarming creaking and groaning noises as we pranced about. Our audiences were small but appreciative and didn't appear to notice the small adjustments we had to make to some of the dances to prevent plummeting from the 6" high stage, if not to certain death, then at least to certain embarrassment. Then our rosy faces would have been doubly pink!

During the breaks and costume changes we used the firemen's trick of immersing hands and forearms in a cooler of iced water – lovely!

The next Sunday saw us at the Lily Festival in Neepawa. The performances on Sunday were held in the Roxy Theatre, originally an opera house later converted to a movie theatre, once owned by the Asper family but now owned by the community and used for films, concerts and dancing demonstrations! It was a very hot weekend (surprise!) and still no air conditioning. Again we did Morris, garland and English, ably accompanied by The Boatmen and The Fine Companions. The temperature back stage increased perceptibly when one of our Morris side realized that she had forgotten her white costume pants! Fortunately there was a spare pair available so disaster, and profound embarrassment, were again averted. We had a few interesting moments as we learned to cope with stage left and stage right entrances, rather than all coming on from one direction. While it looked much nicer from the audience, it did cause us some difficulties. At one point in the heat of the moment we ended up with 5 garlands on stage right and 3 on stage left, but 4 dancers on each side. Whoops! During another garland dance we almost went from the frying pan into the fire when Jackie's glasses were hooked by an errant garland and they flew (safely) onto the stage. We managed to kick them gently off into the wings and again avoided disaster. Fortunately none of these goings-on were apparent to the audience, and they warmed to the dancing, spontaneously clapping in time to the music and giving generous applause.

The season came to a close with dancing at the Taylors' cottage on August 12<sup>th</sup>, which, as you can see from Delayne's article, went very well. We can look back with a rosy glow on a great summer, with expectations of another wonderful season for 2006/2007!

## Happiness is.....

by Delayne Groen

Blue skies? Nah, thunderstorms, deluges, windshield wipers going a mile a minute. Where did this happen and when? It was all on the day we Village Greeners were invited to Margaret and John Taylor's cottage to dance and celebrate life. Celebrate we did on August 12th.

John, our friend Annemarie and I were the first to arrive on their doorstep. We swung into the U-shaped driveway to be met by a good solid common sense Yorkshire man. You know the kind who do things in a most practical way, like meeting you in this deluge with a jacket laid over his arm and an umbrella to see you safely to the door of his abode.

Shatter that dream, because as soon as I saw John I convulsed into fits of laughter and rolled out the door of the van to be met with an upside-down umbrella that looked very much like a martini glass. As he gallantly took me to the door of his cottage the water gathered in the "Martini Glass Umbrella" and as we turned corners in his attempt to keep me dry, he tipped the umbrella over my head which caused me to be greeted with a waterfall from the top of the Umbrella. Time quickly brought an end to the much-needed rain. Thinking that our time together would be in friendly chatter and swapping stories of happenings since we had last been together, we relaxed with a beer or two, or three, while others enjoyed the view and caught up on John and Margaret's humorous towel quotations from the 1700's.

Here comes trusty Jeannie. No soggy grass stops her enthusiasm for dancing and before we know it shoed and barefoot dancers were twirling and enjoying the music provided by Virginia and Roman (perfection to our ears, but I think Roman might have a different opinion). You want to know the best way to dance those dances of old? Like all Village Green people did in days of yore, barefoot, (thank God not pregnant). Been there done that!

Village Green folk know how to put on a good spread of Pot Luck and I happily admit to being over-indulgent - I could say being a pig, but that is not what you say in polite company. As we tucked into the good fare, our toes tapped to the dance music we know so well. Good food, good music, good company. A certain black dog that adores his Daddy got rather spoilt after we all left. On a plate sat the juicy red remains of the barbecued roast, cooked by Margaret's fair hands. I have a feeling that it did not last long as the door was closed on the last departing body.

Here's to next year (we all hope the invitation is always open).

## COOKERY CORNER from your *Town Crier* editors



Surely picnic season isn't over yet! So here is my recipe for *Jumbo Raisin Cookies*. These are traditional beach fare in the summer. The recipe will make 30 cookies (or less if you make them like small pies which may fill young stomachs longer!) They carry well, freeze well and are great go-alongs for indoor or outdoor picnics.

### Jumbo Raisin Cookies

*1½ c. soft shortening (I use half margarine)*

*2 cups granulated sugar*

*4 eggs*

*1 tbsp. vanilla*

*5¼ c. all-purpose flour (I use part whole wheat)*

*4 tsps. Baking Powder*

*Few grains of salt*

*Cream shortening, 2 c. sugar and 4 eggs together till light and fluffy. Add vanilla. Mix together flour, Baking Powder and salt and blend into creamed mixture. Chill.*

*Raisin Filling: 3 c. seedless raisins*

*2/3 c. water*

*2/3 c. sugar*

*Cook until thickened; add 1 tbsp. grated lemon rind and 2 tbsp. lemon juice. Cool.*

*Roll dough 1/8" thick and cut into rounds (3" or smaller). Put half of the rounds on ungreased cookie sheet and top with raisin filling. Press remaining rounds on top of filling. Prick top rounds with fork.*

*Bake at 400 degrees for 8 – 10 minutes. Yum!*

*Joan Baragar*



Remember the Tropical Social last spring? Do you also remember all the great food? This is the recipe for the Coconut Bread that I brought.

### Quick Coconut Bread

*Yields 2 loaves*

*Preheat oven to 350°*

*4 cups flour*

*1 c. canned or fresh coconut milk*

*1/3 cup sugar*

*½ c. butter or margarine, melted*

*2 tsps. baking powder*

*1 tsp. pure vanilla extract*

*¼ tsp. salt*

*2 c. grated unsweetened coconut*

*1 egg, beaten*

*1 c. currants or raisins (optional)*

*Sift the dry ingredients into a mixing bowl. Blend in the egg, milk, butter and vanilla. Mix in the grated coconut and the currants or raisins if used. Turn out onto a floured board and knead slightly. Shape into two loaves and pat into two buttered medium loaf pans. Bake for 40 to 45 minutes, until a toothpick in the centre comes out clean*

It "isn't exactly like putting a straw in a coconut, but almost" [quote from the source, *Sundays at Moosewood Restaurant* cookbook].

*Judy Valenzuela*

***If you plan to come to the September Social, please bring finger food for 5 people, ready to be served, and wear your name tags.***



***YOU'RE INVITED!***

**WE'RE LAUNCHING OUR 2006/07 SEASON  
WITH ANOTHER FABULOUS**

**'BRING A FRIEND' SOCIAL!**

***AN EVENING OF MUSIC AND DANCE  
WITH VILLAGE GREEN ENGLISH COUNTRY DANCERS***

**HARROW UNITED CHURCH (HARROW & MULVEY)**

**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6<sup>th</sup>, 2006**

**7:30 p.m., dancing to start 7:45 p.m.**

**COST: \$5.00**

**LIVE MUSIC WITH THE FINE COMPANIONS**

**LIGHT REFRESHMENTS**

***COME AND TRY ENGLISH COUNTRY DANCING!***

**Remember to wear comfortable shoes or runners  
and clothes you can move in with ease.**

# VILLAGE GREEN ENGLISH COUNTRY DANCERS

REGISTRATION FORM 2006/2007

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

POSTAL CODE: \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: HOME \_\_\_\_\_ WORK \_\_\_\_\_

WOULD YOU LIKE TO RECEIVE TOWN CRIER BY E-MAIL? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

VILLAGE GREEN ENGLISH COUNTRY DANCERS has my permission to include my:

[ ] NAME [ ] ADDRESS [ ] PHONE # [ ] E-MAIL

CHECK EACH ITEM YOU WISH TO HAVE LISTED, IF YOU DO NOT WANT YOUR INFORMATION LISTED, PLEASE CHECK HERE [ ]

MEMBER'S NAME (SIGNED) \_\_\_\_\_

**MEMBERSHIP AND GENERAL CLASS FEES (includes "Town Crier")**

INDIVIDUAL \$75.00 COUPLE \$140.00

**DROP IN FEE \$3.00 PER DANCE CLASS**

**CHALLENGE CLASS FEES: (based on twice a month for 15 classes)**

INDIVIDUAL \$30.00, COUPLE \$60.00 (\$3.00 DROP IN FEE ALSO APPLIES)

**REPertoire CLASSES:**

SEPTEMBER - MID NOVEMBER \$25.00

\$25.00 WILL BE APPLIED TO MEMBERSHIP IF DANCING IS CONTINUED BY BEGINNER

**TOWN CRIER ONLY: \$ 15.00**

**LIFE MEMBERS AND HONOURARY BAND MEMBERS** NO FEE.

REGISTRATION FORM REQUIRED ONLY TO UPDATE YOUR INFORMATION.

**Cheques to be made payable to:** Village Green English Country Dancers

**Send to:** John Groen,  
78 Northlake Drive  
Winnipeg, MB. R2Y 1K1 (OR) give to John at class

**Village Green English Country Dancers Privacy Policy**

Personal information will only be used to keep you informed on the activities of Village Green English Country Dancers and will only be distributed to 'paid up members'.

We cannot include any of your personal information without written permission from you.