



Let's Talk Folk Dance

Membership network email update and musings on local folk, historical, traditional and community dance

Read more at.....Folkdance.nz/members



Spring is in the air – a great time to rev up those dancing feet and coax dancing friends away from their winter fires and couches – think dance parties, maypoles, and demos!

In this e-news I focus on thoughts and experiences of novice dancers and attracting novice dancers – it's timely to paraphrase that old adage "if you do what you always do, you'll get what you always get".

Growing groups was a theme at the recent chat with FDNZ members. There is no avoiding it – if you want change, then energy is required. Up front energy; your energy (not that mythical 'someone else!'); Firstly you have to commit to that change – do you really want things to be different and attract more diversity in your dance class and risk having to move out of the comfy rut and change dates / venues / pricing / timing / repertoire etc to be more attractive – or do you just want more people like you to do what you always do? Be honest!

Last week in conjunction with keen ex-Dance Folkus dancer Barbara Hobden, we held a pop-up dance workshop in Wellington – it was a new thing for most, in a new place, with new people and new enthusiasm. With two week's notice (including the Facebook page) 24 people turned up for a 2-hour class of 8 fun but easy dances in Wellington suburbs. Many others sent apologies. They had fun – they want more. See 'Members are thinking' column or some ideas on how to promote this.

Coming up:

16 September – Jane Austin Dances in Dunedin
13th October – International Dance workshop and Dance Party in Hamilton with Dance Souvenirs from travelling FDNZ members
Labour weekend – Welly Folk Fest and Machol Pacifica – see their websites
6th and 14th October – Regency Dance at the Waikato Museum – a fun exploration of costume
Do you have a contribution – don't wait to be asked!

Happy Dancing – Fiona

MEMBERS ARE THINKING ABOUT... Barbara shares the marketing message she used to attract novice dancers to the Pop-Up Dance workshop in Wellington recently – we knew there were people who would enjoy it but were reluctant to drive into the city. We checked with the Wellington group and they were having a break that evening due to members being away. We used Facebook and our own networks. We had no expectations.

"One thing I thought I'd share just FYI was the way I 'pitched' it to my friends. I knew a few liked WOMAD, and others keen on dance in general, and I kind of avoided the 'folk' label because I think that can put some people off. Anyway, this is my email message:

World dance in our neighbourhood!

If you like world music, travelling, dancing (or all three!) then you're likely to enjoy a one-off dance class on Wednesday 22 August, 7.30-9.30pm in the Khandallah Village church hall (33 Ganges Rd, opposite the New World supermarket entrance). Just a \$2 charge to cover hall hire. An experienced dance teacher will lead us through some simple circle dances from a variety of countries. Think Greek, Romanian, Armenian, French, Russian, Hungarian... who knows where we will 'travel' to! Such lovely music, learn some traditional dances, gain a little insight into the cultures, and - it will make you feel happy! No experience is necessary, and no partners needed.

[Ed: thanks to Barbara's great organisation and network, a fun night was had by all]

DANCING...WITH TWO LEFT FEET... Judy is a novice dancer and she shares her challenges...Gross motor movement has been a challenge all my life. Calligraphy, embroidery, bookbinding, music – not a problem. Throwing, catching, playing tennis – disaster. But that doesn't mean I'm incurably inept. After years of fear, I was taught to swim at the age of twelve – by a private tutor, in a warm pool, very slowly. I did my lifesaving badges at high school after that. Dancing falls into the same category. I can learn – it just takes me twice as long as most people, and I need to go over everything many more times than a 'natural' dancer would imagine was necessary. I genuinely do have a problem many others share – I have difficulty with left and right, so when someone tells me to move to the left I have to think about it, at least until that action has become so ingrained in a pattern that it's become automatic. Essentially, I can't dance because I have to think too much. However, given simple dances, much repeated, I get there in the end. The problem is finding not only a teacher who recognises that, but a group of like-minded bumblerers who are happy to learn the same way. It's very easy at any stage of life to learn that we're not good at certain activities, and we tend to give up trying because it's embarrassing and we annoy other people. So, for those of us with two left feet, "slow learners' classes" are exactly what we need, and I would love to be part of one on a permanent basis! *[Ed: I used to run such a class on a Saturday morning when teaching in Australia and it became a useful 'feeder' group for the main dance group during the week. Many are still dancing]*

Update from your committee: It was great to be able to chat with several members on 18th August at the 'in-between chat'. We had some really good discussion and ideas were flowing freely. The notes will be on the members page (have to write them first!). Members abroad have had productive conversations and there are exciting opportunities to bring (literally) world-famous dance teachers to NZ; along with opportunities to revisit our teacher training platform. Don't forget we can advertise your classes / events on the FDNZ facebook page. People look at this face book page – give them something to look at!!

**EMAIL
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