

# The Story of Wasagaming Squares

As told by Charlie McCullough on June 17 2016

In 1991, Bill and Beryl Tinkler and Dave and Fran Pengalley contacted Charlie. It seemed that June was a quiet time in Wasagaming and they would like to have a square dance weekend. They would hold the dance at Danceland in Wasagaming and limited the dance to 25 squares. Charlie agreed to do the calling for them.



When Charlie got off the phone, Carolynne asked him what the call was about. He explained and said they were going to be limited it to 25 squares. She replied "Yah right!". Neither Charlie nor Carolynne believed they could get 25 squares for a weekend dance that was up in Wasagaming. As it turned out they did get 25 squares and even had to set up a waiting list for the weekend. That waiting list was needed for a number of years to follow.

They danced at Danceland for a number of years, but there were a few complications. It seems Olga, the manager, wanted them out of the hall at 4:00 PM on Saturday so she could serve a banquet for the Royal Bank. The dancers could return in the evening to continue the dance. That worked fine for the dancers so they agreed and that arrangement continued for several years.

Things have a way of changing. As Charlie relates the story, one of these weekends they were sitting in the coffee shop meeting with Olga and all was good. The next day they were already dancing when Olga came in and said they would have to be out by 3:00 PM. Charlie said "we can't be as we are here until 4:00". Olga replied "I want to start setting up before then so you have to leave by 3:00". "Can't be done" is Charlie's reply. They kept dancing and the music kept playing. Later Olga came out in front of the stage and shook her fist at Charlie. Needless to say this was not working very well.

The organizers felt they needed a different hall and as it happened there was one available in Wasagaming in the Park. Yes it was available so they switched to the present hall and they are still using it. They danced there for several years.

The weekend was started by the Erickson Square Dance Club and the Mackademskis from that club are still dancing in 2016. The Erikson Club organized the dance weekend for a number of years, until 2001, before their numbers dwindled and they could no longer be the hosts. The Dauphin club took over the organization of the weekend in 2002 and continued to 2006. Marlene and Sherridon Kentner from that club were at the 2016 dance.

In 2007, a new group took over the organizing of the dance and have continued to do so. The group was made up of Cornie and Edith Furdievich, Frank and Sharon Peters, Vince and Doreen Edwards, Brian and Diane Sloane, Eugene and Shirley Dupuis, Nick and

Audrey Lebedeff, Lloyd and Jeannie Baker, Roy and Jan Hangle. Lloyd and Jeannie and Roy and Jan are no longer dancing. All of the others are still on the committee.

At some point, Wasagaming decided they did not want the hall in their town and sold it to Onanole. Organizing the 2007 dance proved to be very stressful. The hall was sold but not moved to Onanole yet. They were allowed to use the hall for one more dance in 2007 and the hall was moved in the winter of 2007/08. Problem was that it would not be ready for the 2008 dance and the dance had to be held in Sandy Lake.

Sometimes difficult situation have good results. There was only one place in Sandy Lake to go for lunch; they made arrangements with the Sandy Lake Golf Club to cater a lunch for us. It proved to be a good thing and when the dance went back to Onanole the following year they found a caterer and have been having a Saturday lunch since then. The dance has been in Onanole ever since.

Over the span of the 25 years of square dancing during the Wasagaming weekend, there have only been two couples that have danced every one of those 25; Allen & Carol Drader, and Ken & Wilma Horton.

Most important of all; Charlie and Carolynne have been there and that is the reason the dancers of Manitoba continue to gather each June for some great dancing.