

Westview Dance Club Getting into the Dance Theme

Welcome to the party. Westview Dance Club is turning 50 in 2020. As the oldest dance club in Winnipeg and one of the longest running clubs in Western Canada, the question we need to ask Westview Dance Club is, "What's your secret?"

One of the things that has kept Westview Dance Club fresh and exciting has been their dances. Since Westview has always been about the enjoyment of dance, our members and guests have enjoyed an inventive array of theme social dances and dinner dances. From almost the very beginning, every dance had a theme and the entire dance revolved around the theme; the hall was decorated accordingly, the dance demonstration matched the theme, if possible, the snack food fit the theme and, of course, everyone dressed accordingly.

One memorable theme was the 2003-2004 New Year's dance, where the theme was "Open the Door to 2004" and the hall was decorated with posters of outhouse doors. The 2008-2009 New Year's dance used the theme, "Phantom of the Opera." The dance demo included, not only all the men dressed as "The Phantom" and the women dressed as "Christine," but a huge chandelier hanging over the demo area. All the "Phantoms" pulled in a boat filled with dry ice, then proceeded to tango around the boat and chandelier.

An October Halloween dance was themed, "Ghouls Night Out," and the demo included members wearing glow-in-the-dark skeleton outfits and darkening the hall during their demo, so they could do the cha-cha to The Monster Mash. Another dance was entitled "Woodstock Revisited," which had all the guests show up in their best hippy clothes and hairstyles. The demo team Rhumbaed to Woodstock.

Other memorable themes included, "Mad Hatter's Tea Party," "Gangster's Ball," "Viva Las Vegas," "Murder at Westview Manor," "Licence to Dance," and "Dancing Queen." A personal favourite of mine (Brian) was when our class named our dance, "Play Ball," decorated the hall in Goldeyes paraphernalia, served hot dogs and crackerjacks as snacks and taught everyone to do the movements to "Take Me Out to the Ball Game."

Westview Dance Club has spent 50 years promoting lifelong learning and an active lifestyle through ballroom dancing in a friendly, non-competitive environment. Theme dances have gone a long way towards bringing the classes and the club itself together and inspire them to get involved and have fun.

With our 50th Anniversary upon us, it is a great time to reflect on what makes Westview Dance Club stand out, what has given the club its longevity. One of those things certainly has been our

theme dances. It is one of the things that makes Westview Dance Club unique in the city and may help to keep the love of dance alive in Winnipeg, so future generations of dancers will someday be able to celebrate Westview Dance Club's 100th Anniversary.

(Brian Campbell would like to thank Dave and Sybil Gardiner for providing much of the information for this article)

Meet the Members

Margie and Bill

by
Brian Campbell

Margie and Bill Martin have always loved dancing. Over the last 25 years, Westview Dance Club has become an important outlet for that love.

Bill said, "We were at a dance at Assiniboine Golf Club in 1993, doing a jive, and Don Gowanlock said 'You guys seem to like dancing. Why don't you look up Westview Dance Club? You can get lessons and it's a lot of fun.' That's how we learned about the club."

They joined Westview Dance Club that year.

Margie added, "We could dance to everything except the Latin music. So we were open to an opportunity to learn Rumba and Cha Cha. We joined to learn that, and we just stayed."

Both Bill and Margie agree that social aspect of Westview Dance Club, meeting people and building friendships, is an essential part of the club. Bill said, "Our group gets together three or four times a year, outside of Westview. These friendships are very important to us."

Margie added a number of other important features. She said, "I love the structure of the classes, the theme socials and the elegant dinner/dances. Westview meets a lot of needs. Our dance instruction, a physical and mental workout, two different types of social events and very good friendships. That's why we're still here."

Margie also believes that the dance demos that once were the standard at Westview dances, and are still done by a select group of volunteer dancers, is an important part of making Westview Dance Club stand out. She said, "Prepping for the demos is a friendship building experience, it improves your dance skills amazingly. In fact, the first demo that we did is that Tango that we still do, and that's 25 years ago."

Bill and Margie make it a point to promote Westview Dance Club to other friends and people they meet; to share their enjoyment of ballroom dancing with others, to give that opportunity to



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as many people as possible and to help keep the club viable.

Margie said, “It is the one thing that we do together. Bill plays golf and shoots pool, and I have Taoist Tai Chi and other interests, but dancing is the one thing we do together. It’s like date night.”

Bill and Margie have volunteered extensively with Westview Dance Club. They started out by helping out with theme dances and activities within their class, then as class reps, finally moving up to the Executive and now in the 50th Anniversary Committee.

When asked about the importance of volunteering, they were quick to respond. “Like any organization, if you don’t volunteer, it doesn’t happen,” Margie said. “It takes effort. Nothing good happens without commitment.”

Bill added, “If you don’t involve yourself in the activities of the club, then you don’t have a club. Volunteering is an important thing.”

They point out that as a volunteer driven club, it is quite often the people who volunteer who help to decide the direction the club will go in the future. If you have ideas of how Westview should be run, you have the opportunity to take part in the planning. All you have to do is step up. It is also the volunteer nature of the club that helps to keep its costs down. Nowhere else in the city can you get 30 lessons and 30 practices for the price Westview charges. We are able to do this because we have volunteers, not staff.

Bill and Margie both feel that it is important to recognize what an accomplishment it is that Westview will be celebrating its 50th Anniversary in 2019.

Margie said, “For any club to exist is remarkable, because time and people change. We must have something special.”

Bill added, “It is an important way to remind you of the things that have happened, the friendships you have made, and the history you have shared within the club. It is a way to reconnect with past members.”

In closing, Margie said, “It is a good reminder that there is a way ahead. Because this is only our first 50.”



50TH ANNIVERSARY

Westview Dance Club Dinner Dance, Saturday, October 19, 2019

Get out your dancing shoes, because Westview Dance Club's first Dinner Dance of the 2019-2020 season is upon us.

The evening's theme is Harvest Moon "for you and your gal" and it is being held at the Masonic Temple, 420 Corydon Avenue at Confusion Corner on Saturday, October 19th.



Cocktails commence at 5:30 pm and dinner will be served at 6:30 pm. Dancing begins at approximately 8:00 pm and runs until 11:30 pm. Attire is Semi-Formal.

So grab your favourite gal or guy, put on your dancing shoes and come out and join us.

Non-member ticket price is \$105 per couple.

For more information, or tickets, go to:

<https://westviewdance.ca/dances/#dance1>



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CELEBRATING BALLROOM DANCING IN WINNIPEG

On, **Saturday May 9, 2020**

At the **RBC Convention Centre**

Featuring: **The Big City All Star Band**

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50TH ANNIVERSARY