

## What is the Federation's Purpose?

One of the questions that we are consistently asked is what is the purpose of the Federation? Why do we have so many levels of "government"? I prepared an email response for a leader in the interior recently, and I would like to address this question.

At the base of our activity, we have Dancers. One dancer on his or her own can't do much – line dance in a very short line, round dance by himself or herself, or dance a square with seven phantoms. Two dancers – still not really enough. But put eight dancers together, and you have a full square. So now those eight dancers get together, rent a hall, hire a caller and sponsor a dance. That group of dancers form a club to make it easier to rent a hall, hire the caller or cuer, and they look at sponsoring a class. The club executive is the first level of government. They decide what nights to have special theme dances, when to have party nights, and they look after the funds that the club raises through door fees and club dues.

But now you have several clubs within a specific geographical area. To ensure that the clubs communicate their special dance dates and try to eliminate having more than one party night on the same night, as well as to sponsor special area dances, the regional Association comes into existence. In some regions, the regional Association will also sponsor classes, and the regional Callers Teachers Associations usually looks after caller/cuer education.

And then we get to the Provincial Federation. The role of the provincial Federation as I see it is to look after functions that are best undertaken by a larger organization. For example:

- Provincial Festivals Currently, the Federation underwrites provincial Festivals. This means that a regional Association or even a club can take on the task of organizing a Festival without the added concern of having to come up with funds if they end up not making money with their Festival.

- Website The Federation pays for hosting the website, and provides free hosting for all regional Associations and to all Clubs for their own website. Not all clubs take advantage of this – some have chosen to go a different route for website hosting, but free hosting is available for those who wish to take advantage of it.

- Promotions We are very fortunate in having the knowledge and experience of Brian Elmer available to us. He has co-ordinated paid advertising on social media for several years now, and some regions and/or clubs are seeing some results from this advertising. However, his promotions are only as good as the information that is provided to him. We also have pay for a 1-800 number to promote dancing, and to provide a way for people to get information when they want to talk to a live person instead of looking on the internet.

- Leadership Grants, Caller/Cuer Grants and New Dancer Class Grants These funds are available from the Federation for those who qualify and who apply for them. Our budget provides for two leadership grants of \$500 each per year for those clubs and regional association. There are two Caller/Cuer Grants of \$250 each per year for those callers and cuers who are expanding their knowledge base at a school and would like financial assistance to do so. New Dancer Class Grants of \$250 each are available for clubs who cannot otherwise afford to sponsor a new dancer class because of the cost of doing so.

In addition, the Federation recognizes contributions – the Sillery Award, Round of the Month Certificates, crests for clubs who achieve milestone birthdays, and badges for dancers who achieve milestone birthdays.

The Federation also collects and remits the Canadian Society Membership dues on behalf of each dancer, caller, cuer, club and association. These dues include your third party liability insurance – which would be much more expensive if purchased by a smaller group – which is one of the reasons for a National Society – the next level of "government".

I guess the basic answer to the question of what the Federation does is what do you ask it to do? If you let us know what you need, we will try to accommodate – but it requires communication. This is absolutely key to the Federation functioning – you need to send Delegates to the Board of Directors meetings, and you need to tell them what to ask, what to say, and how to vote. You also need to listen to them when they get back from the meeting – if they tell you that Brian Elmer needs to know about new dancer classes as soon as possible – they aren't just reporting that for something to report; Brian needs that information for his efforts on behalf of the Federation to be effective.

In addition to communication, it also requires funding. We are looking at other ways of fund raising, but at this point in time an increase in dues is needed to give us time to find those other ways.

Pat Zeeman, Treasurer