

Joyce Carpenter Dancers share more than limelight

Acton Free Press
Feature Page



Joyce Carpenter joins right in with her students, The Joyce Carpenter Dancers in a song and dance number at the spring show she and her girls put on in the spring.

by Helen Murray
More than talented dancers come from the Joyce Carpenter Dancers. Lifelong friendships and unseen bonds hold students together more than tap dancing numbers or acrobatic feats.

Joyce Carpenter, of Elizabeth Drive, has been teaching hundreds of girls in Acton and area for 22 years, giving unselfishly of her time and energy.

Many of her "children" have been with her practically all their lives, starting out as preschoolers, and departing the Monday evening classes only when entering college, university, or the working world.

As the girls grow older, Joyce explains, they grow closer. By the time they are teenagers the mould has been set for life. Over the years they have endured the same problems at trying to learn a particular step, travelled the long roads to various engagements, shared embarrassing moments and the limelight.

Even after the girls discontinue dancing lessons, many visit Joyce and husband Jack regularly, and some even refer to them as their "second Mom and Dad." The Carpenters have attended the weddings of students and enjoy the company of former students' children. However, as the girls meet at St. Al-

ban's for their weekly session, it is strictly a student-teacher relationship. Joyce stresses "There has to be that line between us where no one can cross," she says.

Joyce has been teaching for 31 years, beginning her career in England, where she grew up. She attended strict dance schools and practiced under three different teachers. To earn her teaching credentials, she had to pass stringent exams, something which is not necessary in Canada.

It was while on tour in a pantomime that she met husband Jack, then a well-known comedian. The couple were married and a few years later moved to Canada. The two had lived by the seashore all their lives, and wanted to live by water. A Lakeview subdivision home, backing onto Fairy Lake, was the only answer. They have lived there ever since.

Joyce's true love however, is choreography, something she was just getting into in England before they moved here. In Canada, however, the only opportunities for this are in the city, and she preferred the quiet life of Acton, rather than her dream.

Through the years, her dance school students have not limited their work to St. Alban's Parish Hall. They have

made floats for various parades, entertained at Senior Citizens' Home-sidences, and performed in various shows across southern Ontario. Every other year, the group puts on a spring show with not only local young girls, but also guest entertainers. In 1965, the entire town became involved in a show with over 100 in the cast from all walks of life in Acton. Some 2000 people turned out to see the show.

Most of the girls are not put in the school to learn how to dance only. They learn co-ordination, and self-confidence, and how to work with others. Joyce has never refused to teach a child who has no talent. As long as they are willing to try, she says, she will welcome them. If they are only there because their parents want them to learn how to dance, in most cases it will not work out for anyone involved.

The bonds of friendship developed in her school are not readily given. They must be earned, on both sides, over the years. As she watches her students grow, she comes to understand what makes them tick, and vice versa.

Joyce is proud of all her students both past and present. The fact none of her girls have entered the dance field on a professional basis does not bother her. The limelight should be on all of them equally. "They deserve it," she smiles.



Charlene and Christine Couture, two of Joyce Carpenter's talented students go through a routine at this year's spring show at the high school.

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SECOND SECTION

Halton's blind wait

Vital radio service may soon cease

By Lorne Drury
Canada's first radio reading service for the blind and print handicapped will go off the air within the next six weeks unless additional sources of support are found.

The rejection of an application for partial ongoing support by the Ministry of Culture and Recreation two weeks ago could be the fatal blow for the 15-month-old organization.

"Closure would be a serious blow to our listeners," says Gordon Norman, executive director of the service which operates from a studio in the basement of Woodside Library on Rebecca St. in Oakville.

The service provides daily broadcasts of newspapers, magazines and current books, read aloud by nearly 150 volunteers. Broadcasts go to 300 handicapped persons in the Golden Horseshoe through special receivers which are distributed free of charge to the users. Within the broadcast area there are more

than 15,000 print handicapped persons.

"For some of our listeners this is the only access they have to the print media," says Norman, citing the case of a couple in Kitchener, both of whom are blind, who rely on the service almost exclusively for their daily news.

"They would be denied something that we take for granted," Norman stressed.

Another regular user of the service, Jeff Gunn of Oakville, says, "I'm truly devastated at the thought that it could wind up. I use it nightly and on weekends when I'm in town. I can get news headlines, but where can I get the editorial comment."

Radio Reading Service initially was operated by the Oakville Public Library for the South Central Regional Library System and was established with special grants from libraries, Wintario and many corporations, foundations and individual donations. These grants are now

running out and funds for operating expenses are proving difficult to raise. The service is currently in the process of becoming an independent charitable organization and is not directly funded by the libraries.

Norman feels the provincial ministries are having difficulty fitting the service into existing program structures. Although there are over 80 such operations in the United States, funded mainly by federal and state agencies, this is the only one in Canada.

It in no way duplicates the services of the Canadian National Institution for the Blind, says Norman.

"Our request was denied, I suppose, in keeping with the trend to cut back on everything these days," he explained.

"The buck is being passed. Meanwhile many people who depend on the service for access to the printed word are in danger of being denied that access."

In its proposal to the

government, Radio Reading Service requested 90 percent of its budgeted expenses of \$45,693 for the seven-month period from Sept. 1, 1979 to March 31, 1980.

For the 1980 fiscal year, assistance of \$89,019 or 75 percent of its budget was requested.

"Denial came as a complete and total shock to us," says Norman. "We've always had a more than sympathetic view from the government. It was probably naive of me, but I always felt we wouldn't have any difficulty getting support."

Listeners are now being asked to write Premier William Davis, expressing their concern over the possible loss of the service which operates on a "closed frequency." The signal is sent from the Oakville studios via a special Bell line to a Burlington-based transmitter.

Transmission facilities are donated without charge by CING-FM and the signal can be received from east Toronto to Niagara Falls and into the Kitchener-Waterloo area.

An additional 200 receivers were to be put into operation in 1980 and if unexpected funding becomes available, the number would be increased.

The bulk of the work, both on and off the air, is accomplished by a group of volunteers, some of whom travel from Toronto and Hamilton on a regular basis to perform their duties.

The station's paid staff consists of five persons—two co-ordinators, a technician, an assistant and the executive director. One staff member is on duty at all times during the broadcast day. Programming is scheduled seven days a week with a total of 76 1/2 hours of broadcasting per week.

In addition to asking listeners to voice their concerns, Norman and the service's board chairman William Moore have set up a meeting with provincial Liberal leader Dr. Stuart Smith and have requested a meeting with Premier Davis.

"We tried not to promote a confrontation," says Norman. "The proposal was put forth without fanfare, but now we've only got about six weeks left if we don't get funding."



Several Acton people took part in the Simcoe Canoe Pageant on the long weekend, recreating the journey-of-discovery by John Graves Simcoe, the founder of Toronto and the first Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada. 1. Peter Arbie and Cliff Britton, of Acton took part in the ceremonies held at Soldier's Bay. 2. Acton High School teacher Paul Tamblin and friends portage. 3. Wally Rowley, former Acton High School teacher, loads gear into his canoe. 4. Christine Arbie, Acton, paddles canoe. Photos by Anse Hansen, Newmarket Era.

Acton enthusiasts in pageant

Several Acton people took part in a weekend long canoe trip August 3 to 6 following the original route of the 1793 journey-of-discovery by John Graves Simcoe.

Simcoe was the founder of Toronto and the first Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada.

The route followed the shoreline from Soldier's Bay on the Holland River north on Lake Simcoe to

Penetanguishene Bay. The original journey lasted 26 days. The modern, four day version included stops enroute where Simcoe and his companions were met by costumed descendants of the region's first pioneers and today's community leaders.

It is the first year the journey has been held, and is sponsored by the John Graves Simcoe Foundation in co-operation with the citizens of Simcoe County.

Simcoe was portrayed by Charles Humber, president of the Governor Simcoe branch of the United Empire Loyalists, and a teacher at a Toronto high school.

Special commemorative ceremonies were staged at Innisfil, Shanty Bay, Barrie, Midhurst, Orillia, Big Chute and Huronia Historic Parks. There were four sail-rigged canoes and a party of 30 recreating the journey.



Station manager Gordon Norman and volunteer Ann Haxell: they need money.