

Irish dancers step onto international stage down south

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The excitement and nervousness that a group of six local dancers is feeling right now has been aptly described by their teacher: nerve-excited.

Patricia Finnegan is thrilled that six of her students from the Finnegan School of Dance will be competing in the North American championships in New Orleans this week.

For the dancers — Katelyn Williams, 8, Brynn Parker, 10, Douglas Hayes, 15, Julianna St-Pierre, 15, Lindsay Clarke, 16, and Maisie Harrington, 17 — it will be one of the largest competitions they've taken part in.

They'll be competing against more than 100 fellow dancers from around the world.

"Qualifying to attend the event is an achievement in and of itself," Finnegan told the Champion. "These are very dedicated

dancers who devote about four days a week at the studio and whatever they do outside the studio independently."

She said last week was crunch time for the youngsters as they prepared to face competitors from the United States, Germany and Australia.

"The dancers are coming from everywhere," she said. "I'd say they are nervous and excited. For the two youngest ones, it's their first time in the nine and 10-year-

old category. We call it nerve-excited."

Each dancer at the event dances two rounds. About 50 per cent of the dancers are recalled to the third round.

Dancing is set to begin tomorrow (July 4) and runs until Thursday. Round One of the competition is danced in hard shoes (treble jig or hornpipe depending on age) and Round Two will be danced in soft shoes (reel or slip jig depending on age).

If recalled, the third round is also done in hard shoes.

Finnegan, who's taken dancers to several such events in the past, said she's particularly pleased with this showing for her school since all of the dancers have danced with her for multiple years.

The dancers are from Milton with the exception of Brynn, who lives in Acton.

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Q: Summertime and the living is easy—but not for me! This is a time when I'm off my normal schedule and I start to get anxious. It becomes debilitating. What's going on? Do you deal with anxiety?

A: Stress, anxiety and associated depression are the most common reasons people come to see me at any time of year. Children are out of school and families often have vacation time. Child-care arrangements are different and often schedules are out the window. Many parents are overstressed in their workplace at the best of times and struggle to balance home and work. New schedules and obligations just add more pressure. Many teens and young adults are facing changes in the next short while as they begin new jobs, new careers and new schools.

Anxiety and the stress or panic attacks that are associated with it can be debilitating for sure. If left unchecked, it can have you afraid to go out anywhere or do anything, for fear of having an "attack". First of all, be aware that people do not die from anxiety attacks. It may feel like you are dying at the time, but once you have ruled out medical reasons, be assured that you are not.

Next, you should know that anxiety is something that is very responsive to cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) in both adults and children. Often people will come to see me saying that their doctors told them to come to see me for CBT. CBT is a somewhat short-term (10-12 sessions) therapy mode that is based in the thinking that your cognitions (thoughts) affect your actions (behaviours). See if you can relate to this example: For whatever reason, you think you are ugly. You think you are ugly and so you do not act confident; if you do not present as confident, you may not be listened to by your friends or work colleagues and you feel unimportant and become frustrated. You come home and your partner seems too busy or disinterested to listen to you and the children do not follow your rules. You feel unheard, invisible and beaten and lose your temper. Out of frustration, you yell at your family and everyone tells you it is nicer when you are not there. You feel anxious, depressed and unlovable. There are many such strings of events that can lead to these feelings and are responsive to CBT. Change the initial thinking, and change the resultant behaviour.

Many individuals have extended benefits that cover my services. So if you are experiencing difficulty because of anxiety, you do not need to struggle any longer. I can teach you easily learned techniques that will make your life much more satisfying. Call today and learn how to take back your life.

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Zachary Fiddes
B.ENG., OLS, President

Q: I just saw a surveyor hop my fence and walk across my backyard. Isn't this trespassing? Why is this necessary?

A: In order to properly determine a boundary, we need to find enough evidence. This means that we not only measure the evidence on the subject boundary but also on adjacent properties (and sometimes down to the end of the block!)

The Surveys Act allows a licensed surveyor to enter or cross any property when preparing a survey to do whatever is necessary to finish the work. Often this can mean climbing fences and digging holes in lawns where monuments are often found.

However, we always do our best to respect people's property and we try to avoid doing any work on adjacent properties as much as possible. We attempt to contact adjacent homeowners before entering their property and leave a note once we've left letting them know surveyors were on site.

My surveyors will hand out business cards on request that will identify them as my employees and anyone with concerns or questions are encouraged to contact me. We don't consider the right to enter to be a right to be anonymous!

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