

RSCDS Toronto SET & LINK

www.dancescottish.ca

Tartan Ball Dances
Get an early start on studying for the Tartan Ball. Cribes are now posted [here](#).

From the Chair ...



Decemburr

I am looking out through my living room window at a vastly different picture from a month ago. Mother Nature decided to combine two seasons in one over a couple of days, resulting in a winter snow sandwich filled with autumn maple leaves. Someone needs to invent a new garden tool, the “shrake” to manage our two-fer! And just try getting through to make an appointment to get your snow tires put on before the next onslaught.

The silver lining is that we may be more in the mood for winter activities and Christmas, and there are lots of dancing events to warm us up and keep us moving through the winter. Social groups and association classes will be wrapping up for a well-deserved break before heading into the second half of the dance season... already!

Our family Christmas Dance on Saturday, December 13 will be MC'd by Santa and Mrs. Claus (Keith Bark and Deirdre MacCuish Bark), with music by Scotch & Soda. I'm sure there will be some festive outfits. Ugly tartan sweater contest, anyone? Note that the dance begins at 8 p.m. (doors open at 7:30 p.m.).

Glenview's Christmas dance will take place on Wednesday, December 17 at 7:30 p.m., with Scotch & Soda providing the music.

Say goodbye to 2025 and ring in 2026 with the Glenview Hogmanay and Ceilidh, and more Scotch & Soda! Start polishing your acts for a fun evening of dancing, laughter, camaraderie and, of course, refreshments!

Anticipation will be tremendous when we begin dancing again in January to prepare for the sold-out Tartan Ball on February 7. What a wonderful event this will be. There will be dancers coming from across Canada, the U.S., and the U.K. to enjoy a wonderful program, dancing in the elegant Royal York Hotel while celebrating the 60th Tartan Ball. What an opportunity to re-connect with friends, old and new, and honour this great dance tradition. There is something magical about walking into the Royal York and dancing out: the grandeur, the glory, and the history. Memories will definitely be made.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all.

Arlene Koteff



Tartan Ball News

At the November monthly dance, we held an “early bird” draw for those who purchased tickets by November 7. The prize is a room for two people at the Royal York Hotel the night of the Tartan Ball.

The winner of the prize is Maria R. of Ottawa. Congratulations, Maria!

Tickets are now sold out, but, if you would like to attend the ball, please join the [waiting list](#). We are looking forward to a night to remember!

More information regarding the Tartan Ball, including practice sessions, can be found on the “Dance Scottish” website on the [Tartan Ball page](#).

Note! As space at Broadlands is limited, pre-registration for these practices will be required. A link to a pre-registration form will be published on the website soon.

Sandra Peden, Co-Convenor

Make Your New Year's Resolution One or More of These

Tartan Ball Practices

Sunday, Jan. 18, [Broadlands](#), 2:00-4:30 p.m.

Sunday, Jan. 25, [Broadlands](#), 2:00-4:30 p.m.

Wednesday, Jan. 28, [Glenview](#), 7:00-9:15 p.m.

Sunday, Feb. 1, [Broadlands](#), 2:00-4:30 p.m.

Wednesday, Feb. 4, [Glenview](#), 7:00-9:15 p.m.



Association Classes

All dancers must be members of RSCDS Toronto (beginners are excused until their 2nd term). For members and first timers, the ten-week sessions are \$125.00. For other non-members, the ten-week session is \$150.00, or \$20.00 per class. Not sure if you want to commit? Come and try your very first class for free. Fees are payable by cash, e-Transfer to

rscdsta@gmail.com, or cheques made out to "RSCDS Toronto."

Classes Convenor: [Anne Bishop](#)

INFECTIOUS DISEASE PROTOCOLS IN EFFECT. See elsewhere on this page.

Level 1 Beginner Classes: Dancers learn the five basic steps of Scottish country dance and a variety of formations. These elements are combined in learning simple dances that incorporate some of the steps and formations taught.

Mondays: Calvin Presbyterian Church, 26 Delisle Ave., just off Yonge, north of St Clair [map](#) in the lower hall. Enter the church by the east side door, go downstairs, hall is on the right. Close to transit and Green P parking.

When: Jan. 5 - Mar. 16, 2026. 7:30-9:30 p.m.
(no class Feb. 16, Family Day)

Teacher: Jean Noble Email contact: [Cheryl Catt](#)

Tuesdays: St. Barnabas on the Danforth Church, 361 Danforth Ave. [map](#) In the Upper Hall. Near Chester subway station.

When: Jan. 13 - Mar. 24, 2026. 7:30-9:30 p.m.
(no class Feb. 17)

Teacher: Moira Korus Class Co-ordinator: [Anne Bishop](#) 416-466-4631

Level 2 (Intermediate) classes build on the steps and formations learned at the beginner level, and introduce more complex formations. Dancers become more confident in their skills and abilities, and enjoy the challenge of more intricate dances.

Tuesdays: St. Barnabas on the Danforth Church, 361 Danforth Ave. [map](#) In the Upper Hall for the first 1/2 hour for step practice, moving to the Reception Room thereafter. Near Chester subway station.

When: Jan. 13 - Mar. 24, 2026. 7:00-9:00 p.m.
(no class Feb. 17)

Teacher: David Booz Class Co-ordinator: [Anne Bishop](#) 416-466-4631



Registration is now open.

You can register by filling out this [form](#).

Take out or renew your membership [here](#).

Special Classes at Broadlands in 2026

Sunday afternoon classes, and Tartan Ball practices, will be back at Broadlands in 2026, although some classes are awaiting confirmation. Please check on the [website](#) closer to the date of interest to you. Times vary. We will be in the bright airy room upstairs. These classes are typically "themed" classes and aimed at various levels of dancers. The fee will be \$10.00 per person, per class, cash only please. Broadlands Community Centre is located at [19 Castlegrove Blvd.](#) near Lawrence Ave. East and the Don Valley Parkway. Watch this space for more information.

Sunday, Jan. 4, 2:00-4:00 p.m. — Details TBA.

Sunday, Jan. 18, 2:00-4:30 p.m. — Tartan Ball Practice.

Sunday, Jan. 25, 2:00-4:30 p.m. — Tartan Ball Practice.

Sunday, Feb. 1, 2:00-4:30 p.m. — Tartan Ball Practice.

Sunday, Feb. 15, 2:00-4:00 p.m. — Details TBA.

Sunday, Mar. 8, 2:00-4:00 p.m. — Deirdre MacCuish Bark & Keith Bark.

Sunday, Apr. 19, 2:00-4:00 p.m. — Details TBA.

Rosedale Children, Teens and Family Group

Rosedale children, teens and family group started up again on September 13. We welcome children from age 4 up to 8 dancing with their parents or grandparents, and from 8 years and up either alone or with parents. Teens can also join our classes with any level of experience. Dancing at Rosedale costs a family \$15 per week for the family class or \$325 from September to May. Intermediate and teen groups also cost \$325 per year. Given that there are 30 classes in the year, it's one of the best deals in the city!

Moira Korus

Protocol for Preventing the Spread of Infectious Diseases

The Toronto Association hopes that the following guidelines will help lower risk to dancers attending RSCDS Toronto events and/or social groups.

1. The Toronto Association highly recommends that its member and non-member dancers continue to keep their COVID vaccinations up to date.
2. Seasonal vaccines for flu and other respiratory infections are also highly recommended.
3. Masks are recommended but not mandatory.
4. No one should attend an RSCDS Toronto event if they have symptoms of illnesses such as COVID, flu, or any other contagious disease; have tested positive for COVID in the last 7 days or have symptoms of respiratory infection, such as sore throat, fever, or unexplained cough, runny nose, or congestion; or have a household member or close contact who has tested positive for COVID in the last 7 days, or has shown symptoms of a contagious respiratory infection.
5. Hand sanitizer will be available at all RSCDS Toronto events.

Occasionally there is a medical emergency while dancing. All dancers are reminded to have their emergency contact information on their person at all Scottish Country Dancing events. Look for the handy card for emergency contact information at dancing events and slip it into your shoe bag.



January Monthly Dance

Programme devised by Tristan Gerrie
Saturday, January 10, 2026

Havergal College Junior School, 460 Rosewell Ave. <[map](#)>
(Parking and entrance is off Rosewell, 1 block east of Avenue Rd., south of Lawrence.)

Doors open at 7:30 ~ Dancing: 8:00 - 10:00 p.m.

Music by Scotch & Soda.

If possible, please print your own crib sheets from [here](#).

INFECTIOUS DISEASE PROTOCOLS IN EFFECT. See page 2.

The Pittsburgh Rake	J8X32	Delaware Valley Gold
Valerie's Reel	R8X32	Who's Who in Toronto
Miss Nancy Arnott	S6X32	RSCDS Book 32
Kitty Campbell's Reel	J8X32	RSCDS Book of Graded SCD
Lord Elgin's Reel	S8X32	RSCDS Book 26
Montréal Rendezvous	R8X32	Montréal Moments
Interval		
The Shetland Shepherdess	J8X32	RSCDS Graded Book 3
Les Jumelles de Saint-Laurent	R8X40	A Delightful Diversion
Asilomar Romantic	S8X32	RSCDS 30 Popular Dances Vol. 2
Miss Allie Anderson	J8X32	RSCDS Leaflet Book
Miss Eleanor	S3X32	RSCDS Book 49
The Highland Rambler	R8X40	RSCDS 30 Popular Dances Vol. 2
Extra		
The Old Man of Storr	R8x32	RSCDS Children's Book

Members: \$27 (includes HST); Non Members: \$32 (includes HST);
Young Adult Members (18-34): \$10; Youth (< 18) and Spectators: \$5

Please note: Monthly Dances are SCENT FREE



The RSCDS Code of Conduct can be found [here](#).

Ladies' kilt for sale. Royal Stewart tartan.
Waist adjustable 26-28" Length 27"
Perfect condition. Asking \$50, or offer.
Contact: Bob, at 416-759-2340.

Volunteer Awards

It's time to start thinking about nominations for the awards that the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society and the Toronto Association grant to recognize exceptional service, whether to the Society, the Toronto Association or your social group. There are three awards:

The **Scroll of Honour** is the Society's highest award, given for outstanding service to the Society as well as the Branch, maintenance of the standards and traditions of SCD, and encouraging knowledge and enjoyment of Scottish dancing and music. The Branch can nominate a suitable candidate for consideration by the Society in Edinburgh.

The **Branch Award** is awarded by the Toronto Association for outstanding service, or notable achievement, in the branch in promoting and supporting Scottish country dancing or music.

The **Volunteer Award** is awarded by the Toronto Association for exceptional service to a social group on the recommendation of the Volunteer Awards Committee.

The names and citations of prior recipients of these awards can be found on the website at www.dancescottish.ca/VIPs.html. The guidelines for the award of the Scroll of Honour and the Branch Award may be found at <https://rscds.org/get-involved/membership/member-recognition>.

If you wish to nominate a person for the Scroll of Honour, or the Branch Award, please send your suggestion, with your reasons for the nomination, to the Vice-Chair, Colin Campbell, at ccampb64@uwo.ca. For the Scroll of Honour, you do not need to use the form attached to the guidelines. For a nomination for the Volunteer Award, please complete the [nomination form](#) and send it to the secretary as indicated on the form.

It's time to renew your Toronto Association membership...

Just complete the [membership form](#) found under "Membership" on our website dancescottish.ca and send your payment along via your preferred payment option of e-Transfer or by cheque payable to RSCDS Toronto Association.



Congratulations to Lorraine Ng, who won the draw for the free monthly dance ticket.



Dates to Note

Tartan Ball Practices — see the front page.

Dec. 5 — South Simcoe Scottish Country Dancers' Christmas Celebration. 7:00 p.m. Knox Presbyterian Church Hall, 160 King Street S., Alliston ON L9R 1B9. [<map>](#). **Cost:** FREE BUT Please bring some of your Christmas baking for snacks (other food 'n fluid will be provided) AND please bring an item for the Food Bank. Programme [here](#).

RSCDS Hamilton, Ontario Branch Christmas Dance

December 6th, 7:30. Everyone is welcome!
Tickets are priced at \$25 in advance (until Dec. 3rd), and \$30 at the door. Music provided by Scotch & Soda.
Program available [here](#).



Glenview Christmas Dance

*'Twas a week before Christmas, and all through Glenview,
The dancers were prepping their best ghillies shoe,
With jigs full of jingle and reels full of cheer,
The Glenview Christmas Dance is almost here!*

Wednesday, December 17, 7:30 p.m. ~ \$20 for members, \$25 for non-members, at the door.

Glenview Presbyterian Church, 1 Glenview Avenue. [<map>](#)
Come and join us for an evening of dancing to the music of Scotch & Soda.
Refreshments provided following the dance.
Visit www.glenviewscdg.org for programme and cribs.

Glenview Hogmanay Dance & Ceilidh

*The Hogmanay Dance, oh what a sight!
Live music and laughter and joy through the night!
So don your best tartan, dance and hear the band play,
We promise great fun - and some shortbread - hooray!*



Wednesday, December 31, 8:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m.
Glenview Presbyterian Church, 1 Glenview Avenue. [<map>](#)

Join us to bring in the New Year by dancing to the music of Scotch & Soda.
Dancing will be followed by refreshments and a ceilidh. Tickets \$40 in advance from Sandra Peden at Peden.sandra@gmail.com

West End Workshop — Save the Date

When: Saturday, March 28, 2026
Where: Humberwood Community Centre in north Etobicoke [<map>](#)
Teachers: Samuele Graziani from Bologna, Italy, and Erica de Gannes of Toronto.
More details to come. See also page 6.

West End Teachers' Workshop

When: Sunday, March 29, 2026
Where: Alderwood Community Centre in south Etobicoke [<map>](#)
Teacher: Samuele Graziani
More details to come. See also page 6.



Save The Date
 TAC Summer Events
 at Medicine Hat College
 Medicine Hat, Alberta

Summer School for all dancers
Fundamentals to Challenge levels
July 26 – August 2, 2026

Teacher Candidate Course
July 19 – Aug 2, 2026

Teachers' Conference Weekend
July 24 – 26, 2026

Registration Opens Late Feb. 2026

Teaching staff:
 Angela Young – Scotland
 David Queen – England
 Fiona Miller – Canada
 Arthur McNair – US



Music Director
Gillian Stevenson – Scotland

For more info: <https://tac-rscds.org/>

*Ed.'s Note: Not sure if summer school is for you?
See [here](#) for more information.*

DAA 2026

Following up on the article about the Dancing Achievement Award in the November S&L, if you are interested in earning your DAA certificate, please contact Moira Korus at moi-ra.korus62@gmail.com as soon as possible.

Please contact [Douglas Pickett](#), Outreach and Marketing director, if you are interested in obtaining advertising materials for SCD: flyers, posters, and business cards with QR codes.



November Monthly Dance

Scotch & Soda played their first dance of the season for the Toronto Association on November 8th at Havergal Junior School. Laird Brown and Warren Beesley did an amazing job of keeping the energy going all the way to the end of the dance. Moira Korus was the MC for the first half of the dance. She patiently navigated us through some meanwhiles in both *Bonnie Ina Campbell* and *Chain Lynx*. At the interval between the first and second half of the dance we were joined by the Tartan Ball co-convenors, Laurie McConachie and Sandra Peden. They proceeded with the much anticipated draw for a free room at the Royal York on the night of the Tartan Ball. A lucky ticket holder from Ottawa was the winner. The MC for the second half of the dance was Halyna Sydorenko. After dancing *Granville Market*, Sandra was back out for the 50/50 draw. For the first time since she took over the draw, Sandra sold every ticket she had! The total raised was an amazing \$201 dollars and the \$100.50 was won by none other than our programme devisor, Tristan Gerrie. I had several positive comments about the programme and the second half didn't let us down. *In Memory of Marjorie* was new to me. With a chaperoned chain progression, it was both fun and challenging. The final dance of the evening was *Sleepy Maggie*, which was far from sleepy. The crowd enjoyed it so much that they demanded a 'once and to the bottom.' Laird and Warren generously obliged. Thanks to the 55 people who attended the November dance. Only three were non-members, and of the 52 members, four were young adults. I look forward to seeing them and many more at the December 13 Christmas Dance.

Max Fothergill, Monthly Dances Convenor

Bloorlea Social Group has a veteran in their midst



Alan Beveridge has always joined the Bloorlea social group in a kilt and on time — with one exception. On November 4, he joined the dancing with medals in place after he talked to grade 5 and 7 classes about his time in the Canadian forces.

Ron McNaughton

Scarborough SCD Club's Spooky Hallowe'en night antics

The Scarboro SCDers had such an enjoyable Monday night dancing during Hallowe'en week which featured "Spooky" dances, each with unique formations, such as *Black Magic* with all starting on the opposite side of the set and 4th couple leading "UP then Down," ending with an Up-Side-Down allemande, and *Ferla Mor* (The Big Grey Man), where in the tandem reels of three the first gentleman follows his lady in an 'ominous' fashion. *The Black Cat* caused much hilarity: the dancers ended up with a different partner at the end of the dance, which should not have been the case as this was not in the original instructions! The most challenging of all was the *Old Spedling Castle's Ghost's Dance*, where there was the appearance and disappearance of a mischievous ghost. It was a confusing evening to some extent but most enjoyable nevertheless.

HISCD

Nigel Keenan & Lourdes Genosa
Photo courtesy of Max Fothergill



L to R: Diane Coutts, Jackie Walsh, Nigel Keenan, Cheryl Waith-Taylor, Lynn Nicole Griffiths, Douglas Pickett, Lourdes Genosa, Jean Pantopoulos.

Here's a really enlightening podcast titled *9 Ways Dance Benefits Your Brain*. Enjoy!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dv-3TFGIjoQ&t=170s>

There are 72 episodes of *Hey Dancer* podcasts. This one is number 33.

West End Workshop

The West End Workshop will be held on March 28, 2026 at the Humberwood Community Centre in North Etobicoke. Our teacher from overseas will be Samuele Graziani of Bologna, Italy, and our local teacher will be Erica de Gannes of Toronto.

Fees for the full-day workshop -- which includes two classes with live music, lunch, and the afternoon tea dance -- will be \$85.00 for adults, and \$50.00 for young adults (35 and under). Don Bartlett and Laird Brown will play for the classes, and Scotch & Soda will provide the music for the tea dance. Admission for the tea dance only will be \$20.00.

Registration details will appear on the Toronto Association website at a later date. Please add WEW to your 2026 calendar.

A Teachers' Workshop will be held the day after the West End Workshop on March 29, 2026. It will be taught by Samuele Graziani and take place at Alderwood Community Centre in south Etobicoke.



ERICA de GANNES

Erica first encountered Scottish Country Dancing as an undergraduate at the University of St Andrews. While initially only planning to go to a few classes to support a friend who was teaching, she quickly became enamoured with the footwork and the music, and has been hooked ever since. Since moving back to Toronto, Erica has been involved with the Glenview Social Group and the Spadina Reels Social Group (formerly the Young Adults class) as both a dancer and a co-teacher, and has taught at other social groups and branch classes throughout Toronto. Erica completed her CTI (Core Training for Instructors) certificate in 2023, and is currently working on her teaching certificate. Other dancing highlights include helping to organize Spring Fling in Toronto in 2023, and dancing with the North American Team at the Newcastle Festival in 2024 and 2025. Erica currently serves on the Membership Services Committee of the RSCDS, and is passionate about spreading the joy of Scottish country dancing, particularly to younger dancers. When not dancing, she likes to knit and travel - both at the same time, if possible!

SAMUELE GRAZIANI

Born in Bologna, Italy, where he still lives, Samuele discovered dance during his university years. Fully certificated in St. Andrews in 2012, he is a founder of the Northern Italy Branch. In addition to weekly classes he has been teaching for over 25 years, he regularly teaches at the Summer School, the Winter School, and other international workshops. He practices Renaissance, Baroque, and 19th-century historical dance at a semi-professional level, continuously enriching his technical repertoire. He is passionate about art in general, music, photography, and re-enactment. He co-authored a history podcast and writes historical-scientific articles. During the lockdown, he and his family posted a video featuring a Scottish dance each day. Over 80 videos are available on his YouTube channel.



Happy Retirement, Denis Snowdon

Denis Snowdon has retired after 60 years of broadcasting Scottish culture, music, and dance. His radio broadcast, *A Little Breath of Scotland*, first aired October 21, 1965, on CHWO Radio in Oakville and it ran for 50 years on various GTA stations, and 10 years as a popular weekly podcast. Denis was a good friend to RSCDS Toronto, advertising our balls, classes, and ceilidhs. Many dancers joined him for trips he led to Scotland and other places. Denis wrote: *"I still have my scroll from the Toronto branch given at the 1999 Ball!"*



He shared a photo, recently received from Jan Lewandowski, an RSCDS teacher in Atlanta. It was taken at the 1984 Stone Mountain Highland Games Ball in Georgia. It shows some treasured memories for long-time dancers. On the left, Bob Blackie, renowned for his magnificent strathspey and many contributions to TAC; on the right, Stan Hamilton, legendary for his dance music. Denis is the handsome dancer in the middle. He remarked: *"Bob and Stan were teaching at the weekend. I hardly recognized myself with the beard! On a personal note, I am turning off the mic after 50 years on radio and 10 podcasting this month. I've downsized, and figure it's time. It's been a great run."*



Thank you, Denis, on behalf of Toronto dancers. What a long and vibrant career you've had! Best wishes in your retirement.

Rob Lockhart

To hear recent broadcasts: <https://www.mixcloud.com/alittlebreathofscotland/>

Grace Notes

The Toronto Association is sorry to inform the community of the loss of the following members of our community since our last issue. We welcome hearing your stories of what these people meant to you, and of their contributions to Scottish country dancing. We extend our condolences to their families.

John Hurd, 1928-2025

A professor at the University of Toronto, John founded the Trinity social group at Seeley Hall, UofT in 1973. He was spurred to take on this challenge by RSCDS founder Miss Milligan, who, upon examining him for his first certificate and learning he was at a university, said, "Now, Professor Hurd, you should go out and start a group." John taught the group for many years, and was active with TAC in the mid-1980s. At the ball celebrating the Trinity Group's 50th anniversary in 2023, the group was delighted to have him join in the festivities. An obituary from Trinity College can be found [here](#).



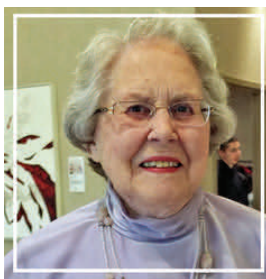
Maureen Richardson, 1952-2025

Maureen taught SCD since she was a young woman at Rosedale, and at many functions and groups of the Toronto Association. A beloved teacher for many in the Toronto area, Maureen left a wonderful legacy for others to admire. A full obituary can be found [here](#).



Betty Brannen, 1930-2025

Betty was a long time and enthusiastic member of the Calvin social group from 1985-2006, and a secretary for the Toronto Association for some years. Those who knew her say that dancing gave her great joy and even after she left Toronto, she would return often for dancing events in Toronto. A memorial service will be held on December 6 at Adam's Funeral Home in Barrie, ON. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made in her memory to CNIB Library Services, Sleeping Children Around the World, the MacTier Public Library, or The Barrie Hospice. A full obituary can be found [here](#).



Sandra Binns-Johnstone, 19xx-2025

Sandra began her dancing career as a Highland dancer at age nine, and then SCD. She taught children's classes at Rosedale in the 1960s, entered teams into festivals, and later adjudicated. She performed on demonstration teams, taught adults, and led workshops throughout North America. She also served as chair of the TAC from 1984-86. In her words: "I feel deeply that the core value throughout is to practise and preserve country dances as danced in Scotland, staying true to the traditions of the steps and formations. We should feel proud of our ability to still be dancing with joy and helpfulness."



Remembrances

Remembering Maureen Richardson

Maureen was a precious gift to all who knew her, and a tremendous help to me throughout my teaching. I wanted to share something Maureen spoke to me about in our last telephone chat a couple of weeks ago. The following are Maureen's words, and it is how she ended our conversation:

*I had a good life.
I grew up in a loving home.
I survived my teens.
I loved teaching, in schools and Scottish Country Dancing.
I have two wonderful sons and two wonderful grandchildren.
And I have wonderful, wonderful friends.
What more is there?*

So many of us loved her, and I was honoured to be considered one of Maureen's friends.

Teresa Lockhart



Remembering Sandra Binns-Johnstone

I remember Sandra Binns well. She was a teacher, with Sandy Bain, at a workshop in Belleville where she required us to know the colour of our partner's eyes when the dance ended. Sandra's eyes were a bright blue. On finding out I was a recent widower, she encouraged me to come to TAC Summer School, at Brock, for my summer vacation. That was 1985 and I went and met Joan. We are still together. Joan's eyes are brown.

Yours, forever dancing,

John F. Reeves



John and Joan Reeves on their 25th anniversary.



MAUREEN RICHARDSON A VERY SPECIAL LADY AND FRIEND

*Halyna Sydorenko,
with input from Jess Houseley, Cathy McKeever, and Aurora dancers
photography courtesy of Ron Macnaughton*

The Friday before Thanksgiving, before I went to teach at Aurora, I dropped in for a quick visit with Maureen. Tea was made, and with her drink of choice in hand, we chatted. We chatted about the past, a Teachers' Workshop where we partnered each other for an exercise of cue-taking. We chatted about the present, the new dancers at Aurora. And we chatted about the future, the return of the 2026 Tartan Ball to the Royal York. Maureen's eyes lit up. "I was either 14 or 16 when I attended my first Tartan Ball with Grace Harris." Not even a month later, Maureen was dancing with angels.

A lifelong educator, Maureen approached life with the belief that big things happen in small increments. In the spring of 2019, a new class was formed in Toronto to appeal to Millennials. A true millennial at heart, Maureen took turns teaching the first session with Gavin Keachie. Over the fall and winter, Maureen continued to support the class as it kept growing. Since the pandemic, the original Millennials have now evolved into the Spadina Reels social group. Maureen would say, "Give it five years and you'll see results of the seeds you plant."

In the 70s - 80s, Cathy McKeever was taught by Maureen as a child and teen. "Maureen was a young teacher assisting Grace Harris with classes and competition teams. Grace and the other local teachers had very high standards, which is what Maureen and our teams aspired to: details of steps, formations, and covering that we will never forget."

Maureen's influence was far and wide. She taught at South Simcoe (Alliston), Aurora, and Petronella. She was responsible for education and training on the Board, and she chaired the Youth Committee, supporting initial planning for Toronto's Spring Fling.

Retired Richmond Hill teacher Jess Houseley remembers that Maureen first came to Richmond Hill to dance. Over time she became involved with the teaching. Jess prepared the programs and music, and if Maureen wanted to teach, she would cherry pick from the program. Maureen loved being free to dance or teach if she felt like it. And the class benefited from her expertise, as did Jess. Jess and her husband Mike will never forget Maureen's joyful nature, her calmness, and the wisdom that she shared with everyone.

Everyone who knew Maureen is likely to have a personal story of how she touched others with her generosity and kindness. Louise Laroche, who dances at Aurora, was reluctant to go on her own to the last Tartan Ball at the Royal York. She recalls that Maureen did not hesitate to drive her to the Ball, and they also did the first dance together.

Agnes Vallejo, Aurora's former administrator, writes that Maureen was one of the kindest, most generous people she knew, always available to help solve problems, whether in dance or on a personal level. For example, she drove a dancer to the airport to pick up family because the dancer didn't like the 401! Always cool and calm, no job was too big for Maureen.

Stella and Andy Henderson tell me that one of Maureen's favourite phrases was "only four things to remember." Ah, yes, only a Scottish country dancer will understand. Aurora dancers also tell me that Maureen's strathspey dancing was always demonstrated beautifully each week. The day Maureen died, Agnes Vallejo wrote and dedicated a poem in Maureen's memory:

*She hears the noise of scuffling as we dance around the floor;
We look at her and say, "Not us", maybe somebody next door?
"Good try" she says, "Watch again and see exactly how it's done";
And she floats into a Demo that surely ranks as Number One!
A Strathspey without noise, a Scottish dancer's heavenly dream,
....danced by our friend and teacher Maureen.*

If you ever had Maureen as a teacher, did you notice that she always wore a kilt? Aurora's Wilma Medley did. So, when the Aurora social group first danced after the news of Maureen's passing, all of us came to class in tartan or a kilt. Before dancing the strathspey, *A Mug of Tea*, I read Agnes' poem and encouraged everyone to dance their quietest strathspey step possible, all the while thinking of Maureen. Then we posed in a semicircle to show off our tartan and kilts.

We are all the better for having known Maureen and for having shared with her the joy of dance. May you keep dancing with the angels, Maureen!



The first Millennials class at the West End Ball, May 2019, Maureen Richardson far left, Gavin Keachie centre.



Upcoming Events: NEAR (Ontario)

Toronto Monthly dances 2025/2026 — Dec. 13, Jan. 10, Mar. 14, Apr. 11. Note: ALL dances will have doors open at 7:30 p.m. with dancing starting at 8:00 p.m.

Tartan Ball Practices 2026 — Jan. 18 and Jan. 25 (Broadlands), Jan. 28 (Glenview), Feb. 1 (Broadlands), Feb. 4 (Glenview). See the front page.

Special Classes at Broadlands 2026 — Jan. 4, Feb. 15, Mar. 8, Apr. 19. 2:00-4:00 p.m. See details on page 2.

Dec. 5 — South Simcoe Christmas Celebration. Knox Presbyterian Church Hall, 160 King St. South, Alliston, L9R 1B9. [<map>](#). See details on page 4.

Dec. 6 — RSCDS Hamilton Branch Christmas Dance, MacNab Presbyterian Church, 116 MacNab St. S., Hamilton. Details on page 4. Tickets [here](#).

Dec. 17 — Glenview Christmas Dance. Glenview Presbyterian Church, 1 Glenview Avenue. [<map>](#). Details [here](#) and on page 4.

Dec. 19 — Peterborough December Dance & Dinner. 7:00 p.m. St. John's Anglican Church Hall, 99 Brock St., Peterborough. [<map>](#) www.pscds.ca

Dec. 31 — Glenview Hogmanay Dance and Ceilidh. Glenview Presbyterian Church, 1 Glenview Avenue. [<map>](#). Details [here](#) and on page 4.

2026 Jan. 23 — Peterborough January Dance & Burns Supper. 7:00 p.m. St. John's Anglican Church Hall, 99 Brock St., Peterborough. [<map>](#) www.pscds.ca

2026 Feb. 7 — The 60th Tartan Ball, THE ROYAL YORK HOTEL. Toronto. See details [here](#).

2026 Mar. 28 — West End Workshop. Humberwood Community Centre in north Etobicoke. Save the date. More details to come.

2026 Mar. 29 — West End Teachers' Workshop. Alderwood Centre, [2 Orianna Drive, Etobicoke](#). Save the date. More details to come.

2026 Apr. 25 — RSCDS Hamilton Branch Spring Ball. Programme [here](#). Contact: [Diana McKenzie](#). More details to come.

2026 May 9 — West Toronto Ball, Royal Canadian Legion. Port Credit, ON. Save the date. More details to come.

Upcoming Events: FAR (Out of province)

2026 Feb. 15-20 — RSCDS Winter School, Pitlochry, Scotland

2026 Feb. 27 - Mar. 1 — Oslo Winter Workshop, Norway

2026 Apr. 4 — North American Festival, Philadelphia, PA

2026 May 1-3 — Catalina Island Workshop & Ball, Southern California

2026 June 12-14 — CANMAC Scottish Country Dance Retreat, Harrington, QC

2026 July 19-Aug. 2 — TAC Summer School, Medicine Hat, AB

For up-to-date info on events near and far, and more, visit dancescottish.ca

Updates for the website should be directed to Rob Lockhart and Leo Roytman at website.rscdsta@gmail.com

Social Groups Need You!

Please support all your favourite social groups, and try out new ones. They are the life blood of the Toronto Association. For details about groups in the Toronto area, check out the Social Groups page [here](#).

Scheduled Dates of Next Board Meetings 2025-2026 season

December 7
January 11
February 1
March 1
April 12
April 26 (AGM)
May 3
June 7



RSCDS Toronto Association Board of Directors

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