

Alan Birchall & Jacqui Jax
CANADIAN LINE DANCE CLASSIC - ONTARIO

By Jacqui Jax

Our Ten day Canadian Adventure was everything we could've wished for and more!! Thanks to Judy McDonald for making it happen and inviting us to be part of the CLDC team in Ontario. From the warm welcome at Toronto airport to the amazing event... From the stunning winter wonderland of snow & ice at Niagara Falls to the multi-culturally diverse city of Toronto! Everything was WOW!!!!

Alan & I were thrilled to be invited to teach at the Canadian Line Dance Classic in Ontario, neither of us had been to Canada before so the excitement mounted each day as our flights grew nearer. We landed in Toronto late at night and quickly found the very bubbly Judy McDonald & Tina Veliotis, who had come to meet us. They both shared in our excitement as we drove to Saint Catharines and asked us on the way if we would like to go via Niagara Falls??... err YES!!!! We didn't need to be asked twice!!! It was a little spooky and dark as we stepped out of the car... and FREEZING!!!!!!!!!!!! Coats wrapped around us we walked carefully on the frozen ground, it was almost midnight and we couldn't see much at first but the 'sound' was incredible! (we discovered later that the Falls are illuminated till about 11pm) Alan's camera produced some great photos before we dived back into the car, knowing that we would be back to see this frozen spectacle again in daylight!!

Arriving more than a whole day before the event gave us a chance to adjust to the time difference, explore the hotel and go for a walk, the sun was shining but it was so so cold! In the evening we met two of Judy's dancers Ellen & Cynthia, who allowed us to gatecrash their game at the hotel's bowling alley!!

The event coincided with National LDF day in the UK (we would've been in Manchester), so with the help of David Laurin, who dropped us off near the Falls and DJ Aggie to hold the camera, we recorded a message from the frozen Niagara Falls for LDF Manchester and posted it on Facebook! We arrived back at the hotel to a very warm welcome from everyone at our first workshop where they soon got used to Alan's UK 'Bolton' accent!!!! LOL The atmosphere over the weekend was fun & relaxed. There were 3 workshop rooms running simultaneously and we taught dances of all levels & genres, two of which SNOW IN VEGAS & LISTEN TO THE MUSIC, we released at the event.

Our Workshop Dances

Listen To The Music (Intermediate - Nostalgic Pop)

Snow In Vegas (Improver - Gentle Country/Pop)

A Dance With No Name (Advanced - MJ Pop)

Powerful Stuff (Intermediate - Country)

Pointless (Easy Intermediate - Irish Pop)

Human-Dancer (Intermediate - Classic/Oldie)

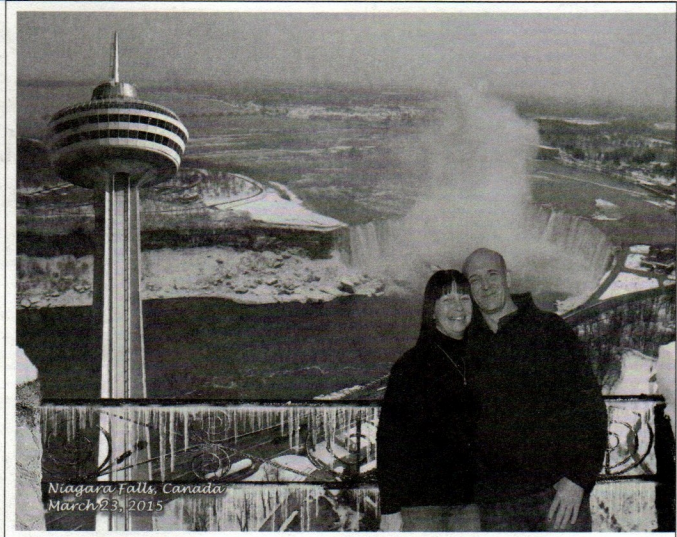
It was an honour be part of this 'fun loving' team, dancing with dancers from Canada & US, some we have met before and others we now have as new friends! Nothing beats dancing great classic dances with their choreographers... 'After Midnight' with Judy McDonald, 'The Way' with Gerard Murphy (thanks for the extra help Gerard) 'Backstreet Attitude' with Jamie Marshall... and the buzz of enthusiasm from those dancing 'Wave On Wave' & 'Somebody Like You' with Alan. It was also lovely to share the floor with Rhoda Lai who is so amazing to watch too, catch up with Mark Cosenza & Donna Laurin who we first met in Tampa, join in 'Shades Of Passion' with Tina Foster, and also a pleasure to meet Joey Prieur, DJ Aggie Aggmar & 'Keepin' It Country' DJ Lynn Warden.





So many people helped to make this event such a success and an experience we will never forget... we danced, we taught, we sang, we laughed and we had FUN with the amazing CLDC Team and some very enthusiastic dancers... "THANK YOU"... Then we relaxed and soaked up the delights of Niagara & Toronto.

With plenty suggestions from Judy and the local dancers, it was time to plan our next five days... First we enjoyed a whole day at Niagara Falls where the temperature remained well below zero even in the sunshine!! The US Falls covered in snow & ice were amazing but the Canadian Falls were absolutely stunning! We were so cold and covered in freezing flakes of ice from the mist by the time we reached the top of the Falls, that my fringe (which had escaped from my thermal hat) froze to my eye lashes and I couldn't blink!! Close by was the Skylon Tower which took us 800 feet above the maid of the mist pool, the immense cold meant that it was only possible to stay outside at the top for short periods at a time, and taking our gloves off to take photos was also done very quickly too!! But "WOW" worth it with such fantastic views in every direction!!



Next stop Toronto where for the first couple of days we wondered how we were going to survive walking around in the freezing temperatures! Then we discovered an underground world of shopping malls and food courts, where you could literally spend the whole day without seeing daylight, all linked together by Toronto's Downtown 30 km underground pedestrian walkway called PATH. We had fun exploring some of the of routes which join buildings, stations and department stores when finding our way back to our hotel... singing "Underground over ground wombling free..." LOL. It had to be experienced to be believed!

Top of the 'to do' list coming highly recommended was lunch at CN TOWER, the world's tallest tower! The glass lift (aka elevator) whizzed us up the outside of the tower to a revolving 360° restaurant in the sky. While we ate our luxurious lunch we enjoyed ever changing views of Toronto & Lake Ontario as the restaurant moved slowly round full circle before the clouds came down and blocked everything!! The large glass floor on the observation deck was scary, there is something inside you that says it's dangerous to step onto it, even though all the information given tells you it's safer & stronger than the actual floor you are standing on!!! After a lot of persuasion and hyperventilating as I did it we both walked 'quickly' across... as I was recovering Alan said we had to go back over it just to prove (to ourselves) that we had done it!!!! I didn't look down!!

Toronto's 'Hop-on Hop-off' City Sightseeing Bus Tour was an experience, in winter, only 2 or 3 run per day but worth it for the informative commentary... Oh nearly forgot the Canadians love our Queen... 'Queen VICTORIA' the very impressive oval-shaped Queen's Park full of trees and monuments borders 'Old Toronto', and they get very excited about their castle 'Casa Loma' which we caught a brief glimpse of after all the 'up to 80 floors high' buildings, our hotel room was on 23rd floor and that was high enough for me!! A glass of Champagne at Tiffany's... a meal at Hard Rock Cafe... and a visit to the Theatre to see "ONCE" on our last night was the perfect ending to our amazing 10 days in Canada

See script for Alan's dance, Listen To The Music in this issue