

LIFESTYLES

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Teens clogging on to contest stardom

By GARRY ALLISON
of The Herald

GLENWOOD — It's an insult if you call it tap.

It's clogging, and modern clogging at that.

However, the double-plated heels and toes on the specially constructed clogging shoes, allowing up to nine different sounds per step, do tap out a beat that's reminds one of tap dancing.

The history of clogging is long, and complicated.

One story traces it back to the Lancashire coal mines of England in the mid-1700s. Instead of steel-toed Oxfords the shoes were wooden-soled, like those worn in the mines.

There are traces of the Irish jig, Celtic folk dances, hornpipes, and even traditional English dances found in clogging.

Today, its names are varied, from clogging to buck dancing and flat-footing. The immigrants brought their dances to the Appalachian mountains in the 1700s and soon the mixture of African dance, some native Indian dances, and other ethnic steps found their way into the world of the clogger. From Nova Scotia to the mouth of the Mississippi, clogging, or step dancing, began to grow.

Modern era jazz movements, break dancing, street dancing moves and even figure skating all became intertwined with the cloggers. The pace quickened, steps were added and clogging became even more universal.

The history of clogging takes in the camp-fires along the Mississippi to the world of tap, which had a great influence. Steppers began to appear

on the Vaudeville stage, in minstrel shows, and at the Grand Ol' Opry with the Stony Mountain Cloggers — all with their own brand of clogging.

Today, almost anywhere there's a stage, music with a beat and enthusiastic dancers you'll hear the metallic fast-paced clatter of cloggers.

"My dad did step dancing and he came from the deep south," says Linda Shipley, mother of talented Paul and Becky Shipley, pairs champions at the recent Redcliff Western States Clogging Competition in St. George, Utah.

Modern clogging is far more up tempo, mainly adding double the moves to old-time clogging steps.

Becky says the idea is to put as many complicated steps into a routine as possible, generating a staccato of rhythmic noise.

Paul, 16 and Becky, 13, began clogging with the Chief Mountain Cloggers and have recently struck out on their own.

They brought home an armful of trophies and plaques from St. George.

Paul finished first in the intermediate freestyle competition and combined with his sister for the intermediate duet title at their age level, as well as the intermediate overall crown.

The duo also won first in the advanced duet competition for their age level, 16-17, and took the overall title in that event as well for the highest overall score. Becky also finished third in the intermediate freestyle event.

They will also compete in the United States National Championships at Orem, Utah July 1-2, during the Freedom Festival there.



HERALD PHOTO BY GARRY ALLISON
CHAMPIONSHIP DUO OF BECKY AND PAUL SHIPLEY

Success story starts in rural Glenwood

GLENWOOD — Cheese isn't the only thing putting this community of 350 people on the map.

Clogging is also leaving its footprint on the outside world.

The clogging Shipleys, Paul and Becky, will be competing in the National championships in the United States this summer and Paul is also involved in teaching.

Ted and Linda Shipley's Glenwood home has a mirrored wall and special masonite-floored clogging room, for practice and instruction.

Paul has about eight students, ranging in age from 10 to 70.

"You've got to teach the age groups differently," says Paul. "I love teaching and I want to see my students improve."

Sister Becky does not instruct but would like to some day.

"I want to turn clogging into a career," says Paul, who admits to being mocked by his friends in Cardston High School because of his dancing.

"It doesn't bother me much though," he says.

Now that he's won a major American clogging championship some friends are expressing interest in learning the very physical routines.

Clogging moves for a male are much more aggressive and physical than the female routines, Paul says.

The Shipleys began training three years ago with Tawnya Mackenzie-Gough of Taber.

Today, they know 80 or more intricate clogging steps, with names like the double, double knock, Bobbie step, Canadian step and the old-fashioned Canadian step. They heat out a steady, super-fast rhythm with their double-clapper shoes.

The Shipleys are a farming and ranching-based family in this area. Their ranch is along the Blue Trail and bordered on one side by the Waterton River. Ted also spent 13 years teaching at St. Mary's High School on the Blood Reserve.

Though they live in a small town the family doesn't feel their goals or opportunities in clogging have suffered.

Linda says the dancing, though strenuous, has helped build self-

esteem, generate a high level of fitness and even helped improve her children's school work.

"We don't need a city to accomplish what we have," she says. "We support our children and help them any way we can. We show them we are proud of them."

It was a desire to perform at the Calgary Stampede that enticed Paul to join some of his friends in clogging. A year later he was part of the Chief Mountain Stampede troupe.

"I first started with tap dancing when I was three," says Becky. "I kept at it until I was nine years old. Now I love clogging."

Most of the eight Shipley children and their two foster children have been into dance of one form or another through the years, says Linda who also happens to be a seamstress. She makes the costumes for her clogging kids, who spend more than an hour practising each day.

The costumes are important. They contribute to judging marks, similar to figure skating, and also help show off the dancers. Linda's latest creation is a red and white Canadian Maple Leaf design that wowed judges in St. George.

About a year ago the young duo decided they wanted to go further with their dancing and linked up with a long-distance coaching team from Utah, national champion brother and sister Brandon and Marlay Brownson.

Because of the distance the pair use instructive videos.

They began dancing to the videos last September and it wasn't until Christmas they met their coaches face-to-face.

The Christmas holidays were spent in intense five to six-hour training sessions in Salt Lake City. They didn't get back with their teachers until about three weeks before the St. George competition for two quick sessions to refine their act.

The Shipleys receive their video, study the steps and instructions then practise them, in front of a video camera.

Chief Mountain cloggers topline performers

MOUNTAIN VIEW — The Chief Mountain Cloggers have performed at the Calgary Stampede, Lethbridge Whoop-Up Days, at the Banff School of Fine Arts along with Red Skelton and in front of British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

They've worked with the Osmond family, at a Reform Party rally, at most southern Alberta fairs and rodeos and the Great Canadian Barn Dance each summer at Hill Spring.

One of the dance troupe's most recent successes was their Once Upon A Christmas presentation to sell-out audiences at the Carriage House Theatre in Cardston. They'll be back at the theatre this summer, says Rebecca Mackenzie.

The Christmas show also headlined Deedra Lybbert, Miss Rodeo Canada 1992 and Audra Foggan, runner-up in the Lethbridge Search for the Stars competition.

Rebecca Mackenzie is mother of the originators of the Chief Mountain Cloggers, Zana and Tawnya. The girls began performing on weekends at the Prince of Wales Hotel in Waterton Lakes National

Park in 1984 and eventually were joined by brothers Roderick and Kendyn.

Then neighbors started taking lessons from Tawnya and in 1991 the Chief Mountain Cloggers were born.

"The girls were the first to bring clogging into southern Alberta about 13 years ago," says Rebecca. "During the past 10 years they've travelled to workshops and clinics, including the National Clogging Convention in Nashville. a BYU clinic in Provo, Utah and clinics in Rexburg, Idaho and St. George, Utah.

"Tawnya has taken private lessons from BYU instructor Vicki Austin and from the United States' finest instructor, Jeff Parrott. She'll be in Nashville this fall for instructional clinics," says Rebecca.

The Chief Mountain Cloggers, consisting of youth aged 11 to 16, have just competed in the team event at the Ricks International Clogging Championships in Rexburg, Idaho.

They won the intermediate team title with a 9.6 score and then scored 9.8 from a possible 10 in

take the advanced team class. They qualified for the American national team championships May 21 in Lagoon, Utah.

As well, two individuals captured awards.

Rachel Goetz of Glenwood was first in the intermediate freestyle event and third in the advanced singles event. Sarah Goetz took first spot in the beginners freestyle.

Members of the winning team, coached by Tawnya Mackenzie-Gough of Taber, were Kristi Perry of Fort Macleod; Gesso Henry, Tine, Gary, Kevin and Kristie Morton of Del Bonita; Randi Allred and Lyndsay Byam of Raymond; Courtney Alston of Magrath; Rachel Goetz of Glenwood; Vicki Scott, Kendyn and Roderick Mackenzie of Mountain View.

Tawnya's first exposure to clogging was during a trip to Utah. Her instructor was Paula Nielson (Hartley). Tawnya now she has more than 60 students of her own and has presented clinics and workshops in many southern Alberta communities.

Clog team dancing is said to have originated in North Carolina in the

1920s and by the 1950s set routines had been developed.

Today, there are regional and national competitions throughout the United States, attracting from 1,000 to 4,000 dancers.

Counselling aids anxious parents

Dear Ann Landers: This is for the Indiana mother who tried everything to keep her 16-year-old daughter from continuing a relationship with an undesirable 18-year-old. You were right. It is the PARENTS who need counselling.

We have lived through four teens and have one more coming up. We too, made similar attempts to "protect" them. It didn't work. It just made them better liars. Once they learned that being honest only got them into trouble, they became very good at deception. My husband and I went to counselling over one of our boys, and it proved to be very helpful. We were amazed at how changes in OUR behavior made a difference in his.

Parents should decide which rules are going to be enforced (curfew, church attendance, substance control, homework time or whatever) and discuss them with their children. They should let their teen select his or her own friends but make it clear what the house rules are. We insist on meeting all new friends so we can get to know them. It's funny how fast some undesirables disappeared when they learned we wanted them to come to dinner, join us at church or help on a family project.

Two very good things have come out of this. Our kids learned on their own what to look for in friends and WE learned that some of the "undesirables" were really good kids who just needed a chance to be in a loving home. — A Happier Mom in Honolulu

Dear Hon: How refreshing to hear from a parent who admits she

made some mistakes. You can be sure your children appreciate your integrity and they will in turn be better parents because of it. Children tend to treat THEIR children the way they were treated.



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