
Central Park Dance Skaters Association

Newsletter

Editorial: Brent Nosworthy, Bob Nichols, Lezly Ziering, Maureen Eckert, Rosyln Dotson **Vol. 1 No. 1, 1995**

What's Up!

During recent weeks, the Central Park Dance Skaters' Association (CPDSA) has been working desperately to resolve the current crises on Skaters' Road. These efforts are beginning to pay off. The organization has:

- made initial contact with the city
- uncovered politicians willing to help reach a negotiated settlement
- retained legal counsel
- initiated the formal process of forming a non-profit corporation.

These, of course, are only interim results. We will do whatever it takes to either *negotiate* or *litigate* a solution which allows the return of dance skaters to Skaters' Road.

In the meantime, it is critically important to realize that the success of our negotiations also depends upon *how we conduct ourselves during this crises*.

Our legal counsel and every person contacted in the administration has stated clearly that any violent or extreme anti-social behavior will permanently ruin our chances for any mutually acceptable resolution of the current problems. -- Editor

Parks Department Cracks Down on Skaters' Music

Sent to City Agencies --March 31, 1995

The Central Park Dance Skaters' Association (CPDSA) represents a group of multi-ethnic and multi-cultural dancers/skaters who have met each weekend for more than eighteen years in Central Park. Over the years, we have entertained about a million spectators, and in our own small way helped change the negative preconceptions of many tourists, who came to New York expecting only racial intolerance and rampant crime.

Last Spring, in response to a "crackdown" on amplified music in Central Park a group of concerned dance skaters met with the Parks Department. A mutually acceptable solution was devised. The skaters agreed to monitor the volume of the music and a set of rules was established to, among other things, keep the area environmentally safe and clean for skaters and observers alike.

The Parks Department issued a document recognizing our contribution and designated our area as the Central Park Dance Skate Area. Laminated signs on Parks Department stationary were issued for us to post around the area.

We were visited periodically by Parks Department representatives who monitored our decibel levels and we complied with their every request to keep our sound levels from infringing on others' rights. We felt secure that we were doing a good job of moderating our volume since we were never notified of any complaints.

In early March, we read in the New York Daily News of the administration's new policy of "Zero Tolerance" of amplified music. Our efforts to reopen a dialog with the Parks Department have proven fruitless. During the last several weeks, there has been a heavy police presence in our area and absolutely no amplified music has been tolerated, not even at levels *below* last years' agreement.

As a temporary measure, individual skaters brought live entertainers into the area to provide music for the skaters in a fashion that conforms to existing Parks Department guidelines.

In recent years, our ranks have grown significantly to include in-line skaters and other fitness enthusiasts, and it has become apparent that we as a group, need to provide a structured environment to ensure that everyone continues to enjoy the park. To that end, we have formed the CPDSA. The goal of this newly-formed association is to open dialog with City officials concerning the lawful continuance of dance skating in Central Park.

With over 450 individuals have asked to join our association, our organization represents a majority of skaters on Skaters' Road. The CPDSA is eager to reach an amiable agreement with the Parks Department so that everyone can return to enjoying the park.

Organized Confusion

The new "zero tolerance" policy is confusing to everybody, in spite of innumerable theories offered as to why the crackdown policy is in effect. The question of "why," it seems to me, must be aside temporarily in light of the most pressing issue: what can we do.

It is important to keep in mind that *acting strategically* is better than *reacting*. The strategy is simple, and should cause no harm to anyone. The most important thing to do is simply to *keep coming to Skaters' Road*. It is that easy.

Come and skate without amplified music. Bring your Walkmans, bring acoustic instruments and please bring your friends and encourage skaters who are hesitant about skating without the sound system to sustain the presence. Of course, also sign the petitions, join the CPDSA and inquire about our fund-raising activities. It is also extremely important to keep a cool level head, especially with police/parks department officers.

Another thing that everyone can do is to write letters. You can fax and mail these letters to Captain Bayer, Commissioner Bratton, Park Commissioner Henry Stern and Mayor Guiliani. You can also give them to CPDSA staff members on Skater's Road (weekends) or the Roxy (Tuesday/Wednesday nights) or at Empire Roller Rink (Tuesday and Saturday nights.) -- Maureen Eckert

Name of The Game

We are an interracial, multi-ethnic community of skaters and dancers that has evolved into what we call the "Skate Circle," a small oasis of peace, harmony and brotherhood. Our group is composed of health conscious people of all ages, from the most diverse walks of life imaginable. We have gathered on weekends and holidays for the last nineteen years on Skaters' Road. We traditionally bring our music to the park and peacefully -with love in our hearts - dance on skates.

Thousands of tourists know us and flock to watch our art in progress. We are known internationally; people come from all over around the world to watch, photograph, film and videotape our activities and to share our experience.

Please be kind. Don't Litter!

The best part is that we give ourselves freely to NY -- we cost the city not one red cent. In this age of budget cuts we are not on the dole, we ask but one thing of our beloved city - "Let us Be!"

We are a caring community, we keep our area clean and are very kind to our environment. We welcome children into our midst and you will often see a group of youngsters of all races dancing and skating together under the tutelage of one of our number, who gives them his time, his sole remuneration being the joy in their faces and their eagerness to be part of "our thing."

So many of us look forward all week to our Saturdays and Sundays of skating in the park that we cannot conceive of a New York without our vibrant skate circle. Could you imagine Los Angeles without Venice Beach? -- Lezly Z.

The Skate Circle

Skaters Road is not a piece of pavement, it's a state of mind. For some strange reason, the city calls it "The Dead Road", but the skaters know better; for us it is vibrantly alive, it is roller skate central - holy ground. We can feel the living spirit of the place.

During the week it is a low-key friendly place where smiles and courtesy are the rule and novices can get expert advice from veteran skaters. On Skaters Road, we find the freedom that skaters experience when they are rolling, much like flying without leaving the ground. It is a unique sensation of weightlessness; by overcoming friction, we seem to defy the laws of gravity.

Each weekend The Skate Circle forms, we skate around an audio system playing popular dance music and celebrate life in our own unique way. Those of us who skate in the Circle carry a special knowledge in our hearts as we dance to the music: the secret of trust. You cannot skate in such a small area without placing your own safety in the hands of others. Call it love, or magic, the spirit of the Circle is the healing power of tolerance, goodwill and friendship.

We are adults who have learned to play together and by doing so have regained an innocence strong enough to overcome the fears that separate people in an increasingly polarized world. Despite differences of background, economic status and race, we've learned to look into the rainbow of faces of our fellow skaters and to see real people, friends. We have grown to become better people by joining together in this joyous celebration of music and dance. In our own small way, we have the certain knowledge that we played our part making the world a better place.

In a world increasingly tainted by distrust and prejudice, our example of mutual respect and caring must not be allowed to die.

The Central Park Skate Circle Lives! -- Bob Nichols

Official Contacts

The effort to resolve the current Skaters' Road crises is a massive undertaking that requires a collective effort. Many different types of talents are needed. We need artists, writers, photographers, etc. as well as people willing to roll up their sleeves and perform some old fashioned hard work! If you are interested in helping us, please let us know. All inquiries should be directed to: Brent Nosworthy (718)-797-0592
Lezly Ziering: (212) 777-3232
Bob Nichols (212) 246- 1344

Please be kind. Don't Litter!