

A place for everyone to dance

By TAMSIN JONES FARMER

"All That Jazz" School of Dance has a very conscious philosophy to create within their studio "a place for everyone" said owners Karren Day and Tracy Kendas.

Practically, this means that they offer a wide range of classes for all shapes and sizes, ages and levels. Whether you are an accomplished dancer with years of training in ballet, jazz, or tap, or you are an adult whose feet have never touched soft shoes (fuzzy slippers excepted!) you can find a class at "All That Jazz" to suit your wishes.

An excellent example of this is Helen Gordon who, at the age of 77, might indeed be one of the most senior members in the school. Helen was not entirely a

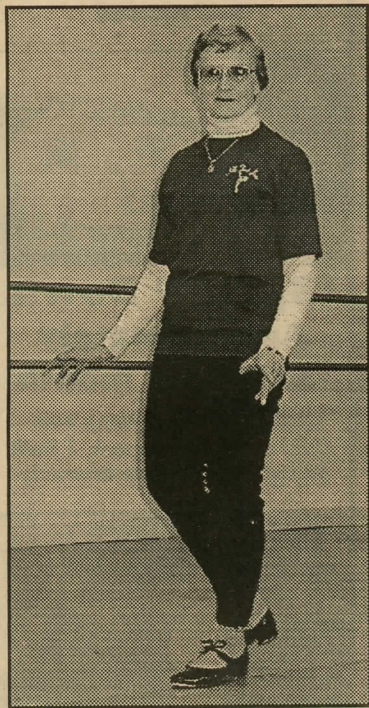
beginner to tap dancing, having learnt to tap by imitating the older girls at the boarding school in Saskatchewan she attended as a girl. As an adolescent she went on to choreograph and perform dance pieces at various community shows. But soon thereafter, occupied with the business of life, she forgot all about dancing.

She moved to Fort St. John in 1963 with her husband and four children. She kept herself physically active for two decades as a fitness teacher. When that finished she began to wonder about taking some dance lessons again and asked around but none were being offered, that is, until October of last year when "All That Jazz" opened its doors. Although she admits that "the music nowadays is not my type,

shall we say" and that "the thought of performing still sends shivers down my spine", Helen is very happy about the adult class she takes with five other men and women.

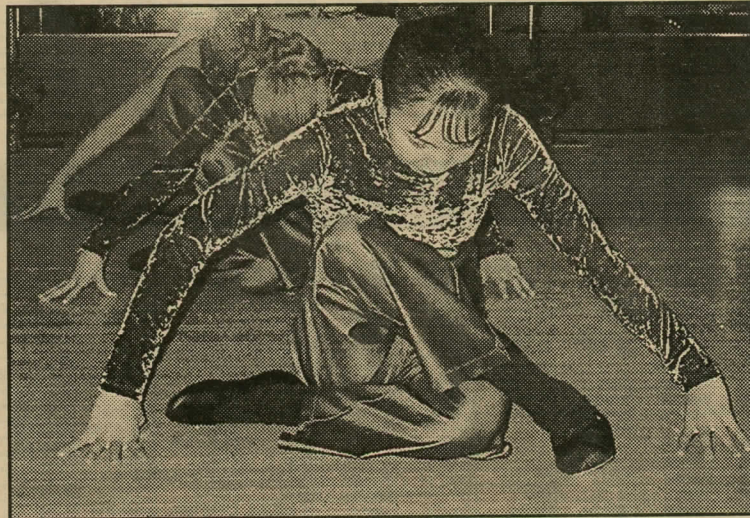
"All That Jazz" gave an informal performance last week at the Cultural Centre against the backdrop of the Festival of Trees. The performance was a wonderful showcase of their diversity, with young and old, recreational and company dancers.

Watch for upcoming performances in different places throughout the city. With classes such as Dance With Disney (for preschoolers) and a Funk class (just for boys!) beginning in the new term, these shows should be just as fun to watch - or perform in. That is, after all, their motto.



Helen Gordon, 77, proves you're never too old to dance.

- photo by Tamsin Jones Farmer



"All that Jazz" dancers performed at the Cultural Centre's Festival of Trees last week.

- photo by Tamsin Jones Farmer

All That Jazz dance studio now in full swing and still growing in Fort St. John

After just two years in operation, All That Jazz is in full swing and still growing strong.

Karren Day and Tracy Kendus felt that there was a need for another dance studio in Fort St. John, and so they opened All That Jazz for anyone who wants to dance.

"It's grown tremendously at a pace we never expected," said Day. "Our focus is basically on dancing being fun."

And fun it is! The studio offers ballet, tap, jazz, musical theatre, hip hop, lyrical and combination classes (typically for preschool children). They also offer term classes in swing dance and country dance or anything else their might be an interest in.

"Anything there's a need for we'll find a teacher somewhere," said Day.

All That Jazz offers classes to any age and you don't have to be a

This premise shows itself through registration and they have about 250 - 300 students signed up right now and Day is forecasting a 10 to 20 percent increase next year. They usually have waitlists in September for classes.

Both studios are pretty much full all week long," she said. Day takes care of the marketing end of the business and Kendus teaches ballet. Altogether the studio has four senior instructors and six junior instructors.

"There's something here for everyone and we do a lot of fun things," said Day. "We do have a competitive component to our studio but it is a small contingent."

Despite the competitive components size, many All That Jazz dancers have come home from competitions with trophies and medals. One young dancer has even been asked to join the Royal

There's something here for everyone.

- Karren Day



professional dancer to sign up. Their oldest student is 77 and their youngest is two. They also have many classes for teenagers just starting out.

"We like to see kids come and dance no matter what their size, age, skill, it doesn't matter," said Day. "We work on the premise that everyone can dance."

Whimpeg Ballet's professional ballet program. Some of the dancers will be competing in the BC Festival of the Arts in Fort St. John at the end of the month.

So no matter your skill level, or where you want to go as a dancer, there is something for you at All That Jazz. Be sure to stop in and check it out



All That Jazz

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Potter sculpture unveiled

2001

MICHAEL PURVIS
ALASKA HIGHWAY NEWS

Harry Potter mania hit Fort St. John Wednesday night.

After nearly three days of chipping through 1,100 kilograms of ice, Peter Vogelaar completed his Harry Potter ice sculpture by placing a burning candle into a wizard's lantern made of ice.

"I'm really honoured to present it to you and hope that it lasts more than a few days," said Vogelaar to a crowd who had gathered outside the North Peace Leisure Pool Wednesday night for the unveiling.

Vogelaar was brought to Fort St. John by the Fort St. John Community Arts Council and was commissioned to build the Harry Potter sculpture by the City of Fort St. John for the Festival of Northern Ice Lights. Vogelaar is also a former Fort St. John resident, having competed with his team at snow sculpting at the Nagano Winter Olympics in Japan.

The roughly two-metre work of art joined several others completed on the weekend during an ice sculpting workshop in Centennial Park.

How long they'll stay outside the pool is hard to say.

"Weather wise it should last for weeks and weeks as long as you guys don't have another chinook," Vogelaar said.

But for Vogelaar it doesn't matter so much how long the sculpture lasts because he views it more as performance art.

"If 100 kids are amazed with this that's great," he explained.

Is it worth it to the city?

"Oh, I think so. The kids are finding Harry Potter fantastic," said city operations manager John Locher.

Busy over the last few days, both with the sculpture and with presentations at the city's elementary schools, the Olympic snow sculptor said he had a full plate, but figured it took him about 2 1/2-3 days to complete Harry Potter.

"And that was with the help of the city crew who helped me stack the ice because we started with 2,500 pounds," laughed Vogelaar.

A familiar face at the city's events leading up to their bid for the Winter Lights Celebration competition, Eliza Stanford was there Wednesday night for the unveiling, digital camera in hand.

"Seeing everything starting from noth-



Michael Purvis photo

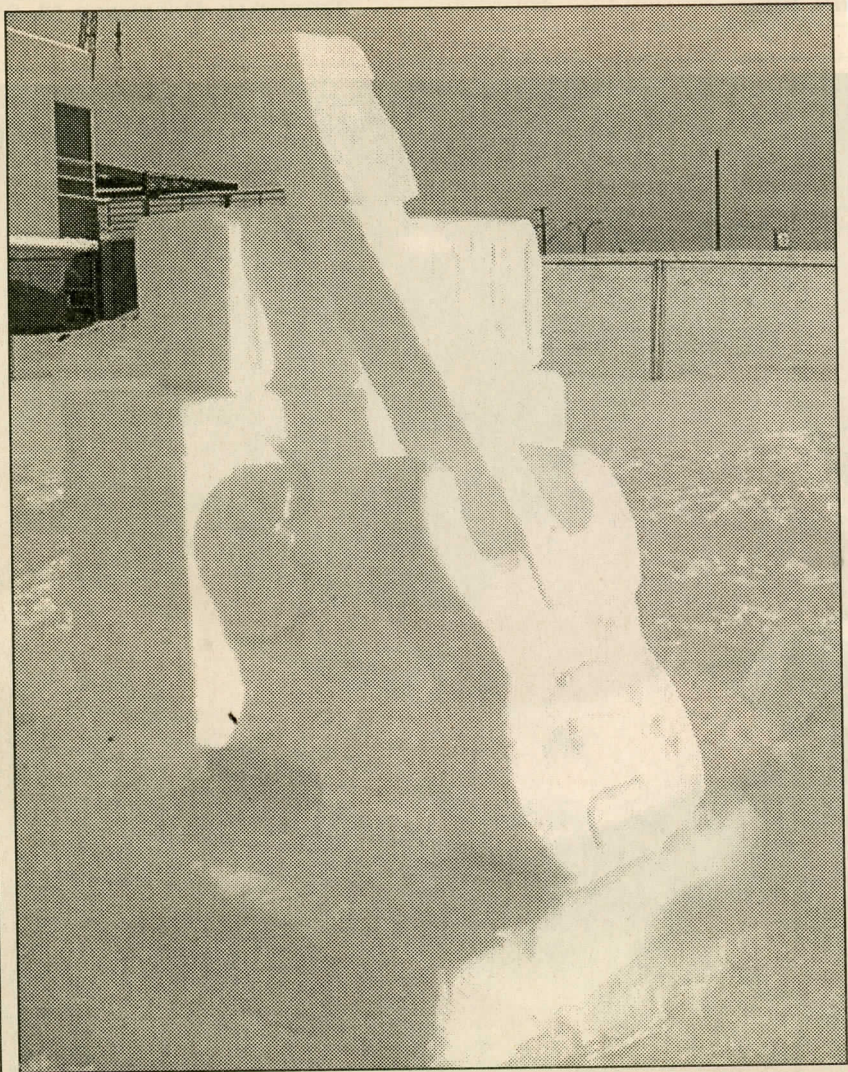
Brittney Domeij, 8, and Dane Domeij, 9, admire a Harry Potter sculpture by Olympic sculptor Peter Vogelaar just before its unveiling Wednesday night. Made from blocks of ice weighing a total of 1,100 kilograms, the sculpture was commissioned by the City of Fort St. John for the Festival of Northern Ice Lights.

ing to this is absolutely amazing," said Stanford.

Images captured by Stanford were edited into a short video by Cole Busche of Eagle Vision Video Productions Ltd., something that had the Winter Lights

Celebrations judges impressed.

"It was really well put together," said Ted Blowes, a judge and former mayor of Stratford, Ont. "It is, I think, an excellent tool to promote this program to other communities."



contributed photo

ALL TUNED UP

DEC 13, 2001

Kim Ans's Grade 12 art class at North Peace Secondary School took part in a snow sculpting workshop led by world renowned snow sculptor Peter Vogelaar last Friday. The event was put on by the Fort St. John Community Arts Council. The six-foot high snow blocks used in the workshop were built by Larry Evans, Lisa Bush, Wayne Cheesman, Stephen Petrucci and the City of Fort St. John. Vandals, though, destroyed the volunteers and students' hard work last weekend.



IN RECOGNITION

Michael Purvis photo

Lisa Bush, left, and Laurie Petrucci of the Fort St. John Community Arts Council accept a certificate of recognition from city councillor Karen Simpson, at Monday's regular council meeting, for the snow and ice sculpture workshop held during the Northern Ice Lights Festival in December.

Judges tour Fort St. John

Dec. 2001

NATHANIEL SWIRES
ALASKA HIGHWAY NEWS

The national judges for the Winter Lights Celebration toured Fort St. John Tuesday.

After having dinner at Ryanz Neighbourhood Restaurant with members of the Fort St. John city council, judges Ted Blowes of Strathford, Ont. and Heather Edwards of Coquitlam, B.C. began their judging tour at the Fort St. John Hospital.

"I was super impressed with the decoration of the hospital," said Blowes.

He also commented about the Fort St. John Hospital Foundation's fundraising ability this year.

"There seems to be a good community spirit (in Fort St. John)," he said.

Following the hospital tour the judges boarded a bus and were shown parts of the town.

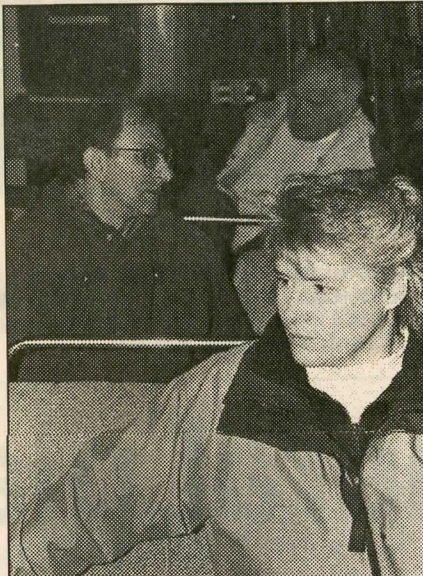
"It was great, a lot of nicely done houses and community participation," said Edwards, commenting about the tour. "Fort St. John is as good as any community we've seen."

Edwards admitted she did feel Fort St. John did have an advantage over some other communities.

"You have the advantage of having snow," she said. "It feels a lot more festive having snow."

The judges are continuing their evaluation of the town Wednesday, Dec. 12 through Thursday, Dec. 13.

"What we are evaluating the community for is not just quality of life for local residents, but also



Michael Heintzman and Nathaniel Swires photos

The national judges for the Winter Lights Celebration viewed many aspects of winter and holiday decorating about Fort St. John Tuesday, both inside and outside. Artist and former Fort St. John resident Peter Vogelaar put the finishing touches on the ice sculpture he created for the Fort St. John Community Arts Council at the North Peace Leisure Pool, which will be unveiled along with other ice sculptures Wednesday evening.

Airdrie, Alta.; and Portage La Prairie, Man. in the 10,000-20,000 population category of the Winter Lights Celebration.

According to the judges, this is



for tourism appeal," Blowes said.

Edwards agreed with him, saying the house and business lights were but one aspect of the overall picture. Judging takes into account what a community has to offer all through the winter season from November to March, she said.

"We want to look at what makes your community tick in the winter," said Edwards.

The judges will be shown a video of this year's Santa Claus Parade Wednesday.

Fort St. John is competing with Cobourg, Ont.; Rosemere, Que.;

**Fort St.
John is as
good as
any
community
we've seen.**

— Heather Edwards

announced at the awards ceremonies in Ottawa, Feb 8-9," said Blowes.

The two judges will travel to Airdrie on Thursday.

the first year of the celebration, which is an extension of the Communities in Bloom program.

"Nobody was quite sure how many communities would get in on the first year," said Edwards.

Some 30 communities are participating in the winter program this year, she added.

Fort St. John will not know until February as to the results of the competition.

"Winners will be

