

## SQUAREUPB.C. Report

to the Board of Directors Meeting via ONLINE Video Conference  
of the B.C. Square & Round Dance Federation – March 28, 2020

***Note that this report contains active internet links that should be “clickable” as long as the document is in electronic form (digital)***

For those who are unaware, SQUAREUPB.C. is a marketing initiative of the Federation, established in 1991 and chaired by Brian Elmer of West Kelowna, who serves in an appointed position.

SQUAREUPB.C.'s goal to maintain a marketing approach requires that attention be given to designing an attractive product or service that fulfills the needs and wants of a defined population demographic, presenting it at a desirable place or location for a competitive price before launching the promotion or advertising. Some demographic groups, such as Boomers, relate quality to price.

In our dance forms of square dancing, round dancing and clogging we have a time-tested, quality product (service) in which we firmly believe. Importantly, though, we must adapt each dance form to meet the needs and wants of people in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. After such adaptation, we have to let people know about the dance forms, their benefits and their availability.

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### ***Effects on our Recreation Due to the Winter/Spring 2020 Covid-19 Virus Pandemic***

It's certainly a challenge for our social recreation of square, round and clog dancing to promote itself at the time of this Coronavirus Pandemic. Basically, we can't promote our activity for participation at the current time but we can look ahead to the future.

One thing that we can do now is to design strategies for recruitment once the pandemic is declared over. Those strategies should perhaps be designated “Plan A, B, C” etc. because recruitment will probably require some adaptation, especially when the public will probably remain leery about close human interaction.

If “social distancing” is the pandemic-conscious phrase right now, perhaps “social re-connecting” is the phrase we should consider launching once the coronavirus is defeated.

### ***The Digital Age to the Rescue***

At the current time, in defiance of the virus, we're seeing some innovative ways to share the dance forms that we love so much.

An example is the international clog dance community that has launched a weekly “Worldwide Clogging Fun Dance” via the internet. Over 3 half-hour segments, each from a different city, leading clogging cuer-teachers are entertaining cloggers all over the world. They're clogging in their homes and webcasting their segments live through YouTube. The first webcast achieved 1,400 connections at its peak during the 90-minute duration.

Technically, a webcast can be conducted simply with a laptop wherein the built-in camera captures the image and the built-in microphone picks up the sound (but place the originating sound, such as a p.a. speaker having both the caller-cuer's voice mixed with the music, close to it for clarity).

The webcasts began Saturday March 21 at 5 pm PDT and the plan is for them to continue weekly on the same day at the same time. Each webcast is recorded and posted for later viewing on YouTube, complete with the many “chat comments” from the original webcast, shown on the right of the screen. Access has been via one of two clog dance web sites:

[www.clogdancing.com](http://www.clogdancing.com) or [www.doubletoetimes.com](http://www.doubletoetimes.com).

See the first Sat. March 21 Fun Dance at the following link: <https://youtu.be/ksRqgfgmGMO>

Thanks to social media vehicles like Facebook and Twitter, your B.C. Federation is posting updates regarding the impact of the pandemic on our activity, particularly as relates to our province. See:

[www.facebook.com/bcsquareandrounddancefederation](http://www.facebook.com/bcsquareandrounddancefederation)

[www.twitter.com/bcfeddancenews](http://www.twitter.com/bcfeddancenews)

[www.twitter.com/bcfedlive](http://www.twitter.com/bcfedlive)

### ***How Might Round Dancing or Square Dancing Defy the Pandemic in the Digital Age?***

The same approach could apply well to round dancing, where round dance enthusiasts could dance in their homes (perhaps around their kitchen island, if any?!), led by round dance cuer-teachers via a live YouTube webcast. Not only might presenters cue complete rounds but they could also workshop steps in select rhythms.

There might be some applications, too, for square dancing, where caller-teachers perhaps workshop some calls or speak on topics enhancing the activity or reflect on memorable moments over time.

### ***When Will Things Return to Normal? -- It Might Take Months***

Again, leaders in our recreation need to start thinking about Plan A, B & C, etc.

Regarding when this will all be over, a CTV News report of March 26 relates:

Ashleigh Tuite is...an expert in developing mathematical models to forecast the spread of infectious diseases... she's part of a team at the University of Toronto that has been given federal money to specifically model the COVID-19 pandemic.

But when it comes to what may happen next in Canada, Tuite has no special insight. "I don't know is the honest answer."

Asked at a press conference Wednesday (March 25) about how long it might take the country to start returning to normal, Dr. Howard Njoo, the country's deputy chief public health officer, responded that "if you look at the science and the evidence... it's not days and weeks, but certainly months that this pandemic will endure."

(source: <https://www.ctvnews.ca/health/coronavirus/when-will-canada-pass-the-peak-of-covid-19-even-the-experts-don-t-know-1.4869852>)

### ***The Year in Review***

Reflecting upon the efforts by your SQUAREUPB.C. marketing initiative since the Spring of 2019, here's a point form summary:

- Following the Winter 2019 campaign, additional paid advertising on Facebook promoted some early summer square dance lessons in Burnaby
- Public awareness of Festival 2019 in Salmon Arm benefited from paid advertising on 6 different commercial radio stations in the Thompson-Shuswap, Columbia Valley and North Okanagan, covering the cities of Kamloops, Salmon Arm, Vernon, Revelstoke and Golden
- Press releases and community calendar announcements in support of the Festival went out to media outlets
- A dedicated Facebook page promoted the Festival before, during and after (with “Reflections” posts). See: <https://www.facebook.com/BCFestival2019/> Most of the posts were cross-promoted on the B.C. Federation's Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/BCSquareAndRoundDanceFederation/>

- Much of the Festival activity was also reflected on Twitter, including the Festival's own Twitter page at: <https://twitter.com/bcfestival2019> and Federation pages including: [www.twitter.com/bcfeddancenews](http://www.twitter.com/bcfeddancenews) and [www.twitter.com/bcfedlive](http://www.twitter.com/bcfedlive)
- Our member clubs were made aware of the provincial proclamation of Square & Round Dance Awareness Week. See the 2019 Proclamation at: <http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/proclamations/proclamations/SqrRndDncAwrWk2019>. Our special week this year should be Sunday Sept. 20 to Saturday Sept. 26. For the next declaration, monitor the B.C. Government's web page showing various 2020 Proclamations at: <http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/proclamations/proclamations/2020procs>
- Two different paid Facebook advertising campaigns promoted lessons presented by our member clubs in the Fall of 2019 and Winter of 2020. A total of 58 individual ads overall were produced and launched. Some clubs supplemented their Federation funding with additional money. (Note that if your dance club conducted lessons and received Facebook advertising, your full analytical profile can be furnished to you by contacting: [brian@squaredance.bc.ca](mailto:brian@squaredance.bc.ca).) Despite limited provincial funding for the ads that's only reaching about 20% of the new dancer prospects for each club, the campaigns resulted in the following:
  - Fall campaign saw 280,372 appearances of one or more of our club lesson ads on Facebook screens around the province. Of those appearances, 81,649 Facebook users saw one of the ads at least once and 3,537 "clicked" within the ad seeking more information about lessons in their city
  - 36 individual ads were produced for the Fall campaign, wherein some were multiples for the same club where needed, such as the first ad promoting an open house then the second advertising the first regular lesson. Unless the club supplemented the funding, the allotted dollar amount for a given club was split over the multiple ads.
  - The club ad that saw the best response by Facebook users was that for Okanagan Cloggin' in the Central Okanagan Valley. 430 Facebook users clicked within their ad seeking clog dance lesson information. It utilized action video of clogging which would be ideal also for square and round dancing if well-produced and about 15 seconds in duration. See the actual 50-second ad, with sound, at the following link: <https://www.facebook.com/423356377709725/posts/450545652482050>
  - Winter campaign saw 525,422 appearances of one or more of our club lesson ads on Facebook screens around the province. Of those appearances, 102,816 Facebook users saw one of the ads at least once and 6,032 "clicked" within the ad seeking more information about lessons in their city
  - 22 individual ads were produced for the Winter campaign, wherein some were multiples for the same club where needed, such as the first ad promoting an open house then the second advertising the first regular lesson. Unless the club supplemented the funding, the allotted dollar amount for a given club was split over the multiple ads.
  - One notable Facebook ad during the Winter campaign was that for the Valley Promenaders, a new Thursday afternoon square/round dance club in the Western Fraser Valley (Abbotsford, Aldergrove, Langley). Supplemented funding allowed for 3 different ads to run consecutively, promoting their free square dance lessons with an introduction to round dancing throughout February. The second of the three ads promoted their "free chili, cornbread & salad lunch," featured during their Grand Opening event. Overall, the club's Facebook campaign saw 70,562 appearances of one or more of the ads on Facebook screens in the 3 cities. Of those appearances, 19,322 Facebook users saw one of the ads at least once and 705 Facebook users clicked within one of the ads seeking more information. See the actual 15-second ad for the Grand Opening week (no sound) at the following link: [https://www.facebook.com/423356377709725/posts/2932444436800894?dco\\_ad\\_id=23844364009970365](https://www.facebook.com/423356377709725/posts/2932444436800894?dco_ad_id=23844364009970365)
- Several clubs were assisted by SQUAREUPB.C. with regard to no-cost community calendar announcements (CCA's). CCA's submitted in the North Okanagan in support of lessons at the Vernon branch of Got 2B Cloggin resulted in several media postings such as:
  - Infotel online news, Vernon: <https://infotel.ca/events/lessons-in-contemporary-precision-clog-dancing/3-24967>
  - Global TV News, Okanagan Valley: <https://globalnews.ca/event/6482304/lessons-in-contemporary-precision-clog-dancing/>
- Some other clubs were assisted with no-cost press releases, such as one for Nanaimo's Amalgam-Eighters & Travelling Squares' combined new square dancer lessons. Another for the new Valley Promenaders in the Western Fraser Valley resulted in reproduction, at least in part, in the February 13/20 issue of the Aldergrove Star newspaper. See it at: <https://www.aldergrovestar.com/entertainment/new-square-dance-club-offers-free-lessons-in-february/>

### ***Paid Facebook Advertising Strategy***

An extraordinary commitment of time and effort by the SQUAREUPB.C. marketing initiative over 2019 & 2020 has been toward the research, design and launch of paid Facebook advertising in support of member clubs and Associations.

This dance season there have been 58 separate ads shown in their relevant cities around the province within two campaigns. The ads were exclusively for member clubs or associations conducting new dancer sessions in square, round or clog dancing.

Once a given ad is launched, the club to which it relates is notified by e-mail and furnished with links to the ad and a special "sharing link" wherein it can be more broadly distributed at no extra cost.

If a club or association wishes to boost their Facebook advertising's effectiveness, additional funding can be directed to the Federation's treasurer, Pat Zeeman ([bcfedtreasurer@gmail.com](mailto:bcfedtreasurer@gmail.com)) and it will be applied only to that group's individual campaign, which some member clubs and associations have done.

In actual fact, our purchase of Facebook advertising includes exposure on the Instagram platform but it is a much smaller part of the campaigns, so the concentration in reporting will be upon Facebook.

It's requested, please, that all our clubs survey newcomers and report their findings regarding all the different elements that they felt influenced them to participate. Several of our clubs did take time to report when they noticed that the advertising on Facebook was producing notable results.

Our strategy to utilize Facebook for the purchase of advertising is motivated by the fact that few, if any, other paid advertising avenues give us such a chance to interact with our potential customers. Facebook is powerful.

The essence of our advertising effort is to influence people to try one or more of our dance forms. That's not to mention the broader purpose of building awareness, creating a "position" amidst the myriad of recreational activities and trying to improve our image.

Facebook furnishes us with analytics (calculations) that show how many thousands of Facebook users were exposed to our advertising in terms of "reach" and how many of them "clicked" seeking lesson details.

We can place the advertising with careful attention to geographics and demographics. "Market segmentation" is necessary in advertising today. Statistics are available to us that show how men & women in various age ranges are responding to our ads.

Most valuable is Facebook's ability to interact with new dancer prospects--potential customers--relative to the paid Facebook advertising program under the SQUAREUPB.C. marketing initiative.

Upon seeing one our ads, a Facebook user can like, love, share or comment and many do.

When a user asks a question, SQUAREUPB.C. responds on behalf of the dance club in question. That's a function that a representative from your club can perform.

Having a list of all new dance lesson offerings, SQUAREUPB.C. can direct a new dancer prospect elsewhere if a day, time or location doesn't suit them.

Few, if any, other paid advertising avenues give us such a chance to interact with our potential customers. Facebook is effective for the following reasons:

- Advertising that reaches the chosen geographic & demographic targets
- Interaction with potential new dancers
- The ability to evaluate the advertising, given the funding invested

### **Outside Funding for Your Dance Lesson Advertising**

In the fall of 2019, a promotion of lessons on Facebook for one of our member clubs in the Central Okanagan Valley was granted \$500 by Valley First Credit Union under their “Simple Generosity” program. The business is a division of First Credit Union.

It was learned that a Seniors Centre in the region also applied for and received the same dollar amount for their programs.

This grant program is continuing in 2020 and our member clubs are encouraged to consider applying for funding. Note, though, that the credit union limits the grant program to select areas of B.C. (see their website)

The grant program organizers at Valley First state the following:

*Our Simple Generosity Neighbourhood grants program is supporting local grassroots ideas, events and initiatives that are focused on building stronger and more connected communities. Through the program, we will be gifting \$60,000 in grants throughout 2020, ranging from \$100-\$500 to local volunteers, groups and neighbourhoods that are sharing simple ideas to help our communities thrive. Please feel free to share with your networks, partners and community groups!*

*You can learn more about the grant program and apply online through our website;  
<https://www.valleyfirst.com/community-leadership/simple-generosity>*

*We'll be posting information about our grant recipients on our social channels with the hashtag #SimpleGenerosity. You can also find more information on the recipients and the program on [Do Some Good](#), our community partner in #SimpleGenerosity.*

### **Marketing Tools**

Our B.C. Federation and the SQUAREUPB.C. marketing initiative maintain several communication and social media “tools” to advance our great recreation:

- The Federation web site known as “The Dance Connection:” [www.squaredance.bc.ca](http://www.squaredance.bc.ca)
- Toll-free Dance INFOLINE – 1-800-335-9433
- The 10 minute “Dancing Keeps You Young” promotional video on YouTube: [DancingKeepsYouYoung.ca](http://DancingKeepsYouYoung.ca) (or .com). The video has now achieved 15,430 views since its original launch in July, 2010. That’s up 998 views from 14,432 a year ago.
- The promotional “landing page” at [www.squaredancefun.info](http://www.squaredancefun.info), which is a list of all our member clubs that conduct beginner dance lessons, including rounds and clogging. Facebook users are sent there when they “click” on one of our paid ads.
- Social media pages:
  - Facebook – now having achieved 593 “follows” (529 a year ago) and 563 “likes” (517 a year ago): [www.Facebook.com/BCSquareAndRoundDanceFederation](http://www.Facebook.com/BCSquareAndRoundDanceFederation)
  - Twitter: [www.twitter.com/bcfeDDancenews](http://www.twitter.com/bcfeDDancenews) – now with 96 “followers” (93 a year ago) and [www.twitter.com/bcfedlive](http://www.twitter.com/bcfedlive) – now with 90 “followers” (87 a year ago)

***Marketing Assistance Available & Consider Joining the SQUAREUPB.C. Team***

SQUAREUPB.C. is available to assist regional promotion committees or club promotion/marketing persons.

Contact Brian Elmer by phone at 250-768-2694 (toll-free: 1-800-335-9433) or e-mail [brian@squaredance.bc.ca](mailto:brian@squaredance.bc.ca)

If you have marketing training or are just interested in professional-style marketing of our great recreation, your volunteer assistance will be very welcome. SQUAREUPB.C. was intended to be a team effort. Just call or e-mail to join in.

This concludes the SQUAREUPB.C. report to the Board of Directors online meeting by video conference, scheduled for 10 am PDT Saturday March 28, 2020.

Respectfully submitted,  
Brian Elmer, West Kelowna - SQUAREUPB.C. Chairperson