

**Report to the April 30, 2023 B.C. Square & Round Dance Federation  
Annual General Meeting via the Zoom Videoconferencing Platform  
By Brian Elmer, Director-at-Large for Region 3, Okanagan Valley  
*brian@squaredance.bc.ca***

**Summary of Activity in Region 3**

**Okanagan Square & Round Dance Association**

A total of five (5) dance clubs comprise the activity in Region 3 under the Okanagan Square & Round Dance Association, involving 3 different dance forms:

1. Star Country Squares
2. Rhythm Rounds
3. Okanagan Cloggin'
4. Westsyde Squares
5. Westside Youth Square Dance Club

Most all of the member clubs have resumed regular dancing and have welcomed beginners. Some have only undertaken select events.

At this point, the Association's Executive is working behind-the-scenes until formal meetings can be launched soon, probably via Zoom videoconferencing. An important task has been to keep the member clubs informed relative to B.C. Federation activity and their memberships in the B.C. Federation and Canadian Society, including the need for third party liability insurance coverage.

The relatively new Executive is manoeuvring around the fact that guidance from the past-president, Bill Morey of Penticton, is no longer possible after he passed away in September of 2022.

The Association plans to spearhead a substantial promotion, publicity and paid advertising campaign for its member clubs in support of lesson startups in the Fall of 2023.

One such promotional initiative is just getting underway in support of the annual 3-day Clogover Vine clog dance workshop in early June at West Kelowna. The workshop will include an open invitation to the public to discover clog dancing in a special one hour session added to the event's agenda. Via media press releases, community event calendar postings in the press and some paid advertising, the Association's Communication & Marketing Committee will extend a broad invitation to the public to attend.

It's planned that, during the "Introduction to Clogging," there will be one or two notebooks with pens for interested newcomers to give their contact information (name, phone & e-mail) such that they can be contacted when the full lesson period approaches. It's ideal to get those contacts when they're excited about learning to clog.

This concept wherein the public is welcomed to try one of our dance forms in a special session at one of our larger events is perhaps one that our Association and Club event organizers should incorporate into their planning. Furthermore, the interested new dancer prospects can be welcomed to stay to see what fun the accomplished dancers experience.

## **Specific Club Reports**

### **Star Country Squares, Vernon**

***By President & Chairperson, Joe Marcotte***

#### **Summary of the 2022-23 season of Square Dancing.**

Our club survived the pandemic. We tried a number of attempts in 2021 to restart but it was stalled by health restrictions due to Covid-19.

In September 2022 we were finally successful with an intake season. We had a handful of previous dancers and eight new dancers. We decided to use the Social Square Dancing (SSD) model for teaching.

Our Club Caller/Teacher divided the season into three twelve-week sessions. We splurged in advertising and hoped for the best. Our second intake did not take any more new dancers but allowed our first group to continue their progress and develop a closer bond with each other. Our third intake we have four new dancers and they are blending in well.

Our season was based on having fun. We included a themed coffee night each month which allowed the dancers to socialize and have fun. We ensure that the fun is captured in photos and loaded onto our Facebook page. We also put efforts into being visible in the community. We had a few demonstration squares in the community and hosted an event at our annual Winter Carnival. We won an award for this event about which we are all very proud.

We have close to 30 dancers and each night have at least two squares. We are appreciative to our Angels for their patience with new dancers as we know the only way to grow and succeed is to ensure the new dancers are having fun and have a sense of belonging with our club.

Several club members have an interest in learning to call:

- Joe Marcotte
- Christel Ellis
- John Fawcett

To that end, we are all going to a caller workshop in Williams Lake in July. (The B.C. Federation will be asked for help with that.)

The workshop will consist of the callers who have been participating over the last year in Zoom sessions about learning to call. Caller-teacher Nick Turner and Lyle O'Hara will create the format for the workshop.

## **Rhythm Rounds, Vernon**

*This round dance club, led by Peter & Stella Tennant of Vernon, did not submit information for this report in time for its preparation. It's noted that the Federation Zoom sessions are generally scheduled on Sunday afternoons when their club also assembles to round dance. The following is a repeat of their submission for the February 5, 2023 Directors-at-Large meeting via Zoom:*

The Rhythm Rounds club dances Sunday afternoons in the Halina Activity Centre at the Vernon Recreation Centre. They have a core of 5 regular club members, who usually show up every week. They also have 5 new dancers. On occasion, 1 or 2 couples drop in.

Cuer/teacher and club leader, Peter Tennant, tells of his dancers that "Everyone has a smile on their face when they are finished and are heading home for a rest."

## **Okanagan Cloggin', Central Okanagan**

***By Barb Bizovie, West Kelowna, Clog dance teacher & club leader***

Okanagan Cloggin' participants enjoy contemporary precision clog dancing.

The club resumed regular classes as of October, 2022. It offers two different venues:

- Monday nights at the Westside Senior Centre in West Kelowna
- Thursday afternoons in Kelowna (renting space at the Village Dance Studio)

Monday night classes include:

- Beginner class from 6:00 to 7:00
- Easy-Intermediate class from 7:00 to 8:00
- Intermediate class from 8:00 to 9:00

On Thursdays the daytime schedule includes the following:

- Beginner class 12:00 noon to 1:00
- Easy-Intermediate from 1:00 to 2:00
- Intermediate class from 2:00 to 3:00

On average, the club has 10-12 people dancing on Monday nights and 15-20 dancing in the daytime on Thursdays.

Since October, between both locations, the club has 8 beginners and around 20 accomplished dancers.

Despite the ongoing pandemic, in June of 2022 the club held their annual weekend Clogover Vine workshop, with less attendance than usual (45). Now, in 2023, the workshop is going to be held again June 2, 3 & 4 at the Westbank Lions Community Centre in West Kelowna. It is hoped that now all COVID restrictions are lifted and people are more comfortable going out in public that the attendance will increase from previous years.

The Clogover Vine event is described by leader Barb Bizovie as “always a fun event and we have a lot of energetic instructors participating.” Those instructors include the featured Darolyn Pchajek from Winnipeg MB (website: <https://www.daretoclog.com/>) as well as others from Nanaimo BC, Mesa Arizona, Regina SK, Cold Lake AB and Langley BC. Barb will contribute as well and will be leading the public “Introduction to Clogging” session.

It’s promising that a number of people have inquired about clogging who used to dance years ago and would like to start again.

The club identifies that the biggest challenge is finding space to rent/use that is priced reasonable enough to justify holding classes.

Relative to upcoming plans, the club’s dance season ends with the Clogover Vine workshop in June. New to the program is that the workshop will include a free 1-hour “Intro to Clogging” session for the public (all ages) and it is hoped that will create some new interest. The Communications & Marketing branch of the Okanagan Square & Round Dance Association is supporting the effort through media releases, community event calendar and social media postings and some paid advertising.

The club does conduct a few summer “dance nights” at the Westside Senior Centre in West Kelowna that are fun and easy for everyone to come out and enjoy.

Plans are to recruit new dancers this year with more advertising and start sessions up again in September of 2023.

An extensive Facebook post of June 24, 2018, detailed that year’s Clogover Vine event held June 15 to 17. Many photos show the fun. See it at:

<https://www.facebook.com/BCSquareAndRoundDanceFederation/posts/1892806450764703>

### **Westsyde Squares, Central Okanagan** **By Brian Elmer, Club President, West Kelowna**

The Westsyde Squares square & round dance club has yet to resume regular sessions but has presented a square & round dance Refresher event in West Kelowna to help dancers retain their dance skills. In early October 2022 it supported a special “Two Bills” Memorial Dance at Penticton with planning, promotion, sound equipment and catering supplies.

The Two Bills dance was a tribute to longtime caller-teacher Bill Browne of Penticton and dance leader Bill Morey of Penticton. Bill Morey danced with the Westsyde Squares, often enjoying round dancing with his partner, Pat, and he was a key leader in the B.C. Federation. Along with the Federation’s past-president, Jean Wood of Salmon Arm, Bill co-chaired the great event that was Festival 2019 in Salmon Arm.

A hall is being sought wherein regular or semi-regular sessions for accomplished Mainstream program dancers can take place. Lacking a club caller or cuer, recorded calling and cueing would be featured. Some dancers in Penticton and Summerland have expressed interest in such sessions, having lost their local Penticton Squares dance club in recent years.

The club expects to occasionally bring in a guest caller/cuer to present some special Mainstream program dances.

Having a very low membership, the club needs to build its participants as a first priority, primarily by attracting new dancers.

New callers in the Central and North Okanagan plan to fulfill the club's interest for the Fall of 2023 in presenting new dancer sessions in Social Square Dancing. A comprehensive effort toward publicity, promotion and paid advertising for those lessons is planned.

The club maintains a Facebook page through which it updates dancers and, in particular, presents information and posters about dancing in the Okanagan and Shuswap regions to help the dancers stay in practice. Facebook link: <https://www.facebook.com/westsydesquares/>

### **Westside Youth Square Dance Club, Central Okanagan** ***By Brian Elmer, West Kelowna***

While the main approach has been to introduce children to square dancing through elementary schools, the club has taken advantage of new opportunities to teach children, adults and families through "pop-up" dance events.

Generally one-time dance occasions, special dance instruction has reached into the community in new ways such as through birthday, anniversary and family reunion events. It's planned that this concept be publicized, promoted and advertised broadly to build interest in our great dance form.

One such birthday event featured participatory square dance instruction where the grown children and their offspring celebrated a 60th birthday for the family's matriarch. Special effect lighting made it even more enjoyable.

Participants at that event were very receptive to square dancing and anxious to leave their names and contact information to be notified when regular lessons start.

It is intended that elementary school instruction will resume in the Fall of 2023.

The youth club recently provided consultation with a North Okanagan Valley dancer interested in introducing square dancing to Vernon area elementary schools. The organizational elements passed along included the need to have criminal record checks on the caller-teacher and any helpers supporting him or her.

Also furnished was an outline relative to teaching all grades, K to 6, at a given school (usually over 6 separate days). On the final day, family members from parents to grandparents to siblings of students are usually invited to come see their particular student show off his or her square dancing skills.