

October 19, 2025

**Report to the 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

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Summary of Activity in Region 3: Okanagan Square & Round Dance Association

A total of six (6) dance clubs comprise the activity in Region 3 under the Okanagan Square & Round Dance Association, involving 3 different dance forms:

1. Star Country Squares, Vernon
2. Lumby Squares, Lumby
3. Rhythm Rounds, Vernon
4. Okanagan Cloggin', Central Okanagan
5. Westsyde Squares, Central Okanagan
- 6.. Westside Youth Square Dance Club, Central Okanagan

Most all of the member clubs have resumed regular and/or new dancer activity. Some have only undertaken select events.

At this point, the Association's Executive is working behind-the-scenes until formal meetings can be launched, 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 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

President & Chairperson, Joe Marcotte

This club is doing well in the presentation of regular weekly dances for those accomplished and in offering multiple opportunities for absolute newcomers to try square dancing.

Weeknight dancing takes place on Thursdays at the Halina Activity Centre, a separate building in the Vernon Recreation Complex. Caller/teacher Allan Peterson of Salmon Arm attends weekly to call.

In recent years, the club surveyed its dancers to determine what they like about square dancing. The key element identified was to have fun, so that is the foundation of the club's activities.

In maintaining a fun atmosphere, the club presents many themed dances such as Hawaiian, St. Patrick's and Spring or Easter dances.

Round dancing is included on special nights with cuer-teachers Peter and Stella Tennant of Vernon.

The Star Country Squares supports the annual Vernon Winter Carnival event and in February of this year (2025) they presented a free Open House called “Hip to be Square” during the 64th Carnival. The public was invited to attend wearing 1980's attire.

Notable from the period of the Winter Carnival is that CBC Radio for the Southern Interior produced a 9-minute feature about Star Country's introduction of square dancing during the Carnival event. Broadcast on “Daybreak South” January 30, 2025, throughout B.C.'s southern interior from the Okanagan Valley through to the East Kootenays, it was repeated the next day on CBC radio's Metro Vancouver broadcast. Hear the audio from the full report via this online link:

<https://www.cbc.ca/listen/live-radio/1-110-daybreak-south/clip/16124872-its-hip-square-group-square-dancers-vernon-working>

The club is was formed from two long-running dance clubs in Vernon, namely the Stardusters and the Sun Country Squares. This year they recognized that amalgamation by celebrating the 25th Anniversary for Star Country Squares.

This Fall, two free Open Houses welcomed absolute newcomers to come try square dancing and a viable group of new dancers came from that effort.

The Star Country Squares also conducts square dancing on Tuesday afternoons at the Halina Activity Centre with the promotional name “Try it Tuesdays!” Absolute newcomers to square dancing or those wanting to refresh their knowledge are welcomed by donation at the door at 5 pm every Tuesday through to December 16. Earlier at 4 pm, sessions for those wanting to learn the Mainstream program run in that first hour.

Furthermore, new square dance callers in the region can attend in the second hour to practice their calling.

Star Country website: <https://starcountrysquares.wixsite.com/star-country-squares>

Star Country Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/p/Star-Country-Squares-100057717487549/>

Rhythm Rounds, Vernon

Cuer-teachers Peter & Stella Tennant of Vernon

Cuer/teacher Peter Tennant reports that The Rhythm Rounds is temporarily inactive.

The group was dancing in the daytime every Sunday in the Halina Activity Room at the Vernon Recreation Complex; the club had 20 dancers in September, 2023. Various elements reduced that number to 8 to 10 dancers per week, including Snowbirds heading south, special vacations, a broken ankle and other commitments.

Lumby Squares (Lumby is a 20 minute drive east of Vernon)

Caller/teacher: Will Cullen

The new square dance club named "Lumby Squares" dances Sunday afternoons from 2 to 4 at the O.A.P. hall in Lumby. The relatively new caller/teacher, Will Cullen, is instructing.

The small town has been supportive of the social recreation of square dancing, including participation by youth dancers. In the late Summer, the club gained additional exposure by welcoming all interested persons to come dance in the gazebo at Arbour Park in Lumby.

The club has a Facebook page at this link: <https://www.facebook.com/p/Lumby-Squares-61579797471128/>

Article from the Lumby Valley Times newspaper of Sept. 26/25:

The Lumby Squares had an open house at the OAP Hall the last two Sundays (Sept. 14 & 21/25) and welcomed not only last year's square dancers but also new people who were interested in checking out what we were doing. It was delightful to see the young people who attended. They add a spark to the squares and we'd like to see more of them come and try it. The dance club is fun, the people are great, and it is a good way to get some exercise and enjoy yourself at the same time.

Okanagan Cloggin', Central Okanagan

Clog dance teacher & club leader: Barb Bizovie, West Kelowna

Okanagan Cloggin' participants enjoy contemporary precision clog dancing.

The club has been operating September through May with classes at 3 different venues in the Central Okanagan on different times and days:

- Monday nights at the Westside Seniors Activity Centre, West Kelowna
- Wednesday nights at the Village Dance Studio in Kelowna
- Friday afternoons at the Village Dance Studio in Kelowna

The club once again held its annual Clogover Vine workshop weekend over June 6 to 8 at the Westbank Lions Community Hall, operated by the City of West Kelowna. It's well-attended by cloggers from throughout the Pacific Northwest.

The popular professional level clogging instructor, Darolyn Pchajek of Winnipeg, returned once again but this time was accompanied by instructor Andy Howard of Atlanta, Georgia. Local and regional instructors also taught and cued the cloggers.

Although Clogover Vine is an event for accomplished cloggers, in recent years all ages of the public have been invited to stop in on the Saturday afternoon at 1:00 to learn some steps at a free 1-hour lesson conducted in an adjacent hall. They can then watch the accomplished cloggers having fun in the main hall.

There were 13 absolute newcomers to clogging who attended on Saturday June 7/25, including a mother and her daughter who saw mention of the free lesson in a Kelowna area Facebook group.

All avenues of publicity and promotion were engaged to tell the public about the clog dance weekend and the free clogging lesson in particular. Posters, public service announcements, social media and even the local coffee news magazine served to raise awareness of the clog dance activity in the region.

The Communications & Marketing branch of the Okanagan Square & Round Dance Association annually supports the Clogover Vine event through media releases, community event calendar and social media postings.

Although some of the links shown within are no longer active, 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 to be had on the clog dance floor. See it at:

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

The currently active web page for Okanagan Cloggin' is at this link: <https://www.okanagancloggin.ca/>

Westsyde Squares, Central Okanagan

By Brian Elmer, Club President, West Kelowna

An attempt to revitalize the Westsyde Squares was made this Fall (2025) through a collaboration with the City of West Kelowna's Recreation Department. Relatively new caller/teacher Joe Marcotte of Vernon instructed. The city set the lessons for an elementary school gymnasium in the Shannon Lake district.

Initially, it looked favourable to proceed with a full square of new dancers, including some considering it a "refresher" session. Unfortunately, various health challenges caused half of them to drop out; so after 3 Wednesday night sessions the lessons were cancelled. The various health issues included arthritis, neuropathy and one lady had a sore arm.

Another attempt to present new dancer lessons will take place in January/February 2026.

Although promotion of the lessons included broad Facebook community group exposure, online events listings and poster placements, the lessons attracted an older demographic despite welcoming singles, couples and families.

Also, conducting new dancer sessions in West Kelowna has been a challenge relative to the availability of venues in which to dance. The city has three appropriate venues but two of them are currently closed for renovation or reconstruction.

Furthermore, a moment reflecting upon the public image of square dancing came when a hairdresser, who dialogues with many clients, said that she'd need to get cowboy boots and a cowboy hat in order to participate. It's evident that understanding of the nature of today's style of square dancing is poor and requires some awareness building—the top element in the marketing funnel—best done at the Federation and Society levels.

A full executive is in place to guide the club's revitalization.

Westside Youth Square Dance Club, Central Okanagan

By Brian Elmer, West Kelowna

It's considered that one of the best approaches for this entity is to take advantage of new opportunities to teach children, adults and families through "pop-up" dance events. Through introductions to square dancing, names and contacts can be collected from those interested in learning more.

Such special one-time dance occasions introduce square dancing to the community in new ways like birthday, anniversary and family reunion events.

In July and August of 2025, an opportunity arose to teach teens who are members of the Westside Youth Ambassadors. They requested several lessons in order to do a display dance at a big windup event involving Ambassadors from other cities. That instruction had to be cancelled when the program for the event was altered and the planned venue was lost.

Past pop-up opportunities have included the following:

- A 60th birthday family event
- An early summer family reunion
- A special lakeside square dance for visiting bachelorettes and the bride-to-be
- A convention of organic growers

It's planned that this concept be publicized, promoted and advertised broadly to build interest in our great dance form.

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