

Square dancers celebrate another July 1 with community

Town 'n' Country Dancers hold 33rd annual Canada Day event

- [MATHILDA DEVILLIERS](#) Jun. 25, 2019 12:00 p.m. [COMMUNITY](#)

For the members of [Town 'n' Country Dancers](#), square dancing is more than moving your feet to a rhythm.

It's also about community and mental awareness.

July 1 will be the group's 33rd annual Canada Day dance, held at Ridge Meadows Senior Centre in Maple Ridge, 12150 224th St. The centre will be decorated according to a Canadian theme and participants are encouraged to wear the country's colours, red and white.

Square dancing involves a group of eight dancers who make up a square, and the Town 'n' Country Dancers Square and Round Dance Club hosts anything from two to 25 squares. A caller is set up to choose the songs and call out the moves that the dancers need to follow.

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Each dance round, called a tip, consists of two dances, each lasting roughly two and a half minutes.

After a tip is over, the dancers can sit and rest until it's their turn again to take the floor with their partners.

It's stimulating physically and also mentally, according to Greg Dahlgren, the club's current secretary.

"The whole idea is that you can do this when you're 90 because, although it's a bit of a workout, it's not like going to the gym."

The club has been in existence for over 55 years.

The dancing season runs from September to May each year, with a few festivals and weekly dances that run throughout the summer.

The club currently has roughly 65 members and hopes to attract more newcomers this fall, when they will be hosting a beginner festival at Pitt Meadows Community Church Society Hall, running from September until the end of the year.

Newcomers who want to learn how to get their feet moving and their mind racing to square dancing can begin to get involved through this event.

There are different levels, with beginners who graduate to become mainstream dancers. The levels that follow mainstream are plus, A1 and A2 being the highest level.

Lucille Lysne, 78, has been a member of the club for over a decade and said that it's a great activity because you have to pay attention to what moves the caller calls.

"It's great exercise; it's exercise for your body [and] for your mind."

Lysne met Peter Lysne at the club in 2009. After having a few other dancing partners previously, she was eventually partnered up with Peter, who then became her husband in 2013.

Lysne moved to Maple Ridge from Alberta in 1999 and she has enjoyed her time at the club, learning the moves of becoming a seasoned square dancer.

Both her and Peter were presidents of the club for eight years, and presently they oversee the 'plus' dancers.

Presold sales have reached 80 for their Canada Day event, and Dahlgren said that they are expecting up to 200 people to attend next week.

"We are known for our hospitality," Lysne said.

Because of arthritis in Lysne's knees, she can't take part in each and every dance, but she said that when she's sitting on the sidelines, her feet are always tapping.

"I love it."