

# 30 years calling, cueing square dancers

**John Corrigan and Cheryl Plume have been with the club for three decades**

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The Town 'n' Country Dancers are celebrating the 30th anniversary of two of their own. John Corrigan, the Caller, and Cheryl Plume, the cuer, have both been with the Maple Ridge club for 30 years.

Corrigan, an accountant by day who is originally from Victoria and now lives in Delta, started square dancing in 1963, when he seven.

He lived on a military base in the provincial capital when it was decided that something was needed to keep the children occupied there until 4 p.m., when their parents returned home.

"So they started up a school and it was a thing that you had to go, you didn't have a choice," explained



(Colleen Flanagan/THE NEWS)

**John Corrigan has been calling with the Town 'n' Country Dancers in Maple Ridge for 30 years.**

Corrigan.

"But luckily for me, I wasn't exactly the most sportsman-like person, but this was something that I could do really well," he said.

In high school, there were three

squares of dancers, 24 individuals, that danced together.

"All the good-looking girls wanted to dance with us because we actually knew what to do," Corrigan said.

"The jocks were just complete klu-

tzes and they didn't want to dance with them. So it was quite funny."

Corrigan even met his wife while square dancing at the University of Victoria, where they both attended. They took a break from square dancing when they got married in 1980, then came back to it in 1984.

Corrigan started calling in 1972. "I wanted to be the guy who told people what they were going to do," he said.

A square dance caller prompts the dancers to do certain moves to create different figures.

There are two different types of call: a singing call, which is a pre-determined set of moves that is quick to learn; and a patter call, which is on the fly and much harder to do. It can take a caller two to three years to learn how to properly patter call. Some never master the skill in their entire careers.

"The patter is basically my brain telling them what to do. But to do that, I have to know all the calls that I am going to call. I have to know all the positions they end in and start in."

Corrigan enjoys the complexity of

patter calling along with the music and the movement.

"A lot of the of what square dancing is nowadays, it's more of a complex thing. It's very good for your brain because it makes you think about where you have to go and what you have to do for each call you are given."

A caller does the square dancing.

A cuer, on the other hand, does choreographed ballroom dance, waltzes, two-steps. Or variations like a jive or tango. There are only two dancers in a round-dance couple, but the cuer could have as many as 10 couples, five couples, or even 15 or 20.

Plume started dancing with Town 'n' Country Dancers in 1986 and has been with the club since. She became the club cuer for round dancing in 1988.

Plume has participated in many conventions, festivals, and handled registrations for Convention 2000 and Festival 2005, and most recently was treasurer for Festival 2017, all of which are major events, drawing dancers from across North America.