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# Heritage Grand Tappers

Cinco Ranch seniors tap their way to fitness and fun

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Each Wednesday and Friday, eight seniors living in a Cinco Ranch neighborhood lace up their tap shoes, stretch out their limbs, and get ready to rock to their favorite 1950s and 1960s hits.

They call themselves the Heritage Grand Tappers, and they range in age from 72 to 82. “We’re never going to be the Rockettes, but we’re just having a ball,” shares choreographer Cynthia Cherry. “It’s mental exercise, and our balance has definitely improved.”

## Becoming Performers

The Heritage Grand Tappers began over three years ago when a resident of Heritage Grand, a Cinco community for residents 55 and older, discovered choreographer Cherry in their midst. The former dance studio owner agreed to teach the class, which started out with about 25 men and women.

“Due to knees, ankles, or backs not agreeing with us, the group has narrowed down to eight,” says dancer Janet King,

who also does aerobics, walks, and chairs various social committees. “This is not for the faint of heart. We get a really good workout.”

This core group of eight women has improved so much and perform so well together, that a new class would need to be started for beginners. As they improved, the Grand Tappers started performing at Cinco Ranch events, such as intermission at a drama club performance, a ladies high tea, and Fourth of July celebrations.

The group has several dances in their repertoire and is open to dancing at a variety of fundraisers and events. “We couldn’t do them all in a row, we’d be exhausted,” King says. “One dance, that’s pushing it.”

Performance numbers include: “That’ll be the Day” by Buddy Holly, “Islands in the Stream” by Kenny Rogers and Dolly Parton, “Blueberry Hill” by Fats Domino, and “There Goes My Baby” by the Drifters.



Their costumes started out simple, with basic denim capris, white shirts, and neckerchiefs, but over the years the Grand Tappers have branched out to include flapper dresses, and black ruffled skirts with hot pink sashes.

### Important Steps

Many of the tappers danced when they were younger, but member Judy Smith was a novice when the group began. "I had never had a dancing lesson in my life, so this was my first attempt," she shares. "Cynthia is so patient. She takes time with us. We do it over and over again. We have to get it in our head before we can get it in our feet."

Smith, who also walks and does yoga, thought about giving up a few times, but is happy she stuck with tap. "It's such a great group of ladies, I just feel blessed to be in the group."

Still shy, Smith admits that her heart races when the Tappers take the stage. "When the music starts, I try to push that aside and keep a smile on my face. That first step and the last step are the most important ones," she says. "If I miss a couple, I catch up and keep on tapping."

### Enjoying Every Minute

The ladies say their families applaud their passion for dance. Smith sends her 11-year-old twin granddaughters, who are also dancers, videos of her performing. "They get a kick out of seeing Nanny in the videos," she laughs.

"My youngest child will be 43 in February," says Cherry. "Every day is a gift. If we're still up and breathing and able to walk at this age, we've got to be thankful for it."

For many, performing takes them back to the "good old days." "The fun thing is the music we dance to, that's our age group," says King. "We're in our element. We enjoy every minute of it." KM



Their costumes range from flapper dresses to ruffled skirts and pink sashes



The group performs at Fourth of July events, Cinco Ranch celebrations, and fundraisers



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