



PSDC Newsletter

Portland Swing Dance Club

March - April 2012 issue

Newcomer Workshop Introduces People to West Coast Swing

So have you ever been to a West Coast Swing dance and said to yourself, I wish I could introduce my friends to this dance? Or have you had people ask you how they can start out in West Coast Swing? Or better yet, have you seen someone who you thought would totally love this dance if given a few lessons to give them sort of a "kick-start" to West Coast Swing?

Well you are in luck. Because this year, like every year, The Portland Swing Dance Club (PSDC) has their annual Newcomer Workshop. This is a two day workshop, starting Friday evening, and continuing Saturday afternoon, followed by the dance Saturday evening.

The fee for the workshop includes annual membership to the club along with admission into the Saturday dance for FREE !

The instruction is provided by local area instructors. There is a dance on Saturday night to practice what was just learned.

The Newcomer Workshop is a great opportunity to introduce newcomers to the West Coast Swing dance experience. It is mainly geared towards those who have never danced the dance before, however, other dancers who want to polish their basics are also welcome to attend.

When: April 27th & 28th of 2012

Where: Check our website for location

Questions: What should I bring?

- Please wear comfortable and securely fitting shoes. Dance shoes with suede sole (or something that you can spin easily)
- Dancing is exercise, so you might consider bringing an extra shirt or a towel
- Wear something comfortable
- Lastly, come looking to have fun

For more information, check out our website on this event at:

Contact Events Director Jennie Beyerl at:
events@portlandspring.org

www.PortlandSwing.org

Swing Blizzard a Swingin' Success

The West Coast Swing workshop known as Swing Blizzard was a huge success. Professional dance competitors and instructors Nick Jay and Joanna Meinl were our guest instructors from the Bay Area in California..

The event kicked off Friday night with a dance at Paradise Studio. Paradise also provided the space for the workshops Saturday and Sunday. We had a few new memberships for the workshops. New members received added discounts that included the Saturday night dance for free. The Saturday dance was held at Norse Hall where Nick and Joanna did a dance performance. A fun part of their impromptu routine was when Nick Jay pointed



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From the Editor

TThanks for all the wonderful compliments on our revised newsletter and new printed format. I have been hearing many warm words of appreciation regarding the new content in the newsletter and the layout.

Well you will be happy to know that this issue is packed with more of the same. We have recaps of our Swing Blizzard, a word from our Dance Director on upcoming Jack and Jill competitions, and a quick promo of our Newcomer Workshop.

We also have our personal interest story focusing on one of our PSDC members, poignantly titled "Member Profile". And be sure to check out Competition Corner.

Again while I like getting positive feedback, the newsletter is nothing without the support and contributions of the club members. Thanks for your support.

Sincerely,

Steve Klein

Steve Klein

Newsletter Editor / Historian
newsletter@PortlandSwing.org

Corrections:

The Previous newsletter in article titled: "It's a Brand New Year, It's a Brand New Board" Jeannie Beyerl is also remaining on the board this year as Events Director...

Board of Directors:

President	Chris Jones
Vice President	Melena Bronson
Secretary	Rhonda Shotts
Treasurer	Carla Titus
Membership	Michael Terry
Events	Jennie Beyerl
Dances	Nick De Vore
Facilities	Peter Bailey
Promotions	Rick Davis
Newsletter	Steve Klein

Jack and Jill Competition

At Norse Hall Dance —March 24, 2012

Interview with Nick De Vore

The next PSDC Dance is on March 24th at Norse Hall on is gearing up to be a fun event. There will also be a Jack and Jill competition that evening.

I caught up with our Dance Director to ask some questions about his goals this year.

1. What do you think trying a Jack and Jill competition gives to a WCS dancer?

I feel a Jack and Jill competition gives a dancer a more focused look on their dancing. I know, from

speaking with numerous competitors, they watch what and how they are doing stuff on a competitive floor then on a social floor. Also, it can give a

dancer a goal. Everyone says they want to be proficient in this dance but how does one claim proficiency? Some can claim it by just trying their first competition. Others do have different ways of measuring this goal but some don't know of a way.

2. Some dancers aren't focused on competition as much, is there something they can gain from watching a competition?

Inspiration is the first thing that comes to mind. someone who doesn't focus on competitions may have not thought of a move until someone does it in a competition, or maybe they are thinking of a specific move and don't know how to get out of it when the person in front of them does something they never had thought of.

3. You had mentioned, as our new Dance Director, you would like to see more Jack and Jill competitions at our monthly social dances. How many can we expect? What's



your goals for balance in social dancing and competitions?

I'd like to see one at least once every quarter, maybe even once every other month (but not likely). My goal is to introduce those who have never done a competition, into the competition world while still having the fun that comes with a social dance. There are so many events and dances that are all over that people just don't know about, So I want to share some of that with them.

4. For the competitors out there, how do you feel this will be of benefit to them? (i.e. prep for upcoming comps?)

I do believe that anytime competitors can practice, they should. Also with the fun challenges that I am looking forward to throwing into competitions later in the year (Hint Hint) I hope it takes our dancing to the next level by helping us think out side of the box while still having fun.

Final Comment - I really hope that everyone tries a competition sooner or later. I'd love to see the competitions that we have

involve everyone and bring a new pizzazz to our club. I want to make them fun and enjoyable and that's why we will be throwing some random challenges into the future ones to make them more enjoyable for everyone.



Jack & Jill Winners
June 25, 2011



PSDC Dance Calendar

March 10

PSDC Second Saturday Swing Dance. Jason Isbell teaches the intermediate lesson at 7:30, Beginners lesson by Rick Davis at 7:30pm downstairs. Open dancing from 8:30 to 12:00 midnight. Location: Sunnyside Grange

March 24

PSDC Fourth Saturday Swing Dance. Cassie Winter teaches the intermediate lesson at 7:30, Beginners lesson by Jimmy Ho at 7:30pm backstage. Open dancing from 8:30 to 12:00 midnight. Location: Norse Hall

April 14

PSDC Second Saturday Swing Dance. Trudy Thatcher teaches the intermediate lesson at 7:30, Beginners Lesson by Arthur Lahm at 7:30pm downstairs. Open dancing from 8:30 to 12:00 midnight. Location: Sunnyside Grange

April 28

PSDC Fourth Saturday Swing Dance. Trina Siebert teaches the intermediate lesson at 7:30, Beginners Lesson by Rick Davis at 7:30pm backstage. Open dancing from 8:30 to 12:00 midnight. Location: Norse Hall

For other weekly dances, be sure to check out our online calendar.

Competition Calendar

For those of you interested in WCS competitions, here is a list of upcoming dance conventions on the West Coast

High Desert Dance Classic
Lancaster, California
3/09-3/11, 2012

City Of Angels
Los Angeles, CA
3/30—4/01, 2012

Seattle Easter Swing
Seattle, WA
4/5-4/8, 2012

Member Profile

Derrick Black



Our member profile for this issue is PSDC member Derrick Black. Derrick has been dancing West Coast Swing off and on since 1998, when he said he was "forced" into it. He played trombone for a Jazz band and went to a Summer Swing Dance Camp where they took

lindy hop lessons. It was at the Oregon Festival of Music. "I guess they were trying to get us to understand who we were playing for, but I absolutely didn't want to do it. But I really took to the dance and ended up dropping Jazz." Derrick went onto say how he has had several hobbies, but dancing is one that he does off and on, during all of them.

Which leads me into his next big hobby and part time sport activity (and the reason for this article), and that is his part time passion of Aerial. Aerial acrobatics to be exact.

For those of you who are not as familiar, this is a type of performance where the performer hangs from a certain fabric, be it silk, stretch fabric, or ropes, and executes specific movements while suspended above the ground.

"I started with Trapeze", says Derrick, "But it was tearing my hands up, so I switched to



Tissue and Rope and been with it every since."

Derrick points out that this sport can build up your strength and flexibility. Training can be intense as well. Before performances, Derrick had been known to practice 2 to 3 times per week. With that schedule you tend to build muscles and strength real quickly.

When asked if this activity has any correlation with dancing Derrick says yes. As an Aerialist, "You are a dancer, you're just not touching the ground." This comes true even in his choreography for his aerial showcases. "I approach it much more like a dance routine, where you take a song and map out where the hits, the climaxes, the phrases are. And the aerial routines are a lot longer than many dance routines. A three minute routine is entirely too short. You pretty much need to have at least 4 to 6 minutes and a lot of them are longer than that."

It also helps with many of the fears people may have. Many people have a fear of heights, Derrick mentions to me that this is a great way to help with that type of fear. Also in looking at the performance aspect of it,



those who perform in dance will find some of that same thing that goes along with dancing in front of an audience.

When I asked Derrick why he enjoys this activity so much, Derrick says a few things including strength. "The strength is nice... I never been strong in my upper body. I've always had strong legs because of the hiking and dancing, but not as much in my upper body before doing this activity. Doing aerial, climbing rope for a couple hours, you get a strong upper body... And honestly it's a lot of fun. You get to do something that is just unlike anything else you do. You're climbing, you're completely off the ground, you're wrapping yourself and then completely letting go and falling 10 feet.... and it's a heck of an adrenaline rush."

It seems this sport is gaining in popularity lately. When asked the question about where to see performances, or where people go to learn this activity, Derrick gave me a few names, including Do Jump, and Night Flight. Classes start rock bottom, where if you didn't even know how climb a rope, and go all the way up from there to where you can do aerial acrobatics. Derrick says, "I currently take classes at Do Jump.... Classes are very safe and a great workout."

Would you like share your outside experiences with fellow PSDC members? Or know someone who has an interesting hobby they would like to share? Email us at: newsletter@portlandswing.org

Competition Corner

What a great couple of months it has been. In our last newsletter I posted the 3 larger dance conventions happening on the West Coast in January and February. These were Monterey Swingfest in Monterey, CA, SwingCouver in Vancouver B.C. Canada, and Capital Swing in Sacramento California.

Luckily I was able to go to all three of these events this year and I can now report back on these wonderful events.

First, Monterey has got to be one of the best places I have visited in California. I loved the coastal atmosphere, the local shops and restaurants. And of course the dancing was great too. The workshops catered to a combination of dance enthusiasts, as well as dance competitors.

If you get a chance to go next year I would recommend coming 2 or 3 days early to take in the sights, to go to fisherman's Warf, the Cannery, or take a short 5 mile drive to Carmel. There was a special tribute video presented to Skippy Blair for her years of devotion to the art of Swing. It was a very moving presentation. John Wheaton did a great job on this event.

The next week was SwingCouver. The thing I like about Vancouver is that the city life is turned way up, and great restaurants were within walking distances. Everyone we met seemed warm and friendly. The event really flowed well, and the music was spectacular. Event Directors John Kirk-Connell, Ian KirkConnell, and Sarah Van Drake did a top notch job on this event.

SwingCouver boasted leveled workshops for the first time in Canadian Swing Convention History. Following what has been happening in Europe, the workshops were based on 3 skill levels of dancer. An intermediate dancer for example, couldn't take an advanced workshop. They held auditions for those who were at lower divisions in competition, but felt they had the skills to take the advanced workshop. Overall a great event and a destination you should consider for next year.

Last but certainly not least was Capital Swing Dance Convention. Dani Canziani always does a real great job at hosting this event. There were a few welcome changes for competitors, including no mandatory contestants meeting, and guys rotating in the JnJ comps. Also this event provides food, serving night buffets, and hospitality suites for breakfast.

Swing Blizzard Recap Continued

(Continued from page 1)

to Chris Jones (who was Deejaying that night) and did one of Chris's signature moves...

The 4th Saturday dance at Norse Hall was well attended and the dance went til midnight. But the talk of the weekend was the "Late Late Night Dance", which was held from 12:30am until about 3am. Those who were still up and braved the crisp night air had a chance to participate in dancing games which included among other things, London Bridges and the Crab walk. Thanks to Jack Lim for hosting.

The workshops continued on Sunday afternoon with more Intermediate to Advanced levels. This included Styling, Syncopations and a workshop devoted to Dips and Tricks.

Nick and Joanna both had a great time with their visit to the northwest. Nick had a great

time especially meeting many of our members, and having fun at the late-late night dance. Joanna had equally great things to say about her stay in Portland. Her most memorable move of the weekend goes to our very own PSDC member Jim Long who had his specialized move simply titled "The Walker". Joanna cracked up every time she thought of it. But if you want to know how the move is done, you'll have to talk to Jim at one of our next PSDC dances. ☺ If you missed this year's Swing Blizzard don't worry, there will be another one next year. We also may bring in another pro sometime within the year. (although not confirmed).

If you have someone in mind who you would like to see us bring to town, please let us know. Send me an email and I will pass the word along.

newsletter@portlandswing.org



Pictured here are: Left to Right, Back Row: Joanna Meinl, Nick Jay, Koichi Tsunoda, Laura DeShano, Andrew Sunada, Joe, Dennis, Joshua Entz, Jack Lim, Michael Terry, Nickolas de Vore. **2nd Row from Back:** Erica Hoffman, Steve Klein, Leah Gross Brandis, Trudy Thatcher, Melena Bronson, **3rd Row from the Back (Sitting):** Ron Hodges, Danielle White, Jordi Balan, Arthur Lahm, Robin Wells, Ashley McAlpine, Jenna Shimek, Trina Siebert, Kristy Brehm. **Front Row:** Jennie Beyerl, and Chris Jones

Experienced Dancers Needed!

Have you been with the club for several years and want to give back to the club? Are you an experienced West Coast Swing dancers with talents to offer the club? This is a great opportunity for you to be an active part of the Portland Swing Dance Club at our monthly dances, and even in between those dances. You can help us out by passing out flyers at the other non PSDC dances you attend.

Email: promotions@portlandswing.org

We also need people for greeters at the door, to bring and/or setup food and refreshments, need someone who would like to assist the teacher for beginner dance lessons. Email dances@portlandswing.org

How to become a member...

We would like to invite you into a family of dancers who share your passion to dance. The Portland Swing Dance Club is born out of a desire for people to thrive with West Coast Swing.

We are a non-profit organization. The membership dues, dance income, and donations go back into the dance community. The Board of Directors operate as a volunteer service. By becoming a member, you will be a part of our mission to foster the growth of West Coast Swing in the Northwest.

Come to any of our dances and sign up as a PSDC Member at the front desk. We take checks or cash for the membership fee of \$30. You may also pay with a Visa credit card with a service fee.

You can also download the electronic application online, fill it out, and mail it with your check to:
The Portland Swing Dance Club
P.O. Box 6761, Portland, OR 97228-6761

Photos provided by: Steve Klein, Derrick Black, and Nick De Vore ...



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