



PSDC Newsletter

Portland Swing Dance Club

July - August 2012 issue



One of the highlights of the summer is the Portland Dance Festival. Ran by event directors Randy and Rhonda Shotts, it has a healthy balance of both West Coast Swing and Country Dancing in a fun playful atmosphere. This year it will be held July 13th - 15th, 2012.

It's a place where you can see Line Dancing, Country Couples Dancing, and West Coast Swing under one roof. The festival is into their 26th year, and has always been a place where you can find top level pros in

both country and swing gathered in one place. Workshops will be offered in both genres of dance.

This event also promotes a fun and festive theme, where everyone is encouraged to "dress up" and attend the Saturday night dinner show in all it's themed glory.

I was able to get an interview with Randy Shott's who offered some insight into this years event, and the event overall.

Continued on Page 2

Dance N Play Recap

By: Quin Kloppenburg

Cheryl Lyons brought the Oregon west coast community, Dance N Play. She put on one of my favorite events so far, I learned so much, with an amazing professional staff, including pros such as Patty Vo and Michael Kielbasa, Michael Kiehm and Mary Ann Nunez and even chief judges like Gary Jobst and Jim Minty, this event had a true depth of knowledge that I've never seen in a convention. This only inspired the dancers to want to grow and learn. Michael Kiehm said, "Dance N Play, awesome weekend! If you're a pro, you want to be here next year; so many "hungry" students with so much desire and appreciation for the knowledge we offered. **LOVED THIS EVENT!**" - this was a post Michael made on Facebook on his way home to San Diego. The event was personal and inviting and was a fantastic asset to have in the community. With so many dancers who had never been to an event, I must say this event was perfect for them. The Pros tailoring the workshop material to the students instead of teaching the same old workshop curriculum they've taught over and over.

Continued on Page 3

From the Editor

It's that time of year again. Summer. Time to hear the birds chirping, making their nests in the trees. In the Northwest, it means time to see just a little more sunlight, spectacular sunsets, less work, and more vacations.

For us dancers it means more time to spend late night on the dance floor.

This summer, the PSDC has much in store for you. We are hosting a swing room at this year's Portland Dance Festival. We also have our normal 2nd Saturday and 4th Saturday dances. Instructors like Jennifer Robinson Miller, Marcus Sterling, and Jason Isbell will teach the intermediate lessons over the next few months.

I'm looking forward to a summer of dance and meaningful moments with friends.

Sincerely,



Steve Klein

Steve Klein

Newsletter Editor / Historian
newsletter@PortlandSwing.org

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inside...

Portland Dance Festival, Dance N Play Recap

Page 1

Randy Shotts Interview, Calendar of Events

Page 2 & 4

Member Profile with Cassie Winter, SOswing Recap

Page 3

Get active with your board, Where Everybody Knows Your Name

Page 4

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Portland Dance Festival (Continued)

Written By Steve Klein. Interviews with Event Directors, Randy & Rhonda Shotts

H How long have you been event directors and how did you get your start with event directing?

“We took over the Portland Dance Festival about 15 years ago from Jack and Sue Wagner. They had been doing the event about twelve years at the time, and they were ready to step down. We weren't looking to become event directors at the time, and we didn't fully understand what we were saying "yes" to, but all in all it's been a good decision for us.”



What is your overall goal for the dancing community and hosting this event yearly?

“Anyone who has ever been to a dance convention will tell you the experience is nothing like going to a local dance or workshop. You just don't know what you're missing until you attend a big dance event. The number of dancers is far greater, the level of dancing is better, the quality of instruction from nationally recognized instructors is unbelievable, the opportunity to dance with people you wouldn't meet anywhere else is priceless, and on and on. The problem is...attending an out of town dance event can be really expensive once you factor in the cost of travel, hotel, event passes, meals, etc. Our goal is to bring a "national quality" event to Portland so people up here in the northwest can get in on the great dance experience that is not nearly as common or accessible here as it is in places like California or Texas. “

I know that PDF has many comps and social dancing in the way of Country, what can we expect for West Coast Swing social dancing and competitions?

“The Portland Dance Festival and PSDC have been partners since the beginning of the swing club. The reason for that is that the Portland Dance Festival has always had a complete swing program built into the event...it's at least half swing. We have a dedicated swing room for social dancing and workshops that is actually a little bigger than the "main" ballroom with a dedicated swing deejay. This year, PSDC president Chris Jones will be our deejay once again. We also have WSDC Jack and Jill competitions on Sunday as well as pro-am swing and strictly swing. Last year's WSDC numbers were way up from the previous year which makes PDF a really good test for Jack and Jill dancers. So, yes I'd say there's as much for swing folks to do as there is for country folks to do at this event. “

I notice the Portland Dance Festival does a different theme each year. What's the theme of this year's PDF? Do people dress up and if so when does it take place?

“This year the theme is '80s'. We do a theme night on Saturday and folks dress up for the variety show and stay dressed up for a good while after that. If you need some inspiration, there are plenty of ideas on our facebook page. Dressing up is always optional, but certainly encouraged. The theme tends to add to the party atmosphere which is always a good thing. “

What has been your most favorite theme(s) you have had throughout the years?

“Our three favorite themes were probably the "Biker Party" back in the late 90s, the "Under Construction" party we had about four years ago, and "Alice in Wonderland”

(Continued on page 4)

PSDC Dance Calendar

July 14

PSDC Second Saturday Swing Dance. Will be held at the Portland Dance Festival's Swing Room. This convention is scheduled the entire weekend of July 13 - 15, 2012.

July 28

PSDC Fourth Saturday Swing Dance. **Jennifer Robinson Miller** teaches the intermediate lesson at 7:30, Beginners lesson will be taught at 7:30pm backstage. Open dancing from 8:30 to 12:00 midnight.

Location: Norse Hall

August 11

PSDC Second Saturday Swing Dance. **Marcus Sterling**, teaches the intermediate lesson at 7:30, Beginners Lesson at 7:30pm downstairs. Open dancing from 8:30 to 12:00 midnight.

Location: Sunnyside Grange

August 25

PSDC Fourth Saturday Swing Dance. **Jason Isbell** teaches the intermediate lesson at 7:30, Beginners Lesson 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

WCS Events on the West Coast

Portland Dance Festival
Portland, Oregon
7/13-7/15, 2012

Palm Springs Summer Dance
Camp
Palm Springs, California
8/09—8/12, 2012

South Bay Dance Fling
San Jose, California
8/30-9/03, 2012

Member Profile Cassie Winter

Our member profile for this issue is PSDC member Cassie Winter. Cassie has been dancing West Coast Swing since 2006, and has been a PSDC member since 2009.

I had the chance to catch up with Cassie who graciously accepted my request for an interview. As you will soon discover she has many interests, and as many of you know, Cassie also teaches West Coast Swing.

You have been teaching for a while now. Would you share with our readers how you began your dance career?

"I began my dance career studying leading and following ballroom, Latin, swing, blues, and Argentine tango. By 2008 I was specializing in and teaching WCS. I have assisted and taught with numerous instructors over the years, and now teach mainly at Paradise Dance Studio."

What inspires you about teaching?

"I love inciting and witnessing light-bulb moments where my students learn a fundamental technique that bolsters their whole understanding of dance connection, movement, or musicality. I also love getting to the root problem that is negatively impacting someone's dancing, because I have learned that one issue can create a multitude of symptoms. For instance, I have seen poor connection create poor timing, and when the connection was fixed, so was the timing!"

You have a great ability in your WCS Dance, not only as a follower, but also as a leader. You took first place in strictly swing as a leader at Bridgetown Dance Convention in 2010, and placed 2nd at Palm Springs 2011. What do you feel has given you the greatest push on your leading abilities? Any mentors?

I wouldn't say I have any mentors, but I do aspire to be an All Star leader and follower like Samantha Buckwalter. Ultimately I lead because I enjoy it. It's incredibly fulfilling to be able to both lead and follow a dance at a high level, not only do I understand and dance both sides better, but it makes me a better teacher too.

Since you have a unique perspective of leading, what's the one thing you could



share with our readers who are also leaders, that would help them in their dance?

"Lead your partner, not the pattern."

Do you have any special interests/hobbies outside of dance?

"I would actually consider dancing to be my hobby. I am a writer first and foremost.

How did you get started in writing?

"I've been writing since I was a child. My biggest accomplishment so far was winning 10th place in the 77th Annual Writers Digest Writing Competition, in the TV/Movie Script category in 2008 with an original screenplay. I was in the top 5 movie scripts, and the top 3 women."

In all your dancing experience, have there been any trials you have had to overcome? Any obstacles? If so what are they and how did you rise above it?

"My height has been a big obstacle as a follow, which I think is one of the reasons why I took to leading so easily, because my height makes

it easier to lead. One of the reasons why I am such a proponent of leading your partner, not the patterns, is because of how uncomfortable, and even dangerous, it is to be led by someone who doesn't adjust to my size. I have been injured multiple times..." Cassie also went on to say how her height has affected her competitions. She adds, "It took me three years to master my height and get out of the novice division."

Cassie has gone through other obstacles and difficulties, such as being in two car accidents, both of which were not her fault, but caused a concussion and whiplash. Cassie also deals with Celiac disease and a number of other severe food intolerances. She also battles clinical depression, the result of having a lifelong chronic illness.

Through all of this, Cassie remains positive. "I prefer people not to focus on my health needs... but show interest in me as a whole person instead... I think what gets me through it all is the hope that if I keep going, if I don't give up, I'll eventually make my dreams come true."

After my interview with Cassie, I get the feeling we have a great dancer and instructor in our midst, who has a wealth of dance experience. She loves to teach both leads and follows in WCS and is easily approachable by most anyone who wants to learn.

(Continued from page 1) - (Dance n Play event Recap)

The Ten Best Parts of Dance N Play:

1. The intimate and inclusive atmosphere.
2. The two hour Question and Answer workshop.
3. Hanging out with all of the Dancers, Staff and Professionals at the event.
4. The leveled workshops that catered to all the dancers.
5. The Pro's Westie-Bombing the ballroom at night and dancing with everyone!
6. The impromptu All-American, with the Competitive Advantage Staff, and with the audience choosing the winners.
7. The Pros were there to teach out of their love for teaching.
8. The unpaid workshop Barry Jones and Patty Vo taught Sunday night because they wanted to teach and help everyone get better.
9. The activities offered, white water rafting, canoe trips, and hikes.
10. The amazing hotel staff, that bent over backwards to help everything run smoothly.

SOswing Recap S.O. Swing was a new event for the Medford area that brought in dancers from all over, it had a large showing from California and Oregon and the Pro staff was great. The workshop I had with Sharlot Bott was fantastic. It was a great introduction to the dance world for the new dancers that don't travel much in Medford and Ashland. It was an amazing experience with a great dance show from the pros in both their Strictly competitions and Jack & Jill competitions. This included Tara Trafzer and Nick Jay's impersonation of Melissa Rutz and Ben Morris' current Classic routine; yes Melissa did tell her it was ok and even did some of the moves. The dancing was great and the floor layout made the event even more personable. It was a great event and I'll love to see what happens next year.

By: Jacei Payne

Portland Dance Festival (Continued)

(Continued from page 2)

from two years ago. The reason these three come to mind is we had such awesome participation from everyone getting into the spirit by dressing up, and because we had great decorations in those years. When those two things come together, it makes the party really memorable."

The Portland Swing Dance Club has decorated the swing room for many years. What has been the most memorable room that you can remember?

"Without a doubt, the most awesome decorations display the swing club ever pulled off was "Jungle Boogie". It happened in one of PSDC's first years of existence although I can't remember the exact year. When you walked into that room, it was like late in the movie Jumangi when the characters re-enter the house; the inside had been transformed into a thick jungle complete with swinging vines, animals and that musty smell....anybody remember that? Awesome!"

Finally, What is the line-up this year?

"How about the brand new air conditioning unit above the swing room? Seriously, we always have an awesome swing staff and this year is no different. We have the incredible Mario Robau coming back after being gone for at least ten years. We have THE hottest WSDC spontaneous performers on the west coast coming...that would be Jason & Yvonne Wayne and Nick Jay & Joanna Meinel. We also have Michael Kielbasa, director of Sea to Sky coming, local favorite Jenica Krolicki, and our chief judge this year is swing legend Michelle Kinkaid.

One final comment about the swing portion of the Portland Dance Festival is this: we've always allowed swing dancers to compete in our Sunday swing contests simply by purchasing a one day pass and paying the contest fees. Because many other events don't allow that, we see a nice increase in attendance on Sunday from the swing folks, and

for that we're grateful of course. But by waiting until Sunday to attend the Festival, swing dancers are missing all the wonderful swing workshops that will be taught on Friday and Saturday, and the Saturday night dance theme party for us is simply the best part of the event. Of course we think the best decision is to come for the whole weekend, but we know we're competing with summer vacation time, nice weather, the economy, and everything else. So we'll be happy to welcome anyone and everyone to this year's party. We know you're going to have a great time."

Where Everybody Knows Your Name

You are at a dance and music is bold and energetic, there are people all around, someone extends their hand and you instinctively extend yours and you are on the floor. You return to the side lines and your friend asks, "Who was that?" You pause... 'I don't know but he has great rhythm' you respond.

Most of us dance for a variety of reasons but one of the most common reasons is because we enjoy the social atmosphere. Dancing is one way for us to meet new people. What do you do when you meet someone new? Do you introduce yourself?

The sweetest sound is your name coming off of someone else's lips. When someone knows your name after meeting you only once, you feel important and worthy of respect. When someone forgets your name, you feel unimportant. But worse-when someone doesn't even care enough to ask your name? Don't you feel disrespected?

So when asking someone to dance, please introduce yourself and try to remember their name so at the end of the dance you

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

Submitted Anonymously By: Twinkle Toes

can look them in the eye and smile, "Thank you, Taylor."

There will always be new people entering our dance community, which means even more people to dance with! I guarantee that the more people who know your name, the more dances you will get, the more often you will come dancing, and the more fun you will have!

Cheers... Twinkle Toes

Come to our Board Meetings

Want to see how our board meetings run? Do you have input you would like to share with the board?

Come to a board meeting. They are FREE and OPEN to any current member of the Portland Swing Dance Club. Our meetings are open to the membership and we are here to serve YOU !!! So come and check them out. They are normally held from 5pm to 7pm before our 2nd Saturday dances, but on rare occasions are held the 4th Saturday of the month. In the occasion we hold a meeting at a non-standard time, those meeting minutes are available at the next meeting.

And who knows, you just might like it so much you want to join the board next year.

Photos & artwork in this issue provided by: Randy Shotts, Steve Klein, and Cassie Winter



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Deadlines for articles are the 15th day of the month prior to publication dates. If you have a submission, please address it to Steve Klein, Newsletter Editor at: newsletter@PortlandSwing.org