



PSDC Newsletter

Portland Swing Dance Club

November - December 2012 issue



Leify Green

WWW.BRADFORDWHELAN.COM

The Acoustic Sound of West Coast Swing

Steve Klein's exclusive interview with Leify Green...

The scene was set. SwingDiego was the event, on the last night of social dancing in the main ballroom. Sunday night, Early Monday morning, at 1:00am to be exact. The glow of red shines on dancers and the dance floor as the SwingDiego logo glows equally bright on large flat panel displays.

I'm starting to hear a shift in DJ'd music turning over to a more acoustic guitar sound and singer who was playing live. The musical rhythm and melody echoes through the ballroom. And people are dancing. Lots of them. From all over the world.

SwingDiego is known to be the Super Bowl of Swing. So it didn't surprise me that they would hire a top notch musical artist to play portions of the social dancing that night. I find myself dancing to this beautiful music, interpreting with my dance partner as I go. For those competitors who love musical interpretation, and spontaneity, and maybe just a little bit of something different. Enter Leify Green.

Leify is what some in the WCS scene are calling the "Rock Star" of West Coast Swing acoustics. That's all he plays, an acoustic guitar, and his own vocals.

Fast forward to BridgeTown Swing, Portland Swing Dance Club's yearly West Coast Swing Dance Event. The scene was very similar, only this time Leify was playing in a ballroom with a backdrop of the Columbia river, with the moonlight shimmering on the water and on the Hayden Island Bridge as it reached from Oregon into Washington state. He played many sets that night, taking DJ breaks in-between as to give the dancers a healthy mix of Live Acoustics and DJ'd originals.

I got the chance to interview Leify between sets at Bridgetown Swing early Saturday morning. It was around 5am, and he had just finished about 3 sets. We met up in his hotel room to unwind a bit and to just chat about music and dance.

Continued on Page 2

From the Editor

There is so much energy in the club these days. We had many new volunteers eager to join the PSDC Board of Directors (see elections section).

Also we had one of the greatest BridgeTown Swing Dance events ever (see Letter from the President).

In this newsletter, we have our normal Member Profile, and DJ Corner, but we also have a new Featured Instructor section, focusing on a local or regional instructor of West Coast Swing.

Finally we have our exclusive interview with none other than Leify Green.

I want to thank all of you for the positive feedback from our *What Makes a Great Swing Dance Club* article in our last issue. It raised a lot of awareness, and gave our board & members new ideas for the club.

Sincerely,



Steve Klein

Steve Klein

Newsletter Editor / Historian
newsletter@PortlandSwing.org

Board of Directors:

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

inside...

Leify Green Interview, PSDC Calendar
Featured Instructor, Leilani Nakagawa
Election 2012 (Candidates and Campaign Slogans)
Letter from the PSDC President - Chris Jones
PSDC Info, DJ Corner, Member Profile - Arthur Lahm

Pages 1, 2, 8-9
Pages 3 & 10
Pages 6 & 7
Pages Insert
Pages 4, 5, & 11-12

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Leify Interview Continued...

Steve: I remember seeing you at SwinDiego in May of 2012. And I think that's the first time I danced to your music live. It was wonderful and phenomenal.

Leify: Thank You.

Steve: You played a few sets for us live tonight here at BridgeTown Swing, which was Awesome by the way.

Leify: Thank You. I kind of feel like we are making history right now. We are seeing many covers done to acoustic and it seems especially popular in the West Coast Swing (WCS) world.

Steve: What was the best part about playing tonight at Bridgetown Swing Dance Convention?

Leify: What really excited me tonight is that I had multiple request for my originals. Ben Morris was like, "Did you play *Have a Drink* yet?" "and then someone said, "Oh, is this *The Train* song..." And those were my songs... Those were not acoustic covers. Most that stuff was by me...

Steve: That is really special for a musician to have your own music recognized. Do you have any new albums on the horizon?

Leify: My original music is becoming familiar, so I'm well overdue for a new album...

Steve: How do you get some of the inspiration for your own music.

Leify: For example: I love Seattle. I've spent a lot of time up there this year. I wrote, "There's a Snow Storm in Seattle." When I was up there.

Steve: Oh Yeah ! That song came from a trip up there?

Leify: True story. They cancelled my show because of a snow storm and I was stuck in a hotel room. And I was pretty upset, so I wrote that song to cheer myself up. It worked out.

Steve: I know that the WCS and the Westies are dancing to more acoustic music, or acoustic covers at times, how did your involvement in WCS come into play with your music?

Leify: The music and dance kind of came together at the same time. It depends on how far back you want to go. Like I was saying earlier, the song "Have a Drink". It's the

song from peer pressuring the girl into staying at the party?"

Steve: Oh yeah?

Leify: Basically she was a very studious girl, just you know, a premed student, it was the very last Saturday night of the year. We were in the dorms and we were all moving out in a few days, and we were having this party, mainly to get rid of left over booze. {laughs} But the entire semester that she was there, she never really relaxed. And I thought this would be a good time and so I took it upon myself to make sure she stayed at this party. {laughs}

I said, 'What do I have to do to make you stay? If I write you a song will you stay?' I really didn't even know if I could do it 'when I asked her' I was kind of bluffing. Then she said YES. So I had to come up with a song in about 20 minutes.

We became friends. She was the president of a Ballroom Club at the UMBC. She actually ended up getting me involved more with ballroom dance.

Steve: Was that your first dance experience?

Leify: I guess my very first partner dancing experience was with Salsa when I lived in Lima, Peru. It was the sort of non structured salsa that everyone does there. I was there six months. I studied there for a semester, did some volunteer work, built some houses, and did some traveling around. When I came back from that, I started checking out ballroom dancing.

Steve: How did WCS come about for you?

Leify: The salsa class at the University's Ballroom club, the instructor there, he also taught West Coast Swing. So I took a couple of lessons. I learned the sugar push and the left side pass, and the basics. So I first started dancing WCS in 2007, but I didn't really get into it until much later.

Steve: What was your Major in college?

Leify: Economics, and modern languages and cultures, emphasis on Spanish. I took a little bit of Chinese, a little bit of Arabic. But no music. {laughs} My mentor in college, who was a world renowned academic and educator said, "How long are you going to have to do this music thing." It was a complete 90 degree turn for me.

(Continued on page 8)

PSDC Dance Calendar

Nov 10

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

Location: Sunnyside Grange

Nov 24

FREE Dance and FREE Lesson !!! For All Club Members (only \$10 to join this night).

Chris Jones teaches the intermediate lesson at 7:30. Beginners Lesson at 7:30pm backstage. Open dancing from 8:30 to 12:00 midnight.

DJ: Joe Broderick

Location: Norse Hall

Dec 8

PSDC Second Saturday Swing Dance. **Jimmy Ho**, 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

Dec 22

No Dance this week. Happy Holidays !

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

Competition Calendar

WCS Events on the West Coast

Sea to Sky
Seattle, Washington
Nov. 8-11, 2012

US Open
Burbank, California
Nov. 22-25, 2012

Chico Dance Sensation
Chico, California
Nov. 29-Dec. 2, 2012

Palm Springs New Years Eve
Dec. 27-Jan. 1, 2012
Palm Springs, California

Featured Instructor: Leilani Nakagawa

Featured Instructor Interview with Leilani Nakagawa

As I start this first ever featured instructor profile article, I turned my attention to the Wednesday West Coast Swing nights, which Leilani Nakagawa is one of the many hosts, at Lenora's Ballroom—Part of the UpTown Ballroom in Portland. Leilani has been dancing West Coast Swing for 3 years and is a member of the Portland Swing Dance Club for 2 of

those years. What I come to find out is that Leilani has had an interest in dancing long before West Coast Swing.

How did your interest in dance come about and what inspired you to become a dance teacher?

My parents were the catalyst that began my interest in partner dancing. They first met at a ballroom social dance and it has always been a hobby they enjoy. My exposure to dance started in middle school when I would tag along to social dances with my parents; before I knew what had happened, I was learning to dance and loving it! From there my dance journey went something like this...

I decided to take a few formal classes and found I enjoyed the process of learning the concept of connected dancing. Initially I fell in love with swing (East coast / Lindy Hop) dancing in high school and helped run a Swing Club that taught students to dance and then performed for assemblies and local community events. I went all in after that and decided to take a LOT of classes and built a base in pretty much every partner dance in existence (fell in love with all those too ☺) I started TA'ing in college (majoring in something other than dance – psychology; my other passion) for a local studio and enrolled in a DIVDA Teacher Training Program. The next step in my dance venture was competition; starting with Ballroom and Latin. At the same time, I took a teaching position part time and decided I LOVED teaching dance! With this newfound passion, I decided to put my counseling career on hold and made the daring move to teach dance full time and pursue a career in what had once been just a fun hobby. I am still surprised by how quickly my dancing passion and career has evolved ever since! This decision has brought a great deal of fulfillment into my life and I am very thankful I chose this career path.

What is your training background in dancing and West Coast Swing (WCS)?

My formal training began in American Rhythm and Smooth and the social ballroom dances. Moving next to International Standard and Latin, where I really started to develop the passion

that lead to my career as an instructor. I have also trained in Salsa and the social club dances within that genre. I most recently found my way to WCS (thank goodness!) ... and of course fell in love with this amazingly expressive and connection orientated dance! My only wish is that I had found this fantastic dance sooner!

You travel in the WCS Convention and Competition Circuit. What do you like most about WCS dance conventions? Any goals you would like to share with the readers?

WCS conventions are absolutely incredible and I basically love every aspect. First off, I love when I go away for a convention weekend I am able to I do nothing else but live, eat, and breathe WCS. The events allow us the opportunity to be totally immersed by this incredible dance! I cannot count the number of times I have returned from traveling to an interesting locale for a WCS event and a non-dancing friend will ask – “Oh, what a neat place to go for a weekend – what did you explore in the city?” I am forced to confess that I didn't leave the hotel or see the light of day all weekend and their faces are completely confused and aghast! This however is the draw of an event for me; to be completely enveloped by WCS all weekend long! Conventions also provide a great opportunity for gaining knowledge and inspiration. Workshops, private lessons, practice with peers, and even watching the social dancing, all converge to create the ideal atmosphere to enhance your perspective and grow your knowledge of WCS.

This inspires my main goal for conventions – to be aware of what I have learned. It may seem simple, but I like to keep that perspective at the front of my mind. By the end of an event I strive to define for myself the key concepts I have gained from the weekend and incorporate them into my dancing back home. I feel that competing at events is a great tool to develop and encourage improvement. It naturally pushes and stretches limits, dedicating energy to improve. I have loved seeing my involvement in competitive dancing expand my skills as a

(Continued on page 10)



TurnTable FM

The Turntable Dance
By Babak Seyed Shakeri

It started with an idea. An idea to bring a new style of social dancing to the Portland area. One where the dancers who attend are in control of the music. One where they set the tone of the night and give their input into the song choices for the night. An idea that seemed so crazy, it just might work. And it did.

I started with a message to Astrid Perry, the owner of Paradise Dance Studio, asking what she thought about the dance. She loved the idea and suggested I plan it. I've organized events before, but a social dance wasn't one of them, so I took on the challenge.

We decided to use the Turntable.FM app because it's available on Androids, iPhones, and even laptops. Using this app, anyone who is inside the virtual room, could hop onto the DJ booth and play their songs. And we had a running list of requests that we would play for those who didn't have the app so that everyone had a chance to participate.

Even though this dance would be DJ'd by the dancers who attended, I realized we would still need a head DJ. I asked Nick De Vore to be our head DJ. I then went to Andrew Slac, asking him to give the lesson at the dance and be the MC. Once we had Andrew helping us, I knew this dance was going to be great.

But just organizing a social dance wasn't enough for me. With PDF and Bridgetown coming up, I thought it would be a good opportunity to try to plan a Jack and Jill. We were lucky enough to have the community help us on this one. Melena Bronson, Jimmy Ho, Jason Isbell, Cassie Winter, Trina Siebert, and Joe Broderick all acted as judges, with the lovely Trudy Thatcher as our head judge.



The community donated some awesome prizes for our Jack and Jill. From all the way in Medford, Dave Kahn and Rebecca Blust, the organizers behind the first S.O. Swing, generously donated two passes to next year's convention. PSDC donated two Bridgetown water bottles, and Trina Siebert donated two passes to Portland's popular weekly west coast swing dance, West Coast Wednesdays. We had a total of 5 prizes.

28 people competed in our Jack and Jill, making it both competitive and fun. With plenty of people on the side cheering the competitors on, it was a great way to show the support that the community has for one another.

Before the clapping had died away from the Jack and Jill finals, Andrew had everybody stand up for a Jam circle. It was great to see everyone let loose and just dance while getting cheered on by our peers. We kept it going for several songs before it ended with Andrew Slac doing the splits.

To top off an already successful night, we had a surprise guest Dj, Alfred Lee, who decided to pop in from California. He stopped in to see how the dance was going and decided to stay till the end and DJ with us. It was a huge honor to know that we were getting support from someone who wasn't even in the same state as us.

This was our trial run, and a very great one at that. We had a few minor glitches, but we were able to learn from them and fix them quickly. It was smooth sailing for the rest of the night.

Over all this was a great event. Everyone kept thanking me for a job well done, but honestly, it's the community who did it. I may have organized it, but without the DJ, the MC, the judges, the donated prizes, and the people who came out to support it, this dance wouldn't have happened. So thank you for coming out supporting this dance. We will see you at the next one!

PSDC Info... Did You Know?

1. You get a FREE pass when you become a member? You can use it for your first dance admission that night, or use it later.
2. All Star level dancers get Free Admission to our dances.
3. Membership is only \$10 for the remainder of 2012.
4. BridgeTown Swing is owned by the PSDC and forms the Committee that runs the event.
5. Any PSDC Member can sit in on a board meeting. Ask for times and locations of the next board meeting if interested.
6. Our income needs to be 85% from members to keep our non-profit status. So join today !
7. Other Regional and National Swing Dance Clubs get into our PSDC dances at the membership price. Likewise many other Swing Dance Clubs honor our members with their member admission prices. Be sure to ask.

DJ Feedback and Suggestions WANTED !

Our Facilities Director would like input into our current DJ's at PSDC dances, how you like em', and any suggestions you might have to make your dancing experience even better,

Email feedback & suggestion to:
facilities@portlandswing.org

PSDC Membership 2013 RENEWAL

We would like to invite you into a family of dancers who share your passion to dance. We hope to create a dance atmosphere that is welcoming to beginning and experienced dancers alike. 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. We value each and every member. Without you, there is no club.

Discount at Dances and Workshops

Every member pays just \$8 at each dance rather than the \$15 fee for guests. So if you play by the numbers, you will save over \$168 per year on just dances alone. Come to our workshops with pros, and your savings get better and better.

Regional Clubs admission prices honored, and PSDC honors club prices.

Regional clubs will also honor your membership for their dances. Visiting Seattle. Dance with Seattle friends at the Seattle Swing Club's membership price if you're a PSDC member. Likewise, if you are visiting from another dance club, you get to take advantage of our club's membership prices too.

How Much is Membership?

Our membership fee is prorated at \$30 per year. If you join after July 1st, membership for the remainder of the year is \$20. After October 1st, \$10 allows you to enjoy the membership benefits for the remainder of the calendar year.

If you are a full time student and money is tight, don't miss out on taking breaks from studying and relieving stress by dancing it all away because your membership price is only \$10 for the year.

To sign up to be a member, or renew your membership

Go online to:

<http://www.portlandswing.org/about-us/membership/>

Or

Fill out the Membership Form at the End of this newsletter. Print it out, & mail to the address found on the form.

Or

Email form to: membership@portlandswing.org

Source: PSDC Website

DJ Corner

Joe Broderick Featured DJ



What Venues Do you DJ?

PSDC, WCS Wednesday's at Lenora's, WCS Practica 3rd Friday's at Lenora's, Private events and Weddings.

What is your philosophy when it comes to DJ'ing WCS Dances?

Know your Crowd! Play quality music that will keep people dancing all night long. Keep your music fresh so you can mix in new musical gems into our classic WCS favorites.

You go to Swing Dance Competitions, is there a rhythm in the way they DJ socially vs. competitively? is there a structure?

Traveling to WCS competitions about once a month you see a wide variety of DJ styles. From the random sounding sets that change speed and tempo extremes on a whim, to the traditional approach of letting your set rise and fall to specific BPM's. There are pros and cons to both styles and I have learned to enjoy both.

Competition Music is a whole different animal, and usually depends on the chief judge or event directors musical philosophy. Recently we have seen a focus back to blues music at NASDE events, with two blues songs and one contemporary song being played in a set of three. Choosing to forego any type of lyrical or slow song that might border on the edge of "swing" music. Non NASDE events have been keeping with the traditional approach or playing a Blues, Slow and Contemporary song during competition. We are fortunate to have several top notch DJ's on the circuit so no matter what event you find yourself at I'm sure there will music you can enjoy.

Top Ten:

1. Show Me - Usher
2. Nobody Loves You Like Me - Leela James
3. Beautiful Goodbye - Maroon 5
4. Valerie - Amy Winehouse
5. Things are Changin' - Gary Clark Jr.
6. Red Bone Girl - Eric Benét
7. Diamonds - Rihanna
8. Wild Turkey 101 Proof - Kenny Wayne
9. I Don't Trust Myself - John Mayer
10. Holly Brown - Dion



PSDC Election 2012

Below are the Candidates for Portland Swing Dance Club Board of Directors for Year 2013

Candidates for President *(2 Candidates Running)*



Chris Jones

I've truly enjoyed serving you as President in 2012 and can't wait for 2013. A President needs to have experience to know where we've been in order to have the vision to guide us forward. It's also important to regularly attend and take an active interest in core activities of the swing club. This is what I've provided in guiding our club's growth. Bridgetown Swing, Swing Blizard and Summer Swing were better than ever. I've been an active club member since its birth and I'm looking forward to helping our club get even better with your vote for 2013 President.

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Melena Bronson

As Vice-President I have learned a lot this past year and as President I aim to implement changes to foster a more positive and supportive dance community. My priorities include reaching out to past and present club members, the regional/national dance community, finding ways to honor history, and expand our

community with new dancers and new ideas. I will work to increase attendance, make dances more affordable, increase club visibility, and facilitate social opportunities like club-nights-out and picnics. By promoting a more positive and inclusive atmosphere I believe we can succeed in making a warm and welcoming dance community!

Candidates for Vice President *(2 Candidates Running)*



Glenna Cooke

As a charter member of the Portland Swing Dance Club I have held several board positions and supported the club since its formation. If elected to the position of Vice President, I will apply my energies to reducing the price of dances, reinstating club activities including "club nights-out" and an annual picnic, to offering more workshop options and providing

social activities that are fun, friendly and welcoming to past, present and future members. I would like to expand our community outreach to include supporting local charitable organizations and participating in a youth dance program for local schools.



Emerald Beanland

Campaign slogan: My mommy thinks I'm special, and you should too!

Why I want the position: I am a competent person, and I like dancing. If I can use competence to encourage and support dancing, I will be pleased. So basically, this is all about me.

Candidates for Membership Director *(2 Candidates Running)*



Kristy Brehm

Serving on the PSDC Board is an honor that requires responsibility, reliability, common sense, and commitment to ethical service to the club and its members. Members should keep the ideas of RESPONSIBILITY, RELIABILITY, and ETHICAL SERVICE in mind when voting in this election. Membership Director is a job that requires attention to detail,

timeliness, computer skills, a positive, friendly attitude, and regular attendance at board meeting so the work can get done. I believe I have effectively demonstrated these leadership qualities in my prior service as President (2009-11) and Newsletter Editor (2008). Vote Kristy Brehm for Membership Director!



Ted Macy

I want to be Membership Director to help get the club more member and community focused. I feel we have gotten away from those goals in recent years. My experience includes:

- 1) Been a member since the club began,
- 2) Facilities director from 2001 to 2005
- 3) Granted the President's award in 2005
- 4) Facilities coordinator for the first Eight (8) Bridgetown Swing conventions 2001 to 2008...



Secretary: Rhonda Shotts

I'd like to run again for position of secretary in order to support our club. So much of my time is taken up elsewhere these days, I am not always able to make it to all the club functions, so the least I can do is help on the Board. I am a founding member of PSDC and have served on the board in various positions over the years.



Treasurer: Carla Titus

I want to run as treasurer for the board again because I feel the club needs to have transparent financial processes. Since I took this position last year, I have made it my goal to revamp all the financials of the club to provide more organized & clear guidelines of spending. This has helped us stay on track as well as make better decisions for the community.

Candidates for Dance Director *(2 Candidates Running)*



Kinsey Huffman

The first and foremost reason that has propelled me to run for the PSDC board is that I believe in this club and want to help it grow into something even more exceptional. My objectives for this year are to lower the price for dances to make it more accessible to people. Also, to create a larger more important sense of community with not only dances but other events that are member oriented.



Bobby Shakeri

I am very excited to run and bring my enthusiasm to the board! I have many new ideas for the upcoming dances. One idea is to add themes chosen by the members using the new Facebook page. 80's night? Super hero? You decide! This page will give members a place to get information about upcoming dances and give us feedback about previous ones. Feedback is very important

to me, because I want to hear the members input and use their ideas to make these dances grow. And these are just a few ideas, so if you want to hear more or have any questions please let me know!



Newsletter: Steve Klein

I am here to serve you, the membership. I have enjoyed being the newsletter editor for the past year, and will continue giving you what you want most in a newsletter – interesting topics that relates to our West Coast Swing world, our club, and community. I will also work for you in our board meetings, by voting to reduce admission prices to our dances, discounts for students, and fostering a more open and positive atmosphere. Past experience includes: Dance Director 2011 (creating & passing the first Instructor Hiring Policy). I am also a founding board member of the PSDC.



Events Director: Nick De Vore

I am currently looking to be your next event coordinator and boy am I excited to continue the wonderful job my predecessors have done. I look forward to helping the club bring in top notch pros, work closely with the Dance Director to help increase memberships, and of course make our club THE club to be a part of while having fun at the same time! We of course love to hear your feedback. I am here to serve YOU, our members. I hope to continue serving the club in a professional and cheerful manner and look forward to a great 2013 Year as a PSDC board member.



Promotions: Jimmy Ho

One of the most important things to a dancer is to know when and where dances are available. That is because every dancer would like to find out where they can dance and socialize. My name is Jimmy Ho and I am running for the PSDC Promotions position. I have been a dancer and a dance teacher for over twelve years, which I have a good network and resources on knowing when and where west coast swing dances are. In addition, I have held this position before and am experienced at it.



Facilities: Peter Bailey

My goal for the coming year is to make our club more of a community and to increase our involvement in the local scene. To me, this includes increasing the number of social opportunities, recruiting more dancers, listening to our members, and making an effort to include those who are not yet part of our club. As per the feedback of members, I will work to increase the number of DJs in rotation, make our dances more affordable, and provide more low cost or free introductory workshops. I welcome your feedback, so feel free to get in touch with me.

**Be sure to VOTE ! Your vote counts...
Attend our Annual Elections Night
FREE DANCE ! Nov 24, 2012**

Leify Interview: (Continued from page 2)

Steve: Dancers really appreciated your music because they dance lyrically and like the spontaneity of your music when they dance. When did you start making the WCS connection?

Leify: I graduated in 2010. And found myself broke. And my friend Casey was originally the VP of the ballroom club. She was dating a guy who did dance floors and sound and lights for West Coast Swing events. He would also run these weekly WCS parties in DC. He was looking for an employee, and I was looking for money, so she introduces us and I started working for him part time.

Then in the fall of 2010, the Flash Mob thing happened. The D'Amicos in Texas started it, I think. Then everyone in the country was doing it, including those in DC. They played that song a million times. Dave Moldover, my boss at the time, came to me and said, 'You know, if you put an acoustic version of this song together, I bet you I could make it a real hit.' I said OK this sounds like fun. I hadn't even recorded my album yet or anything. I was at the time playing a handful of shows every now and then. And thinking of maybe recording an album and doing music full time. But at that time I was torn between doing music and being an economist.

I listened to that song a million times, wrote out the parts, and went into the studio. I went back to my university and hired a recording student to be my sound engineer. I sent a copy over to Dave and he listened to it and said, 'Ah, it's not bad, but no one's going to dance to it. I also sent it to another guy who I knew DJ'd West Coast Swing and he said the same thing, 'Yeah it's Awesome! And I really like what you're doing, but I think that song is too swung for people to dance to it.'

And that's an important lesson for anybody in life doing anything. That you're going to hear 'NO' a few times. And don't believe

it. Don't take it to heart. You just got to keep going. I hear no like 19 or 20 times for stuff I want to do.

Steve: I know what you mean. For someone starting out, for them to hear no, they may take it like it's THE answer, but it really isn't.

Leify: Yeah, and they were all very respected DJ's so I just took their word for it for a while. Then I thought to myself, 'Well it's still a good song, I will put it on the CD and let people listen to it.'



Photo by: Chelle Nicole

Then one night, another DJ, Sharon Roberts, said she liked it and thought people would dance to it. She played it, but it really never took off. She would play it at the dances and she would text me and say "Twelve couples are dancing to your song." And it put a smile on my face.

Steve: So when did it really take off?

Leify: At MadJam 2011 *Dance Convention*. Sharon said, "You know, you should really give that song to the DJ's

to play, because I want to dance with you to it. You know, maybe they will play it once." So I walked up to Helen Tocco and Erica Lyons. And I said hey, I have this song that my friend wants to dance to with me, and I would like it if you would play it. And they said, "Oh, you wrote it?" and they looked at me skeptically. Then they said, OK we will listen to it.

I didn't think they would play it, based on the way they received it. Then a half an hour later it came on. Afterwards I went over to thank them. They said *excitedly* That was AWESOME! All these people had come from their hotel rooms because the hotel had the ballroom televised through a special TV channel. They heard it on the TV, and came down in the middle of the night and danced. You know, people having midnight breakfast. People flocked to the ballroom. And all the other DJ's at MadJam

wanted it. And every single DJ played it during their set. It got played 13 times that weekend.

Steve: When did you cross over from the CD and start playing live?

Leify: Playing live was another tough sell. I was thinking to myself, "I think I can play live..." That was tough because everyone said, 'No, Westies hate live music.' So I played a couple small dances and events.

Steve: Why is it that they thought it wouldn't work. Was it the type of song?

Leify: It's not about the song, because I can take just about any song and make it a Westie song. It's a bunch of things. I think the most important thing is it's very nuanced. Music and Dancing is a conversation.

Steve: Yes, that's true.

Leify: It's a conversation between the music, the leader, and the follower. It's a three way conversation. And when it's DJ'd music, the one person is very passive. The song. It's the same thing every time. It's like a scripted character. Only the leader and follower have room to improvise. Live music just has to be just as much of a conversation, and an active participant in it. The important thing I do is leave a lot of space in my music. A lot of musicians make the mistake of playing really loud all the time, and just putting notes everywhere. Maybe they're a great guitarist and they want to shred and show how many notes they can fit in a small space, and it leaves no room for people to interpret and to give *their* conversation, and if the musician's not giving space and taking time to listen, then the other people can't be a part of the conversation. They feel blocked out of it, and they don't want to dance to it.

It's like someone talking fast all the time and never giving anyone a chance to respond. So I leave a ton of space in my music. I don't use any effects; I don't use a drum track, or a loop pedal or anything. It's my guitar and my vocals. Two things. That's it. And I play my guitar percussively. I do have some percussions in there, but it's all on the guitar. A very basic part of that is the 2 and 4 beat, because there is a lot of action there.

Steve: Yeah, I was just thinking tonight, 'how is it that we are dancing to this acoustic song?' How is that possible when there is no percussion or beat, but it's there.

(Continued on page 9)

Leify: Yeah, the pulse is there. It's not boom boom boom.

Steve: Yeah, it's not blaring out at you, but we (the dancers) can hear it...

Leify: Yeah, you can put that pulse into the guitar and into the vocals too. A lot of what I do is fluctuate the dynamics a little bit. I'm not singing at one volume, it's ebbing and flowing, raising and lowering, and it has got its own little rhythm that way and that gives people something else. It's like there is this beat going on and there is also this one. It's almost like a heartbeat and breathing I would say.

Steve: Where do you see your music taking you in the next few years?

Leify: What I really want my music to do... I feel like in life, one should have a purpose. And that's something we decide. And it's kind of an approach to life. One could choose to live with purpose or not.

I'm very moved by the quotation, it's up for debate of who actually said it, it's attributed to Gandhi. 'Be the change you want to see in the world.' So I want my music to contribute to that in some way.

There are a lot of changes I would like to see in the world, but one of the things I have been thinking about a lot lately is to keep human beings human beings. I see a lot in our modern society that we tend to commoditize each other and we see people as products. When you go to a restaurant, or even a fast food restaurant, people could look at them as a food dispenser rather than a person.

Or guys will look at a beautiful woman at a bar, and see her as a sex doll rather than a person. There are many ways that people are dehumanizing each other and disconnecting. I want to reconnect. Reminding people about who we are and who we are is, we are social. We belong together and to appreciate each other.

That's a real strong theme in my music, simplicity and togetherness. Just lyrically. That's one of the reasons I really like the dance world. The dance world is a great example of it. It's people coming together. We are getting off of the couches and away from the TV, and we're dancing with each other and we are connecting in a physical way.

Steve: It seems like a very important theme.

I think that's a very important part of the message that I have and I'm 100% behind it. I feel dancing unites us.

Steve: That's great. Social dancing does bring us together.

Leify: I'm very invested in this social dance idea. I play for a lot of small dances because I want to help their community out.



Photo by: Chelle Nicole

Steve: So you travel a lot with your career. You've been on the East Coast and West Coast. Is that what you love about it, the travel?

Leify: Yeah. I mean there's also hard work to it. I'm on busses, planes and trains all the time. I try to travel using mass transit as much as I can. Because one, it's better for the environment. And I also want to try to provide an example for that.

Steve: Is your real name Leify Green?

Leify: Well, Nooo.

Steve: Do you want to reveal that here? We don't have to...

Leify: It's not that hard to find. I kind of made a game out of keeping it a secret so I'm not going to tell you that. But I will tell you, my real name is Leif. L. E. I. F.

And Leify Green, is a nick name I picked up early in my life.

Steve: Is Leify Green your stage name?

Leify: It's my stage name, but it's also MORE than that. My mom and my little sister have been calling me Leify forever. It was confusing at first, people who were in business would call me Leif. And my family and my closest people *to me* would call me Leify. Then when I took that as my stage name, strangers were calling me Leify. It kind of caught me off guard. But I'm used to it now. And they both are interchangeable.

Steve: Is there anything else you would like to add?

Leify: I would like to thank the West Coast Swing community for being as supportive as they have been for me. It's great when people come up to me after shows and say, 'That was so amazing... That was the most incredible dancing in my life.' I mean this community has been just awesome at spreading the word. Everywhere I go my music has preceded me. That's wonderful to feel. There is a reason I keep doing these. There are many reasons, and part of it is just that it's kind of become my family. Even if I end up deciding I don't want to be a career musician, I still want to be a part of it. If go back to school, or go back into business or whatever, I will still keep doing this.

Steve: As we ended the interview, just before his last set in the early morning hours, the sun starting to rise on the Columbia River, I couldn't help but think how lucky we are. This is a unique time in history where we get experience the wonderful music and talent that is Leify Green. Find out more at: <http://leifygreen.com/>

**Leify's next stop is: Sea to Sky Dance Convention in
Seattle, Washington
November 9 thru the 11th, 2012.**

(Continued from page 3)

dancer and I hope to continue to develop to my greatest potential through my commitment to training and competition.

In WCS, who have been your mentors?

I have been blessed to be able to train with a wide variety of instructors and really enjoy being able to acquire a diverse set of skills. I will highlight a few here. The first "pro" I took a private lesson from was Brandi Tobias, and I loved being able to relate to her understanding of WCS due to her background in ballroom. I have great praise for Kyle and Sarah, as their training and perspective led to my understanding of "swing" connection and separated it from my "ballroom" connection training. To an equal degree, I also have greatly appreciated the highly technical training of Jordan and Tatiana – their attention to detail is superb. They have helped me refine my dance immensely.



What keeps you going, and/or inspires you?

I must say that at the end of the day, many times it is dancing itself that keeps me going. My career demands a high amount and consistent flow of creativity, which isn't always free flowing. After a long challenging day of teaching and producing I can end up completely drained of my creative juices. I have learned one of the best things for me to do when I find myself in this position is to go social dancing. Social dance is a powerful thing. The freedom your soul and body experiences during social dancing is so healing and rejuvenating. For me, it takes me right back to the beginning, back to my roots, and the place where the magic first began. Many times I find I am ready to create again soon after social dancing. Long story short – *I create to dance and I dance to create.*

I hear you recently purchased a studio called Uptown Ballroom. Can you tell us a little more about Uptown Ballroom and your role there?

Uptown Ballroom has been the best experience in my dance career thus far. In the beginning, when I first joined as an instructor in 2009, it provided a wonderful atmosphere for me to grow. I had the best instructors in town to train under, a thriving student base to develop my instruction skills, and great mentors to teach me the business side of the dance world. Now that I have taken ownership of the business, even more opportunity awaits, as I will be guiding it in future endeavors and success. I am looking forward to being able to fully express my heart for dance through this opportunity.

What dances are taught out of the studio? What social dances are held at the studio?

A large range of partner dances! We specialize in International Ballroom and Latin, West Coast Swing and Salsa. We also have a full Zumba Fitness program. We hold 2nd, 4th and 5th Saturday Ballroom and Latin Social Dances every month. We also hold a 3rd Friday West Coast Swing Practica. On the 4th Fridays of every month we hold a Salsa Social.

For schedule, go online at www.portlandballroomdancing.com

BridgeTown Swing Photographic Moments



PSDC Member Profile: Arthur Lahm



Arthur Lahm has a rich history. So much so that I was compelled to ask him for an interview. He decided he would be willing to do one for us and the club. I know he was into show horses, owning and breeding a few show quality Arabian horses, he likes gardening, he's a doctor, and even a part time pianist. But what I wanted to find out is how he knows all those Latin dances, and where did he learn to speak fluent Spanish. My research took me to interviews over the span of a few months.

My first discovery, Arthur came from a family of diplomats.

"I lived in South America. In Lima, Peru." Arthur said. "My dad was a diplomat. He was a Military Attaché to Peru. He had been to Ecuador before, and other areas. There were only 2 families that had their families in total immersion. You had to go to Peruvian schools. All the other American kids went to the American schools. My grandfather did the same thing for the US government, and my father grew up in the same environment in Europe, in France. He was also in total immersion, in French schools."

Arthur grew up in Latin America attending Jr. High and Two years of High School there. He has fond memories of growing up there and it gave him a different perspective on life. "It was an interesting time of my life, being down there. We had to learn Spanish. It was an immersion of culture and it was different. They have different values. It's more European. Even the law system is different. It's Napoleonic Law. Compared to our English Law here. It's a little different approach to life. They valued a lot of family time, and vacation. They didn't put such emphasis on work, but more on living. It's more like that in Europe too."

I found out that this is where Arthur first learned to dance. It was part of their culture. "They put a lot of emphasis on dancing. So that was important in several capacities. Peru was always the center of the western hemisphere, when the Spaniards occupied South America. They ran this Western Hemisphere from Peru, Lima. So their history is quite ancient. It was very sophisticated. They have very established educational system and it was also super imposed with an Indian culture."

Steve: When did you start dancing down there?

Arthur: "My father had dance instructors come to the house twice a week. And we were required to learn how to dance. So I danced with my sisters and brothers, and all our help. We all danced together as a family. We were representing the United States and he was giving parties to that effect, to get to know people. We were expected to dance, and dance with everyone that came to the parties. And we were required to circulate around. If there was anyone sitting down, we were required to go dance with them." The dances Arthur did were Ballroom Dancing, Latin Dancing, and some of the Tropical Dances which included Samba and Cumbia.

How long did it take you to feel comfortable in all the dances?

"We had to learn to dance, and we did. I wasn't very good at it, but I enjoyed it. It took about 2 years. I was very self conscious. I think I was in Jr. High at that time. It was during that awkward stage. But after 2 years I got a lot better. My classmates were rather critical of my dancing at first. They took a lot of amusement from watching me struggle with it. But they had danced since they were little. It was 2nd nature to them. But the older people were nice. They were very supportive because they noticed we were trying very hard."

When did you come back to the states? Did you continue dancing?

"Yes. When I came back, I went to University really quickly, in Fort Collins, Colorado. I got into medical school. I was quite young. I was only 16 when I went off to medical school. I didn't know anybody, but I did find some friends I knew from South America there and we formed a dance club.

I know you are into horses as well. When did that passion start?

"I always had an interest in horseback riding. My grandfather was in the Calvary, and my father had horses, and I became interested in them too. Dancing and riding horses are quite similar. In that you use your center, and you move your center around and that influences the other party. It's like lead and follow where you are the human, you are the leader, and the horse follows you. It's really the same language, and with a different species, so it's an interesting parallel. So a lot of the skill sets overlap."

Continued on Page 12



Member Profile: Arthur Lahm, Continued...

Arthur goes onto speak about his experiences breeding show horses and working his practice after college, but still had a desire to go dancing again. During the country dancing phase in the mid 1990's, Arthur was encouraged by his horse riding instructor to take up dance lessons again as it would help his riding. Because as he puts it, "I was getting to a higher level of equestrian skills."

Arthur started taking classes in country dances at Bushwackers with Randy Shotts and also some lessons at many of the grange halls in town 15 years ago. "I started dancing mainly on the country side, because Country was very popular. Probably more popular than West Coast Swing at the time. But I started taking West Coast Swing because it seemed more difficult," Arthur said, "and I wanted to start dancing it, because to me it was a challenge."

Arthur now competes, but that is not his primary goal. "My primary goal is social dancing, because of my background. I like the social aspects of the West Coast Swing, and I like the people who do it. There are two elements: the social, and the competition. I enjoy them equally. I used competing as an incentive to improve. Now I like it because I can help share what I've learned with other people." And Arthur wanted to earn this way up through the competitions point system. "When I decided to compete, I decided I would go through and get the points as they came. I would not try to skip any levels and just gut it through to see if it was possible. I decided to start teaching, and I wanted to see what the competitor experience was like going through all the levels and earning my way through."

How was the experience of earning your way through? "It was really hard. I had a lot of plateaus. But I still had great social dances and I enjoyed the comps for that. I enjoyed competing because you meet different people in the competition, and they are in a little bit different frame of mind. And if you can make their dancing experience *there* more pleasant, with the partnership skills you acquire social dancing, then all the better. I've helped bring some new dancers into the competitor world by asking them to do strictly's. Inspiring them to go dance above their level. Which accelerates their learning. So I think those are fun things. Some of the students I have taught from the beginning are doing so well. I'm excited for their successes."

In Competing in West Coast Swing, Arthur has a few mentors. Mario Robau, Robert Royston, and Kyle Redd just to mention a few. For Arthur, each one adds a new style or element to his dancing. "I think it's good to look at pros that you can emulate and take a bit from each one of them." He said, "Such as handwork from one, footwork from another. The way this one person moves his center. But eventually through learning all these individual styles you have to pick your own style. I try different styles on like clothes and I have been criticized for trying on many different clothing. But I'm trying on a lot of different clothes and will eventually tailor my own suit."

2012 PSDC Dance Photos




PSDC Newsletter
 Portland Swing Dance Club
 P.O. Box 6761
 Portland, OR 97228-6761

Photos & artwork in this issue provided by:
 Brad Whelan, Steve Klein, Leify Green, Chelle Nicole,
 Leilani Nakagawa, Joe Broderick, Jim Long, Rabscuttle.com
 Also all the 2013 Candidates for PSDC (pages 6&7)

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

2 November, 2012

Dear PSDC members,

As I write this letter and think back to where we have come in our 14 years as a swing club, I am grateful for the many blessings that this club has provided to me over the years. Foremost among those blessings are the many wonderful people I have met through participation in the club's activities. Activities which, over the years, PSDC has continued to expand, which increases the benefits we receive for our dance dollars. We have grown from one dance a month to two dances every month. As our abilities grew, we expanded the lessons at our dances to include beginning and intermediate lessons. We have added workshop weekends with a wide variety of nationally renowned instructors. We have added Newcomer Workshops to welcome new dancers into our world. If all that was not enough, we host an incredibly amazing, nationally recognized, top notch West Coast Swing convention that brings in the best in West Coast Swing dancing from around the world.

While some of this may not be surprising to many of you who have been with us over the years, what I find to be amazing is that all these additions have been accomplished for you and for me with very little increase in cost to us. The annual membership dues of \$30 have not gone up once since the club was founded in 1999. In fourteen years, the admission price for our dances has gone up a total of three dollars. The current price of eight dollars was set in 2008 and has not gone up since then, even though the price of hall rental has gone up. Being concerned with the tight budget of students, the prices are even lower for them. As some of you have expressed an interest, and in order to keep you better informed of how your swing club works, I am writing this letter share with you where your swing club dollars go.

First and foremost, we have two dances every month. The basic financial obligations to hold these dances are; hall rental, DJ service, dance instructor, sound equipment rental, food & decorations, and bartender fee. Over the course of a year, these fees amount to slightly less than ten thousand dollars. The income, with projection for the two remaining paid dances left, from these dances (the \$8 admission price) is approximately five thousand dollars for the year. As you can see by these numbers, our membership dues obviously contribute greatly to allowing us to have our dances. Your membership also contributes to our ability to bring you a constant variety of wonderful instructors for our workshop weekends.

In addition to the regular dances and workshops, our membership dues also cover things like insurance, music licensing fees, accounting/tax services, World Swing Dance Council Membership, Secretary of State fees, webhosting fees and promotion and newsletter costs are just some of the things that have to be paid so that we all can enjoy our dances every month.

Some have expressed concern about the price for non-members to attend our dances. Granted, the price may seem high without knowing all the factors involved, but it is not just a number that was arbitrarily decided on. How we decide on how much to charge is not something that this, or any other Board, has ever taken lightly. Our current pricing structure is explained very well in a letter to the membership from our former President, Julie Isaacson.

Hi members and soon-to-be members,

Hopefully, many of you have heard we are changing our pricing structure starting with the 2009 membership year. You may not know Portland Swing Dance Club is a tax exempt organization (501-3C). As such, the majority of our income has to come from our members---in fact 85%. That's a pretty tall order. At present, about 50% or a little less of our income comes from members. Many PSDC Boards have been wrestling with this problem for years, trying to figure out a strategy to correct it. That's how we came up with the following plan for 2009:

*Regular membership remains \$30/year
Student membership remains \$10/year
Dance admission for members will increased to \$8/dance (a small increase in line with inflation)
Non-members will pay \$15/dance*

However, if a non-member chooses to become a member for the cost of two dances, i.e. \$30, then he/she will get that first dance free. We (the club) will get a new member. If he/she comes to just three more dances in that year, he/she will have more than paid for the membership. (Three non-member admissions to the dance at the old price was \$30.)

In fact, we like the idea of a free dance with the new membership so much, that we are offering this to everyone, new or returning members alike. You can use the free dance for yourself or offer it to a friend. Please encourage your friends whom you often see at PSDC dances to become members. Their membership keeps our club in good standing with the IRS and allows them to enjoy the same dances they are already attending at the much lower member price.

Let's make this work.

*Julie Isaacson
2008 PSDC president*

As you will hopefully see from all these different factors, quite a bit of thought goes into what is charged for our dances. I also hope you will truly see value in what you are paying for when you attend a PSDC dance or a workshop or BridgeTown Swing. I hope this goes a little way to clarifying what we pay for when we support our swing club.

Finally, on a side note, I would just like to say thank you to the BridgeTown Swing committee and all the volunteers who did an amazing job in producing this event. As one Friday night participant put it, "that was literally the best night of social dancing EVER!" I wholeheartedly agree. The members of the Bridgetown Planning Committee have all worked together as a great team and put in many hours of hard work to create a spectacular event for us and for the swing community at large. Great job to all who planned, volunteered at, and attended BTS.

It has been an honor to serve you this year,

Chris Jones
2012 PSDC President



Portland Swing Dance Club

Membership Form

Only one name per application. All applications must be signed and dated. Membership is renewable every January 1st. Applicant must be 18 years of age to join. Information contained on this form will be kept in confidence by the Portland Swing Dance Club (PSDC) and its Board of Directors.

Member Information

Please Print Clearly

Name: _____ Birthday Month/Day /

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Best Time to Call: _____ E-mail: _____

Membership Dues

\$30 Annual Membership Dues

\$20 (From July 1 - Sept 30)

\$10 (From Oct 1 - Dec 31)

Make checks payable: PSDC

Mail To: PSDC Membership

P.O. Box 6761

Portland, OR 97228-6761

\$10 Student Membership Dues

Must be a full-time student, 18 and up.

Email Paper newsletter

Volunteer Opportunities

The PSDC is supported by volunteers. What areas of volunteering interest you?

Set Up & Clean Up

Developing Flyers

Refreshments

Distributing Flyers

Decorations

Assist with Newsletter

Greeting & Dance Admission

Computer Skills

Workshop Registration

Dance Video Librarian

Official PSDC Use Only

Member Number: _____

Payment: Cash \$ _____ Check# _____

Date Received: _____

x

PSDC Officer or Representative Signature

Free Dance Pass Received Yes No

Member Signature: _____

Date: _____

As part of your application to join the PSDC, you agree to hold the PSDC, its officers, and venue management harmless from liability for any injury you or your guests may incur while participating in any club activity. Please contact the membership director by e-mail at membership@portlandswing.org for additional information or questions.