

# North Houston Swing Dance Club

**Saturday December 6, 2008**

## **Club News**

Basically, the news is all in this picture:



As we come to the end of another year of dancing, we've got to look at this year as one of the best years in the history of our club. We've been through a hurricane, we've had problems with the studio and air conditioning, and we've taken a few risks with our class format, our music, and our growth.

We've even added 4 levels of instruction - almost unheard of, around the country!! And look at us! We're stronger, bigger and better than ever! We've raised the level of our dancing. We've got the highest regular attendance numbers ever. And just look at those happy faces (we're hoping to see those of you that were camera shy next time). We're having the best times of our lives! High 5's to us all!

Thank you Dean, for coming through with the camera. You da' Man! (My camera crashed and burned. Santa is bringing me a new one.)

We held elections for the club officers this week. All were re-elected: Jack Holter - President; Ann Dahn - Vice President; Donese Scheffe - Treasurer; Helen Engle - Secretary; Charles Sutton - Sergeant at Arms. Jack also thanked the appointed Board members; Bobby Pritchard - Dance Director, Jeni Davis, Linda Moore, and Wayne Brodd - Social Director. Members At Large will be appointed in January at the next monthly board meeting.



Speaking on behalf of the Board, we ALL thank you for your support and for coming out each week. This is and will be our focus each week - to make our club a fun place to get together and dance West Coast Swing. Thank you again.



One more photo: Bobby had to step out, but Jack thanked all the Board members for their contributions this year. Besides, we looked so good, I just had to post one more photo.

## Class Notes

Our **Beginner Class** ended up getting what amounted to a private lesson! Paul and Debra had practiced what they learned last week, and that opened the door for them to add a few more pieces to their basics. They concentrated on technique this time: good connection, proper footwork, and position in the slot. Debra even got to learn some anchor variations by changing up the count of her turn on the Sugar Tuck. Instead of counting 1, 2, 3 & 4, 5&6, Debra changed it up by dancing it 1, 2 AND 3, 4, 5 & 6. Nice job!

Ann reviewed the moves from the last **Intermediate Class** before Thanksgiving. She did the right and left side pass along with the Promenade. Since there were some new members, Ann also reviewed the Whip Step.

Ben's **Advanced Class** was a blast! Do you know what's happening in that class? Y'all are not just doing moves, you're *dancing*! Ben has spent the last few weeks building up a series of moves that certainly challenge you to learn a new step alright, but what Ben is doing, is teaching his class to dance to the music by hitting and holding a move on count ONE. As we learn to count music, we learn to 'address the ONE' - in this case, by hitting and holding your stance for a beat or two. When Ben plays the music and y'all dance this amalgamation of moves, he's got it set up so you can experience what it feels like to address the ONE. Its awesome, isn't it? You can be sure that Ben will keep challenging you to understand music and learn to address other parts of the music, hitting breaks or accenting music that has a point of interest on the THREE, or the FIVE, or the SEVEN. Keep your ears perked up - the more you can hear while you count, the better you'll dance.

Ben put together a Throw Out starter step, a Spinning Left Side Pass, a Cross-hand Sugar Tuck to a Hit and Hold on ONE. Hold that, then step in towards the lady with a Head Loop on FOUR, take your time and slide back into a closed position and anchor on 7 & 8. Do a Throw Out starter step again, followed by the J-Hook lead to arm catch, and lady's freespin out. Add the new move from this week - the Sweetheart Check with the 'Sneaky Creepy Hand Inside The Elbow Hook' ( I made that last part up). Although this move didn't come easy, its a great move to keep the guys humble. Will we ever be good at this?!?!?!

Wrap the gals up on the right side by count FOUR, check her to the right and open her to the audience on AND FIVE. Sneak or creep your right hand into her inside elbow, and lead her back down the slot, catch the elbow as she rocks back, and free spin her back to the right. Hey...it makes sense to me, and if you were in the class, you'd know what I was talking about, right?

Bobby emphasized the Musicology Theme in his **Advance Patterns and Styling** class too. By putting together an Arm Catch move and a Dallas Side Pass with a Man Slide-In, Bobby worked on addressing the main phrases in music. Start the Arm Catch on count SEVEN. That way, you catch the next music phrase on the ONE. So you'd set up your move by beginning that move to 'Walk, Walk, Catch" ( SEVEN, EIGHT, ONE). Now you've got the choice to hold that for a beat or two, or spin the lady back out. The same is true with the Dallas Side Pass. Start that move on count FIVE. You'd dance that as Walk, Walk, Triple Step, Hold, Loop and Slide (FIVE, SIX, SEVEN AND EIGHT, ONE where you hold, and loop on ONE and take your time sliding in towards the lady after that)

## Your Thoughts

I appreciate your comments on places to dance around town. I'll be keeping an eye out for opportunities for us to get out and dance in the 'wild'. Its a whole different challenge. Unknown dance floors, live music, dancing next to the stage, tight dance areas....all present challenges but what could be more fun?!?!? We're spoiled, aren't we?

Our studio provides a comfortable and spacious place to dance in a smoke-free environment. You don't find that everywhere, do you? Stay tuned for some fun times ahead.

Coming up in January right here in Houston is America's Classic swing dance competition. Its held over the Martin Luther King holiday weekend - January 15-18. This is a weekend of incredible dancing and competition that everyone in our club ought to try to make it to if you can. These events have workshops, competitions for all skill levels of dancers, and LOTS of social dancing until the wee hours of the morning. You haven't had this much fun since Mom and Dad went away for the weekend and left you in charge of the house!

One of the categories that we can enter is the Novice Jack and Jill event, and for many beginner dancers - the Newcomer division. I'll be talking more about this opportunity as various events come along, but think about it....why not enter and compete? You'll gain confidence and your dance will improve each time you get out there and compete. Just ask Jan and Harry. They're a great example of two dancers who are having fun and getting better each week. Even if you don't enter a competition, these are fun events to attend. Talk with Donese or myself if you'd like more information. <http://www.americasclassic.com/>

One last question: Would anyone like to order a shirt with our club logo on it for next year? The more we order, the better the price. I'd just like to see if there is any interest before we pursue this much further. Shirts are typically either cotton or micro-fiber that keep you cool and range from roughly \$25-\$35. Men's shirts are charcoal gray Polo style shirts. Women's are either Polo's or tank tops and come in black and a few other colors. Anyone interested?

That's all for now. We've got one more class before the year ends, so we'll see you next week!

Take Care!

Wayne