

The Tucson Swing Dance Club's March 2009

Newsletter

This month

L Perez and Brooke Schilling are March's volunteer dance instructor.

- Thursday, March 5th: **Jack & Jill contest**. Sign up deadline is 8:45pm. Tamra Hood is the DJ. **Nomination meeting** for the elected positions on the 2009-2010 Board of Directors.
- Tuesday, March 10th: Board meeting 7pm at Village Inn, 4245 E Speedway Blvd. All members are welcome to attend.
- Thursday, March 12th: Scott Miller is the DJ. It's our **St. Patrick's Day dance!**
- Thursday, March 19th: Jim Davis is the DJ.
- Saturday, March 21st: Happy Hour at the Maverick, 6622 E Tanque Verde Rd, from 7-9pm.
- Thursday, March 26th: Joe Erker is the DJ. **Jack & Jill evaluations** for new competitors.



Patty Vo's workshop

Upcoming events

- Thursday, April 16th: Elections for the 2009-2010 Board of Directors.

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President's message

At the beginning of the year, I outlined 3 goals I've set for the club in 2009: Increased club communication, Website Enhancements, and More Opportunities for Dance Improvement. I'm pleased to say we're following through on these goals.



Our February workshop with Patty Vo provided a fun, cost-effective way for members to improve their dancing, and our goal is to have 2 more workshops this year. A big THANK YOU to our workshop committee and volunteers who plan and execute these great events.

To improve club communication, we've established many new ways in which members can share suggestions and feedback with the Board of Directors. We now have a suggestion box for anonymous feedback near the front desk every Thursday. We've also added contact email addresses for each Board Member to our club website: <http://tsdc.net>.

Dance Director Tom Grubaugh and Corporate Secretary Cathy Schreiber have put together a club survey to get your feedback on various aspects of the club. You'll find a survey enclosed in this newsletter, and there will also be surveys available at the front desk. Bring your completed survey to a Thursday night dance in March and receive \$1 off your price of admission. Your club leadership is very dedicated to making this the best WCS club possible, so your participation in the survey is appreciated.

Club Elections are just around the corner. It's hard to believe it's almost been a year since I was elected. My experience on the Board this year has been extremely positive, and if re-elected, I look forward to serving another term. I've always enjoyed dancing at the club, but being a part of the Board, I've gotten to know many people better and formed some great friendships. If you are interested in being a part of the club leadership, contact a board member. There are open positions that will need to be filled for next year, and it's always great to have new and different perspectives on the Board.

See you on the floor!

James

Wear your best green and join us for our St. Patrick's Day potluck and dance on March 12th.

Bring a dish and get in free!

February Jack & Jill results

- Novice: Zo Carroll and Anna Basden were in 1st place, Zo Carroll and Vera Tucker were 2nd, and Zo Carroll and Debbie Burke were 3rd.
- Intermediate: Robert Grace and Sam Fox were in 1st place, Tom Fox and Maryanne O'Shaughnessy were 2nd, and Robert Grace and Robin Chlad were 3rd.
- Advanced: L Perez and Cassy Olson were in 1st place, James Hood and April Amstutz were 2nd, and Jim Davis and Jane Morgan were 3rd.

On the road

At New Year's Dance Camp in Palm Springs, California, Tamra Hood was 4th and Cassy Olson 5th in the Advanced Jack & Jill, Scott Miller was 4th in the Masters Jack & Jill, and Wendy Miller was 1st in the Champion's Jack & Jill. Robert Grace was 5th in the Novice Strictly Swing and Scott Miller was 4th in the Master's Strictly Swing.

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Anna, Zo, Debbie, and Vera



Tom, Maryanne, Robin, Robert, and Sam



Cassy, LP, April, James, Jim, and Jane

L Perez and Brooke

L Perez was born in NYC and raised in the NY metropolitan area. At age 5 his grandmother taught him his first Swing and Salsa steps thereby giving him the chronic case of dance-itis he has today. In 1993 LP began his career as a full-time professional instructor in Tucson. Since starting his career he has received intensive training from many of the best professional dancers in the world. Throughout the 90s LP won many Advanced level, national West




Coast Swing Jack & Jill contests before most competition coordinators began reporting results to the World Swing Dance Council. In 1999 he earned his first of many invitations to compete in the Champion level of West Coast Swing. In 2004 he won his first Champion Jack and Jill award amidst a field of top national West Coast Swing Champions. He has conducted dance workshops at various national competitions and has taught dozens of Tucson dancers. He currently coaches and choreographs in over 20 different partner dances (Ballroom, Swing, Latin & Country) from beginner to professional level at DANZON! School of dance, the 320 square foot studio attached to their home in northwest Tucson at about half the rates of the "big" studios.

Brooke was born in Ohio and has been dancing WCS for nearly a decade. She has a masters degree in Analytical Chemistry from the University of Arizona and is currently seeking a new occupational situation. While working in Boston, she studied WCS with Maxwell Ho. She currently competes at the

Advanced level at the TSDC. In June of 2006 LP asked Brooke to partner with him for the Strictly Swing contest at the TSDC and she accepted, not knowing then that they would soon discover they have *way* more life chemistry than just dancing. Brooke and LP now look forward to a long life of love and teaching their future children to dance, God willing.

Brooke and LP teach two WCS classes (beginner and intermediate) every Saturday at the Maverick starting at 5:30.

You can reach LP & Brooke at 792-2067 or LPerez.Dancer@yahoo.com, or view LP's website at http://www.myspace.com/l_perez



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Why On Earth Did She Pick That Song?

Jack and Jill music: love it or hate it, it is undeniably one of the most noticeable aspects of our monthly competition nights.



Whether it be music of my choice or that of one of our other DJs, the songs played inevitably always spark feedback from both the competitors and the spectators. As our club's Music Director, I commonly receive feedback, complaints, questions, and (on good days!) compliments regarding the music played.

I frequently find myself explaining how music for J&J nights is chosen to the various people who approach me with feedback, so I figured it would probably be helpful for the rest of the club to get a peek into the the work that goes on behind-the-scenes.

Here is your glimpse into the secret thoughts of your J&J DJs when it comes to selecting music for the night. Well, mine, anyway.

The first thing I do is pick a genre of music for a particular level of dancers. After deciding upon a tempo- fast, moderate, or slow, I scroll through my thousands of songs (yes, literally *thousands*) to find the appropriate type of songs for each J&J category. From there, I narrow it down to about ten songs per category. I always do my best to bring in music that is currently being played on the national competition floors.

Realistically, I change my mind about three times during any given quest for music. My thought process generally follows something along the lines of this: *"Oh wait, you know, I did blues for Advanced last time. Maybe I should do contemporary instead. Wait, no,*

I'm doing that for Intermediate... darn. No, no oldies this time, I'm not in the mood to dance to that myself this week. Hey- I know! I'll pull out my 80s songs! Okay, now, fast or slow..."

And there you have it, a genre and speed is born.

This is where music selection gets tricky. Each song not only has to be an appropriate speed within a similar BPM range for the dancers in a particular level, but it has to display a certain amount of musicality depending on who is dancing to it. Trying to find ten songs in each category fitting all the requirements is trickier than it sounds (*i.e. blues songs with only one break within the first minute and 20 seconds between 110 and 112 BPMs*), and it can take a good two hours per dance level just to find the right mix of music. I can't speak for other DJs, but I have spent more time agonizing over my J&J music than I'd like to admit.

While the majority of what I play happens to fall within the "blues" or "contemporary" genres, it is important to mix in a bit of oldies, hip-hop, some jazz, and rock once in awhile. Part of the fun of a Jack and Jill is the ability to make an incredible dance out of a not-so-popular song with a random partner, particularly at the Intermediate and Advanced levels. Musical creativity is a huge part of what makes West Coast Swing so unique and fun to watch.

While I recognize that not everyone is going to love the music that I choose for a Jack and Jill, I at least hope that the hard work my other DJs and I do is appreciated by all. However, if you consistently find that the music is not to your liking, please let me know. *I'd love to book you to DJ for our next Jack and Jill.*

Tamra

Tamra Hood, TSDC Music Director

DJ notes

What was that song? DJs love to talk about music, so you can always go up to them and ask. I've been putting my playlists online; go to PlanBattheMaverick.blogspot.com and look for the "TSDC playlists" link on the right hand side of the page.

Does the club provide the music? No! DJs buy all the music played at the swing club. I've bought most of the tracks from Amazon's mp3 store, and a few from Napster's or Rhapsody's mp3 stores too. At about a dollar a track, and 30+ songs per night, a DJ could be spending \$30 to provide a night's music.

Does the club pay DJs? No, though I have suggested to the Board that DJs who have national convention experience should be paid. Many swing clubs do pay DJs. Currently all of our DJs volunteer their time, including the several DJs in the club who do play at conventions across the country.

I loved/loathed tonight's music! Feedback's always a good thing, and constructive criticism is fine too. The club DJs report to our music director, Tamra Hood, and you can always go to her if you have questions or concerns about music at the club. Her email address is music@tsdc.net.

Jim Davis



March birthdays

Members get in free the week of their birthday!

March 5th: Matt Rounseville

March 6th: Ellen Colonna

March 8th: Jim Shiner

March 11th: Doug McMaster

March 14th: Jordan Taylor

March 21st: Martha McLeod

March 26th: Gordon Wardell

New members

Welcome Mindy Diamond, Debbie Glenn, Sandra Lemire, Bruce Enderle, Alla Enderle, Alfred Fragoso, Gordon Wardell, Christine Daum, Penny Erickson, Lynn Wilcox, Joe and Sue Kraus, and Scott and Tina Mendenhall.

Local WCS instructors

If you're a current TSDC member and you'd like to be listed here, send your contact information to newsletter@tsdc.net.

- Ellen Colonna: 520-548-6777
- Tamra Hood: 520-360-4891, wcsdancers@gmail.com
- Wendy Miller: 520-318-9236, wendymillerdance.com
- Cassy Olson: 602-750-7368
- Jeannie Tucker: jeannietucker.com
- Ro Vaughn: 520-260-2200

TSDC 2008-2009 Board

James Hood is the President, Heather McLean is the Vice President, Don Bennett is the Treasurer, Robin Chlad is the Membership Secretary, and Cathy Schreiber is the Corporate Secretary.

Debbie Burke is the Event Liaison, Kevin Burke is the Sergeant at arms, Ellen Colonna is the Head Judge, Jim Davis is the Newsletter Editor, Bill Garrity is the Contest Coordinator, Tom Grubaugh is the Dance Director, Tamra Hood is the Music Director, Chris McLean is the Club Photographer, Heather McLean is the Website Administrator, Annie Schill is the Publicity Director, and Eleanor Schrandt is the Hospitality Director.

Dance lessons at the club

Each month the club's dance instructors teach the beginning patterns in West Coast Swing. Students may start the sequence on any Thursday.

- First Thursday of the month: Left side pass, underarm turn, underarm turn with a hand change, and the right side pass.
- Second Thursday: 4-beat starter step, throwout, and closed basic.
- Third Thursday: Sugarpush, tuck throwout, and turning basic.
- Fourth Thursday: Basic whip, whip with an inside turn, and whip with an outside turn
- And in months with a fifth Thursday: Basket whip and variations.

We recommend taking the beginning class for three months before going on to the intermediate class. Intermediate classes teach pattern variations, combinations, and syncopations beyond the basics.

About the TSDC

Founded in 1977 by Rose Marie Burrell, the Tucson Swing Dance Club has dances Thursday night at the Tucson Woman's Club, 6245 E Bellevue Street. There are dances every Thursday night except on Thanksgiving or other major holidays.

Club instructors teach a beginning lesson from 7-7:45pm and an intermediate lesson from 8-8:30pm, with dancing until 10:30pm.

Admission is \$3 for members and \$5 otherwise; annual memberships cost \$25 and run from January 1st through December 31st. Members are also eligible to compete in the club Jack & Jill contests and can choose to get a printed copy of the newsletter. Anyone can read the newsletter online at www.tsd.net.

Contact us!

We now have email addresses for most of the club officers:

President: president@tsdc.net

Vice President: vp@tsdc.net

Membership Secretary: members@tsdc.net

Dance Director: dance@tsdc.net

Music Director: music@tsdc.net

Hospitality Director: hospitality@tsdc.net

Website Administrator: webadmin@tsdc.net

Newsletter Editor: newsletter@tsdc.net

and our mailing address is

Tucson Swing Dance Club
PO Box 32226
Tucson, AZ 85751

Tucson Swing Dance Club 2009 Member Survey

Bring your completed survey to any Thursday night dance during the month of March 2009 and receive \$1 off your price of admission. Limit one survey per person.

Please rate the following on a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 is the best:

1) Venue

- | | | | | | | |
|----------------|-----|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Location | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| b) Parking | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| c) Dance Floor | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| d) Temperature | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| e) Atmosphere | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Suggestions:

2) Music

- | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|-----|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Variety | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| b) Volume | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| c) Sound Equipment | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Suggestions:

3) Jack & Jill Contests

- | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|-----|----|---|---|---|---|
| a) Format | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| b) Music | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| c) Judge Feedback | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| d) Evaluation Process | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| e) Do you compete(Circle one)? | Yes | No | | | | |

Why or why not?

Suggestions:

4) Miscellaneous

- | | | | | | | |
|---------------|-----|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Newsletter | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| b) Website | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| c) Workshops | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

5) Leadership (Circle one)

- | | | |
|--|-----|----|
| a) Do you know who your board members are? | Yes | No |
| b) Are they approachable? | Yes | No |
| c) Is there good club communication? | Yes | No |

Suggestions:

More Questions on Back

Instructor Ratings

- | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|-----|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1) Roger & Dana Belasco | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Comments: | | | | | | |
| 2) Ellen Colonna & Hondo Velasco | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Comments: | | | | | | |
| 3) Jim Davis & Heather McLean | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Comments: | | | | | | |
| 4) Jesse Dickson | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Comments: | | | | | | |
| 5) James & Tamra Hood | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Comments: | | | | | | |
| 6) Wendy Miller & James Hood | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Comments: | | | | | | |
| 7) L & Brooke Perez | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Comments: | | | | | | |
| 8) Ro Vaughn & Raquel Montañez | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Comments: | | | | | | |

What is your favorite thing about the club?

How can we improve?

Thank you for your time and input.