



SHAG RAG

Shag Dancer Newsletter



Vol. II, No. 2

Keep on Shaggin'

February 1995

From the President - By Charlie Price

Dear Members:

In case you haven't heard -- your officers and directors are determined to make 1995 a particularly exciting year for your Club.

Even as you read this, for example, we are working on organizing a NEW YEAR'S EVE SHAG BASH at an area facility that will give us discounted room rates so that you can party, party, party and not have to worry about driving home. The plan is to have an afternoon workshop followed by dinner and a dance. As she has done so many times before, Pauline Easby-Smith has stepped up and agreed to Chair our Special Events Committee, but she can't do it all by herself. Can you help out? Let Pauline know. Don't be left out, get in on the fun. Be a part of the action. "With a little help from our friends," we can make this a year to remember.

The following Committees, and Committee Chairs, have been appointed for 1995. (Also listed are those members who have already volunteered to work with a particular Committee or Subcommittee.) Please contact any of these folks to volunteer to help or, if one of them asks you to help, please give freely of your time. I hear that the word in the Shag community is that we are a "happening club," -- let's live up to our reputation!

Membership Committee - Pat Parrot, Chair

Subcommittees:

- New Members (Pat Parrott, Jim Taylor)
- Membership Renewals (Libby Hendrix)
- Telephone Tree (Pat Parrott, Jose Garcia, Candy Crouch, Lee Ann Woodcock, Ruth Rapson)
- Birthdays (Rita Perrotti)
- Condolences (Debbra Williams)

Newsletter - Janis Grimes, Editor

Subcommittee:

- Newsletter Distribution (Dickie Gee)

Dance Instruction Committee, Rick Hendrix, Chair

Subcommittees:

- Weekly Dance Instruction
- Workshops

Special Events Committee, Pauline Easby-Smith, Chair

Subcommittees:

- Christmas Party
- Annual Bash

Charity/Community Support Cmte., H.K. Lee, Chair

Interclub Relations Cmte., Donna Harrington, Chair

Publicity Committee, Charlie Price, Chair

Keep on Shaggin' and see you at The Juke Box!

ATTENTION SHAGGERS

PLEASE NOTE!!

Starting Tuesday, February 21st, our Wednesday Shag Night has been changed by the management of the Juke Box Cafe to Tuesday nights. That's right -- Tuesday Shag Night, not Wednesdays anymore. Something to do with having "Ladies Night" on Wednesdays Stay tuned for further updates We will keep you posted!

NVSC Officers and Board Members

| | | |
|------------|---------------------|----------|
| President | Charlie Price | 790-0783 |
| Vice Pres. | Donna Harrington | 356-6035 |
| Treasurer | John Belt | 750-2367 |
| Secretary | Patricia Parrott | 591-4113 |
| Board Mem. | Pauline Easby-Smith | 759-4478 |
| Board Mem. | Janis Grimes | 536-7362 |
| Board Mem. | Rick Hendrix | 425-0006 |

NEWS / INFO -- Contact: Janis Grimes, 202-737-2824; or 703-536-7362 - leave message.

The Roving Shag Reporter . . .

. . . was last seen in a flurry of footwork at Fat Harold's in Myrtle Beach!! We consider this to be a well deserved vacation, and look forward to RSR's return next issue . . .

NOTICE!! All Members!

The NOVA Shag Club Board of Directors proposes to publish a Membership Roster for the purpose of communication within the Club. The Roster will be available to Members Only. IF YOU OBJECT to having your name, address and phone number listed, it is imperative that you inform me immediately, but no later than March 1st. Pat Parrott, Membership Chair - 703-591-4113.

To All Members . . .

If ever there is an illness, a loss, or a sadness in your family, please let us know. You are part of a large family of Club members, and we want to be able to share it with you, if only in thought, just as we share our joy of dancing. Let me or any one of the Club members know. Pat Parrott, Membership Chair

Editor's Note: If you've got good news about something wonderful (i.e., a birth, a marriage, a promotion) let me know -- it's newsworthy!

NVSC t-shirts

Report from LIBBY says that due to the many colors of the rainbow that we are using for shirts, there will be a delay, but they will be here soon. Anybody wanting polo shirts or t-shirts should contact Libby, 703-425-0006. Prices are reasonable -- polo w/your name on it - \$29; without a name - \$25; t-shirts - \$15. All shirts have our NVSC logo.



ATTENTION SHAGGERS WORKSHOPS

On Saturday, Feb. 11th, we are delighted to present a WORKSHOP by LARRY & SHIRLEY JONES of the Richmond Shag Club. They will be giving Shag lessons at the Juke Box Cafe from 12:30 to 5:30. The cost is \$25 per person, and this includes hors d'oeuvres. The Richmond Club has some of the best shaggers we've ever seen -- they are winning competitions!! ARE YOU SERIOUS about learning to Shag? CALL RICK HENDRIX at 703-425-0006 to sign up!

OTHER WORKSHOP NEWS . . .

Fortunately for us, BRENT KEY was in town last month on business with his dad, KEN -- so we didn't have to go all the way to South Carolina to see some real, live, bona fide Myrtle Beach-style shaggin'. If you missed seeing him, well, what can I say -- *you missed it!*

HOWEVER, there is some good news -- Brent has agreed to come back up here in April to do a workshop for our Club!! He will be accompanied by his partner, Shea Carver (daughter of Sonny & Judy), and maybe some other shaggin' friends. Now THIS will really be something special, so be on the lookout for the details, which will be announced at the earliest possible moment.

FYI -- BRENT and SHEA will dance at the SOS Grand Nationals in Atlanta, over Memorial Day Weekend, and we'll be there cheering them on!

Speaking of Parties . . . - By H.K. Lee

This month, our Club will co-sponsor the Second Annual Beach Music Dance, a benefit dance to be held on Saturday, February 25th, along with the ARC (formerly Association of Retarded Citizens) of Northern Virginia, to support activities on behalf of persons with mental retardation. The Fabulous Waller Family will play for this event, to be held at St. Stephen's and St. Agnes School in Alexandria. The music will be Soul and Motown R&B.

Since NVSC is co-sponsoring this fundraiser dance, please send in your \$25 per person for a night of FREE wine, beer, hors d'oeuvres and wonderful dance music. Please let H.K. Lee (301-279-2772) know if you will be able to help demonstrate the Shag and assist with some line dance lessons. *Let's party!*

Newsletter Distribution Committee . . . (Anyone, anyone???)

Great News Y'all!! Our Club membership has grown Over the Edge of Likelihood that your Editor can continue to fold, staple, label, stamp and mail all of these newsletters each month by herself. The live-in recruits are resisting (*teeners will do that...*), and last month I had to enlist a House Guest who is not even a Club member! (*Tsk.*)

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED - to fold, staple, label, and stamp newsletters, once a month. When and where: This month: Thurs., Feb. 2nd, 8 - 9 p.m., in Falls Church. (*Yes, that's right -- tomorrow night!*) Next month: First Thursday.

SEE or CALL JANIS for DETAILS - 703-536-7362; leave msg; or, ofc - 202-737-2824. *Thanks.*

ACSC Winter Workshop

Winter Whirlwind - Feb. 24-25

The Twisters Shag Club is sponsoring the ACSC Winter Workshop to be held in Cornelius, NC, the weekend of February 24-25.

This is sure to be a FunFunFun weekend, beginning at 8 p.m. on Friday night. GENE & KATHY BENFIELD will teach a steps workshop on Saturday at 11:30 a.m. Some of you will remember them from the Richmond Shag Club's Shag Splash Weekend last summer.....

The ticket price for this event is \$30, and (get this.....) includes the usual great food, ALL-DAY CONTINUOUS FREE POURS (!), the workshop, and the dances!

The dancing and workshop will be held at a skating rink down the road from three hotels which are offering special shag rates. Shuttle bus service will be provided! Details are on the back page of this newsletter. Remember to request the Special Shag Rate when making room reservations.

This promises to be a Fantastic February Function, and we hope to see lots of friends and members there! Make your plans to come and join us -- Do It Today!

New Members in January

Welcome, new members!! Sal Acosta, Sandy Champion, Judy Gale, Fran Harris, Suzanne Hutchinson, Becky Jones, Ron and Donna Nicholson, Kerry Smith, Sid Strawderman, and Bonnie Torguson.



MYRTLE BEACH - Mid-Winter Party, Jan. 13-15, 1995 - By Donna Harrington

It went through your skin, even your bones, and reached your soul. You truly could feel it before you even realized you were hearing it. The jolt of energy it created was real, electric; you felt alive. Even in the doldrums of winter you experienced the rebirth of Spring surge through your blood.

"IT" was BEACH MUSIC, and we had arrived at Main Street and Ocean Drive for Mid-Winter 1995!

This party at Myrtle Beach, S.C. is sponsored by the Association of Carolina Shag Clubs (ACSC) as a thank you to all of its members (us included!) for keeping alive and promoting the dance we love so much, the Carolina Shag.

In addition to dancing at Harold's (with Susie Beaver, Shirley & Larry); Ducks (with Charlie and Jackie); the Spanish Galleon (with Sonny and Judy) and the Boulevard Grill (where Brent Key, Sy Creed and Dana Brown took our

breath away!!), we were treated to buffet dinners, heavy hors d'oeuvres and Sunday a.m. brunch. Of course, then we had to do more dancing to burn off all those calories, but we were happy to oblige. "Oh, what a thrill" to be able to Shag until your feet are swollen and sore. And, when you aren't dancing you watch, mesmerized, as dancers do the Shag with style and grace and, ooh, those sensuous moves.....

You need to be there where the Shag began with dancers who have respected and sustained its unique style -- then it gets inside you and you'll want to return to Main Street and Ocean Drive over and over again.

As Bob Wood, Chairman of SOS, said at the ACSC meeting on Saturday morning, "It's great to be able to socialize when we meet at our clubs, but we should not forget that the reason for the very existence of our clubs is the preservation of the Carolina Shag and Beach Music." Let's commit to do all we can to be faithful to that goal! Editor's Note: Alright!!

Happy, Happy Birthday ...



February Birthdays:

- 1 - Dan Shames
- 1 - Michael Taylor
- 2 - Nancy Walker
- 4 - Char Dewalt
- 6 - Dee Bassett
- 6 - Carole Vann
- 8 - James Raney
- 9 - Jeannette Bright
- 16 - Debra Mullins
- 19 - Jim Taylor
- 22 - Frank Hale
- 24 - Chloe Getsey

Shaggers Are Cheap!! (Let's Put An End To That Myth...)

SHAG, the book, is now finished and ready to go to the printer. BUT, advance orders are needed so that it can be published. This is going to be a Collector's First Edition chronicle -- the real, authentic history of the Shag. You need to own this important piece of dance literature. I already ordered mine months ago, and I can't wait to read it. Look for the ad in this issue.

What Other Dance and Lifestyle do you know of that has a Book written about it (coffee table quality, by the way), as well as a Movie ("... We survived it")? And it's only \$50. (Yes, fifty dollars -- you can afford it!) Send \$48.69 per copy to Dr. Phil Sawyer, PO Box 4688, Columbia, SC 29204. Let's put an end to that nasty rumor.....

Shagger Profile -- H.K. Lee, Jr.

Occupation: Administrator, Arlington County

Birthday: June 20

Hometown: Silver Spring, Maryland

Marital Status: Divorced

Self-Portrait: Honorable, kind, motivated, friendly,
with a touch of humor

Motto: Let's Book

Dream: To be the Foremost Oriental Shagger in the
World

Inspiration: Beauty

Bad Habit: Yard sales

Hobby: Duck carving, off-shore fishing, pen/pencil
sketching

Luxury defined: Things you can afford once in a
while, or not at all

Drink or Wine: Diet Coke

TV Program: "McGyver"

Books at bedside: Charlotte's Webb

Last words: Be nice

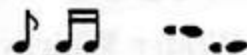
The Shagger Profile File is Growing . . .

. . . Thin. (*Gasp! Oh no!*) It needs to be replenished with the inside scoop on each of our members. So, you need to get your profiles in the mail to me at once! Fill 'em out; Send 'em in -- Right Now!

NVSC MEMBERS NOT CRITICAL

Apparently, there was a bit of a dust-up over an odd misperception by a prospective member who *thought* that some of our NVSC men may have been a little critical of(?), and even reluctant to dance with(!), new shaggers. The Shagmaster has pointed out that our Club members (especially the men and the ladies) are *always* polite and gracious, in a true Southern manner. The Editor appreciates being straightened out on this, and promises to continue encouraging everyone to *Keep On Shaggin'*.....

Member Music Survey!



TOP FIFTY SHAG TUNES

We're compiling a list of the Top 50 Tunes that we love to hear -- the beach music that makes us feel like dancin' the night away. Be sure to let our DJ Bert know what you want to hear! Thanks to RICK HENDRIX and his TOP TEN SONGS, our list now includes:

A Mess of Blues - Delbert McClinton
A Love Worth Waiting For - Shakin Stevens
American Hearts - Billy Ocean
Baby Likes to Rock It
Big Top Hat - Stephen Burton
Club Savoy
Footprints on the Ceiling
Honky Tonk
It Started With a Kiss - Hot Chocolate
Keep On Sitting On It - Band of Oz
Kissing in the Back Row - The Drifters
Lil' Brown Eyes - Theodis Ealey
Miss Grace - Tymes
Remedy
Shanty
She Blew A Good Thing - the Poets
Take It Uptown - Bill Champlin
Tom Cat Prowl

Take a few minutes and Think About It! Send or bring in your list of favorite Shag tunes -- *let's get back to the beach!!*

The Shagmaster Says:

- PRACTICE the BASIC and the PIVOT
- Take SMALLER STEPS
- Go to Myrtle Beach ASAP!
- *Keep on Shaggin'*



From the Editor

GREETINGS FROM MYRTLE BEACH, Y'all! Oh, I am still in a spin from so much fun -- and Cannot Wait to get back to the Beach, the Music, the People, the Dancing the Perpetual Party. *Did anyone else notice how YOUTHFUL some of those old-timers are??* It must be the Dancing, the Music, the Ocean Air ... (*sigh*)

Do you have some information to share? Want to write an article; a column; an ad; your Shagger Profile; Your Favorite Shag Tunes? Yes? Well, Call me, Call me, Call me!! Remember . . . This is YOUR Newsletter..... See ya Shaggin'.

50 Years of Shagging

By
Lance Benishek
and
Cathy Rudenick



Still Shas "Stranders" wild

BILLY JEFFERS AND
MAGGIE LONN FOSS
do the Carolina
Shag along Roberts
Pavillion on Ocean
Drive Beach in 1940.

Life would have been dull in the summers in the late 1930s for teenagers in the South if it had not been for the seven miles of beach along the northern Atlantic Ocean coastline of South Carolina. The long stretch of beach, called the Strand, was dotted with pavilions where the young people partied at night all summer long to the sound of the outdoor jukeboxes.

More than 50 years ago, one of them, Billy Jeffers, asked Dot Bradford to "fast dance" with him on the beach called Ocean Drive, now North Myrtle Beach. Although it was called fast dancing, the name is misleading. They called it fast dancing to distinguish it from such slow dances as the two-step foxtrot. What they called the fast dance was actually, in Jeffers' words, "a slowed-down, smoothed-out jitterbug," now called the Carolina shag. It was a dance fashioned to suit the "dirty" music you couldn't get on the radio but could hear at the beach — rhythm and blues "beach music." Jeffers describes it as having a push beat. They would also dance to the beat of the "sweet" bands, like Les Brown.

According to Jeffers, the Carolina shag is not related to the other shags that came out of the 1930s and '40s. In fact, Jeffers says he never did the shag. It was 'fast dancing' until the late 1940s when some of the people at the beach started calling it 'shag.' When he was told 12 years ago that he was the first one into the Beach Shagger's Hall of Fame in Greenville, S.C., he said, "Hallelujah! What's the shag?"

John "Bubber" Snow, a South Carolina State Representative and shagger in the '40s, believes the dance acquired the name shag in the late '40s or early '50s. "Actually," he says, "it was initially called the 'dirty shag.'" According to Snow, the word shag comes from

England, and refers to the horizontal, as opposed to vertical, movement of the dance. It is a regional dance; most people outside the Carolinas, Georgia, Florida, Tennessee and Virginia have never heard of it.

Originally, the shag was male-oriented. The woman's role was to make the man look good. For example, the man might lead his partner into a free spin but take a couple of spins himself before catching his partner. Jeffers thinks this style is boring and technical because "the girl does time-steps and that's it." He prefers the way they do it at the beach today where the girl does her own thing and it works out fine because they "meet at the turn."

Jeffers describes the shag as a cross between the Lindy Hop and jitterbug. This is particularly true of its count patterns. Most of the steps use a six-count beat while the turning basic takes eight counts. Unlike West Coast Swing (also a derivative of Lindy Hop and jitterbug) in which the woman walks forward in place of the rock step, the rock step characteristic of jitterbug has survived in the Carolina shag. However, there are several differences between the classic Lindy Hop and jitterbug, and the shag.

For one thing, the styling is different. In shagging, the couple's upper bodies and arms are stable and fluid, while the footwork is fast and intricate, the knees and ankles acting like shock absorbers.

"Keep your feet very close to the ground," says Bradford, "even on the rock step." The partners must pull against each other to maintain a constant tension. The music is different, too — slower, like West Coast Swing music, usually with a driving beat. One of the classic shag songs is *Sixty-Minute Man*. Jeffers also likes to shag

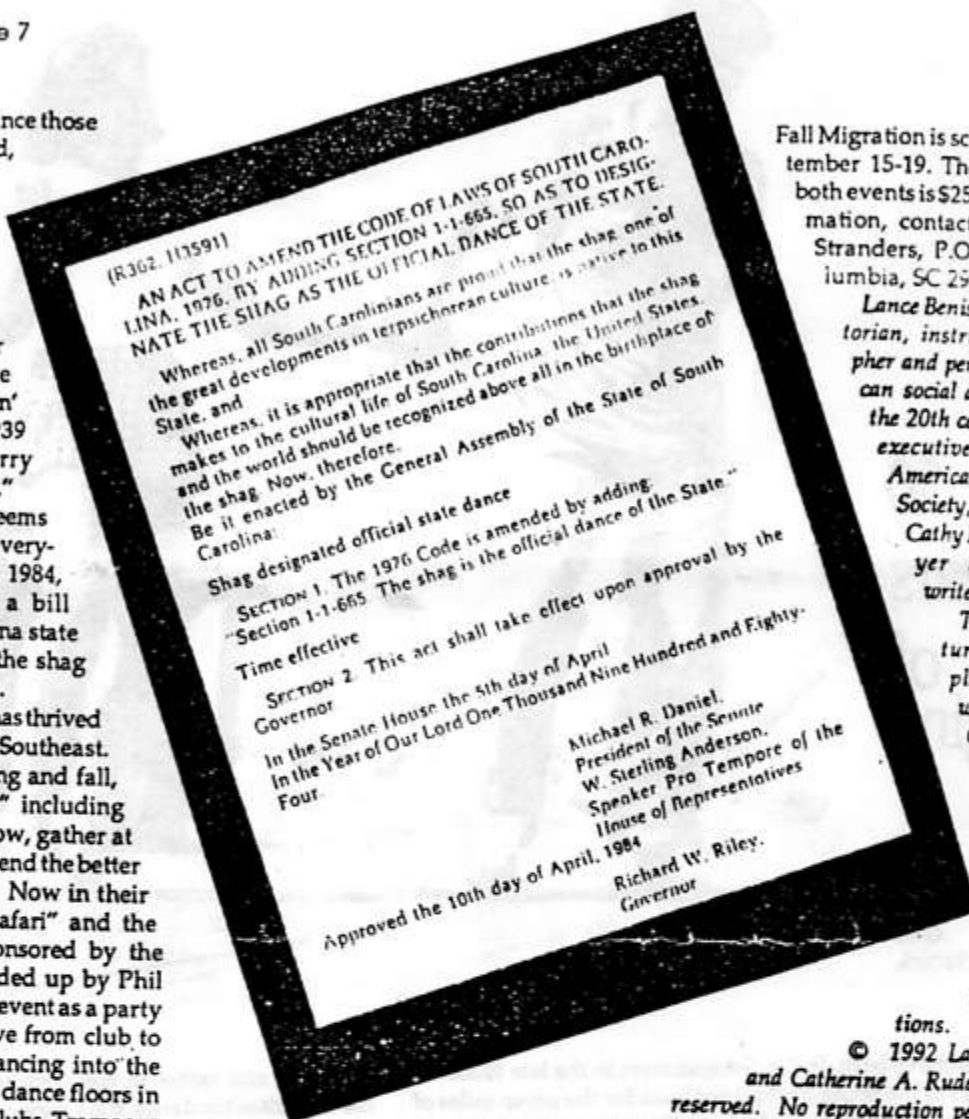
Continued on page 29

to Harry Connick, Jr.

A lot has happened since those early days. Dot Bradford, whom Jeffers describes as the "best dancer on the beach," won three trips to New York to perform: the Big Apple in 1937 at the Roxy Theatre, a 1938 tour with Hal Kemp where she did a dance called "Peelin' the Peach," and the 1939 World's Fair with Harry James and his Orchestra."

But it is the shag that seems to captivate the hearts of everyone who learn it. In 1984, Bubber Snow pushed a bill through the South Carolina state legislature to designate the shag as the official state dance.

And the Carolina shag has thrived and grown, at least in the Southeast. Twice a year, in the spring and fall, about 10,000 "Stranders," including Jeffers, Bradford and Snow, gather at Myrtle Beach, S.C., and spend the better part of a week shagging. Now in their 13th year, the "Spring Safari" and the "Fall Migration" are sponsored by the Society of Stranders, headed up by Phil Sawyer. He describes the event as a party for adults. Shaggers move from club to club swilling beer and dancing into the wee hours at any of the 15 dance floors in the six local participating clubs. Trams are available for transportation. The 1993 Spring Safari is April 21 - April 25, and the



Fall Migration is scheduled for September 15-19. The annual fee for both events is \$25. For more information, contact the Society of Stranders, P.O. Box 4688, Columbia, SC 29204.

Lance Benishek is a dance historian, instructor, choreographer and performer of American social and fad dances of the 20th century. He is the executive director of the American Cultural Arts Society, St. Paul, Minn. Cathy Rudenick is a lawyer and free-lance writer.

The American Cultural Arts Society plans to sponsor workshops on the Carolina shag in the spring of 1993 by Charlie Womble and Jackie McGee, eight-time winners of the national competitions.

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