



SHAG RAG

Shagger Newsletter



Dedicated to the Preservation of the Carolina Shag and Beach Music

Vol. III, No. 12

Keep on Shaggin'

December 1996

From the President - By Charlie Price

Congratulations to the Club's new officers and directors: **John Belt** (Pres.), **Valerie Swiger** (V-Pres.), **Pauline Easby-Smith** (Treas.), **Vesta Jones** (Sec.), and **Betty Abshire, Janis Grimes, Craig Jennings, Joan McKinney, and Dave Rogers** (Directors-at-Large).

For the most part it's been a blast. Thanks for your support over the last two years.

KEEP ON SHAGGIN' AND SEE YOU AT DEJA VU!

Boy, How We've Grown . . . by John Belt

Back in the summer of '93, the Northern Virginia Shag Club was born. Like all infants, we had to crawl before we walked, and walk we did. Under the guidance of **Charlie Price**, we are now on the map of the shag world, our *Shag Rag* is quoted repeatedly in other shag publications, our membership is one of the fastest growing, our Capitol Shag Classic is a "Shell" event, our workshops, dance instructions and instructors, music and deejays are second to none. Granted, Charlie did not act alone. There are other members who gave their time, energy and mostly their dedication to the growth of our club. **Rick Hendrix, Chris Pax, Fred Whitman, Bill Hopkins, Pat Parrott**, and you, **Charlie**, I applaud you, thank you and will miss you all as Members of our Board. Now it's time for us to run, and run we will.

Congratulations to **Valerie Swiger, Vesta Jones and Pauline Easby-Smith**, as your new elected officers. Also, congratulations to **Dave Rogers, Craig Jennings, Betty Abshire, Joan McKinney and Janis Grimes** as Members of your Board. There is no doubt that with this team Northern Virginia Shag Club cannot help but to continue to grow. Thank you, John Belt, President-elect

We're Havin' a Party *HOLIDAY PARTY*

It's getting to be party planning time again, folks, so make plans now to attend our **Holiday Party on Saturday, December 7th, from 6 p.m. - midnight.**

Again it will be held at the VFW Hall in McLean, Virginia, and the food will be fabulous. We know it will be wonderful, because we have great cooks in this club who will be bringing their favorite dishes to share with everyone. To sign up to bring a covered dish, **CALL Valerie Swiger at 703-281-9193. Please Do It Now!!**

There will be a **FREE SHAG WORKSHOP** at 7:00 with National Competitors **Larry & Shirley Jones** from the Richmond Shag Club!!

Our Charity this year is Toys for Tots, and there will be a big box at the door. *Please remember to bring a toy for an underprivileged child.*

- COST:** \$10 per person (in advance)
\$15 at the door
- DATE:** Saturday, December 7th
- TIME:** 6 p.m. - midnight
- PLACE:** McLean VFW
Old Dominion & Springhill Rd.
- MUSIC:** Craig Jennings and Larry Jones
- BRING:** Fancy Covered Dish - **Call Valerie!**
- BYOB:** Beer and Set-ups provided at bar \$1.00

NVSC Officers and Board Members

- President Charlie Price 703-790-0783
- Vice Pres. John Belt 800-374-4434, code 22754
- Treasurer Bill Hopkins 410-730-2714
- Secretary Valerie Swiger 703-281-9193
- Board Mem. Janis Grimes 703-536-7362
- Board Mem. Rick Hendrix 703-425-0006
- Board Mem. Patricia Parrott 703-435-8906
- Board Mem. Chris Pax 301-972-0642
- Board Mem. Fred Whitman 301-816-2941

News/Info -- please contact:
Editor: Janis Grimes, 703-536-7362

Make a Young Child Smile . . .

by Patricia Parrott

Do you want to make a young child smile? Do you want to experience the true Spirit of Christmas gift-giving? Do you want to share the wealth and the joy that the Holidays bring?

While you're out there doing your Christmas shopping, BUY AN EXTRA GIFT FOR A NEEDY CHILD. Don't wrap it. Just bring it to Deja Vu any Wednesday night during the month of November, or bring it to our Christmas Party on December 7th. Give it to a Club Member to bring in, or call one of us to pick it up. Out-of-towners can mail it in. Gifts will also be accepted from friends, guests, and dancers of all styles.

The gifts will go to needy children in Alexandria through an organization called "Ho, Ho, Ho," and to needy children of Fairfax through the Salvation Army. Girl or boy, ages 0-14. A fun toy, an educational toy, a piece of clothing, doll or stuffed animal will do. *No used toys, guns, or other toys of violence accepted.* The deadline is December 12.

A great big "Thank You" right now, in advance, from the Charity Committee: **Pat Parrott, Trelle Shaw, Donna Liebowitz and Janis Grimes.**

HELP!!!

DOOR PRIZES NEEDED!!

for our
Holiday Party
Donations Requested
ASAP

Please Contact:
Bill Hopkins - 410-730-2714
or Any Board Member!

This newsletter is interrupted to bring you an important update: Congratulations to **Chris Pax & Bill Hopkins**, who took **2nd Place out of 8 couples** in the Amateur Division at a recent CSA Competition in Atlantic Beach, NC!

FOR SHAGGERS ONLY...

Dear Readers: Do you have shag questions or problems that you need help in resolving? Gabby (Shagmaster's alter ego and "better half") will give you the help you need. Call or write to Gabby, c/o the Editor.

Dear Gabby:

I love the friendly party atmosphere at weekend shag parties, and I'm longing to fit in, to really belong. I've heard that real shaggers wear Weejuns and smoke tobacco, and that the gals wear lots of gold, i.e., gold shoes, gold belts, gold hats, gold jewelry, gold accessories, gold everything. I don't smoke -- but if I wear the gold, will that help? **On My Toes in Virginia**

Dear Virginia:

Gold? Well, more is definitely better.... You don't really need it, but go ahead -- treat yourself. However, you should know that shoes, costumes and props do not a shagger make! What's required is the ability to shag with smoothness, and a friendly attitude of coolness.

Dear Gabby:

There's a really neat dancer who I regularly see at Deja Vu on Wednesday nights. Her technique is terrific and her timing impeccable. She seems to be quite athletic and doesn't rest much between songs. After about an hour she's dripping with sweat. How do I overcome the nasty feeling of being splashed in the face every time she spins? **Drenched**

Dear Drenched:

Isn't it obvious? Offer her a towel. Or, write a letter to Dear Gabby. She'll get the message.

Got a question? Call or write to Gabby, c/o the Editor.

GREETINGS FROM DICKIE GEE

Good news from **Dickie Gee**, who recently underwent neurosurgery to correct a brain aneurysm. Dickie is recovering on the Eastern Shore, and plans to come home soon. He said he'll be joining us at Deja Vu on a Wednesday night before long. He sounds good.

FOR RENT: Nice CONDO in North Myrtle Beach: 2 BR, 2 Baths, 4 blocks from Fat Harold's, 2 blocks from Ocean. Sleeps 6. Swimming pool, washer/drier. (SORRY-- not available during S.O.S.!) CANVASBACK -- Contact Beachcomber Realty, 800-334-3798



WINNER -- Cool Condo Award

Mirror Patterns -- a Kaleidoscope of Steps . . . By Janis Grimes

As Carolina Shag has evolved over the years, mirror patterns have developed, giving the ladies more of an opportunity to dance on an equal level with the men. When performing mirror patterns, we experience the joy of dancing in unison, together in a mirror image of each other. These pre-planned steps are made up of combinations of fundamental shag steps, and they can last anywhere from 12 to 36 beats of the music (or more!). They are usually called out loud to each other, although sometimes a subtle hand signal is enough.

One of the neat things about mirror patterns is that a couple can make up special steps that they do only with each other. These short choreographed segments can be put together any way you like. It reminds me of a kaleidoscope, with all the many shag steps and footwork patterns being combined in infinite variations.

But, what if you don't have a regular dance partner? Just keep practicing and get comfortable with the basics -- they are the foundation of Carolina Shag. You don't need mirror patterns to dance smoothly, with style and grace. Once you master the basics, you'll be able to dance with shaggers anywhere -- at our weekly get-together, at weekend shag parties, and at SOS in Myrtle Beach!



Happy, Happy Birthday

December Birthday Babes:

- 4 - Al Martina
- 5 - Marilyn Brant
- 5 - Lee Ann Woodcock
- 6 - Barry Kumar
- 7 - Debbie Sumiak
- 9 - Jane James
- 12 - Joe Laws
- 12 - Debbie Nichols
- 13 - Frank Del Piano
- 13 - Fred MacAdam
- 14 - Gayle Brock
- 16 - Eddie Gooden
- 19 - Dotty Hale
- 19 - Dave Rapson
- 21 - Michael Browne
- 21 - Kent Edie
- 27 - Sheri Jackson
- 31 - Ann Hansborough

Shaggers Do It With Their Feet

Shagger Profile -- Robert Wilson

Nickname: Bob

Occupation: National Marketing Director, Syncom
Int'l. Telecommunications Services

Birthday: March 22nd

Hometown: Buffalo, New York

Marital Status: Single

Self Portrait: Positive

Motto: Never give up-- never ever give up

Dream: Financial independence and time freedom

Inspiration: My parents

Bad Habit: My seafood diet -- If I see it, I eat it . . .

Hobby: Golf

Favorite Dance Tune: Rock Around The Clock; any
beach pop songs

Luxury Defined: Casa De Campo (greatest resort in
Caribbean)

Drink or Wine: Coke

TV Program: Jay Leno

Books at Bedside: Any book by Tom Clancy

Last Words: We make a living by what we get . . .
We make a life by what we give . . .

FREE **FOR MEMBERS ONLY** Instructional Shag Videos

Instructional Shag videos by **Charlie & Jackie; Sonny & Judy Carver; and Sy Creed & Dana Brown** are available ON LOAN to members only wanting to brush up on their Shag steps. The Club will loan you a video **for one week, FREE OF CHARGE**. A refundable \$10 deposit permits you to view the tape for one week. A small charge of \$5 for each additional week is required.

See **Larry Camp** - he's available at Deja Vu on Wednesday nights, or call him at 703-823-0282.

The Roving Shag Reporter 🎵🎶...🚗

**It Was Wall to Wall... Back to Back...
Every Chick I Saw Was So Finely Stacked...**
by Steve Booth

Every SOS gets a little earthier, funkier... and a lot more spiritual. Those of us who recapture and, yes, sustain our souls from ghosts of OD who creep up through the worn oak dance floors at DUCK'S through your Weejuns, through your feet and your boogie-walking knees know what I'm talking about. The auto-pilot that kicks in at midnight and takes you pivoting and creating moves you never imagined yourself doing till 2 a.m. . . . you SOS junkies know whereof I speak. I had the additional pleasure this SOS of having my good friend Bill Ramsey come along for his first SOS. I told Bill I couldn't describe it, just do it. Bill was familiar with OD via golf trips, but nothing prepared him for the nonstop music, Electric Lemonade, and soulful atmosphere. Then there was the dancing. Bill on the road to OD was a latter-day Saul on the road to Tarsus. He now says simply, "I will never miss another SOS."

We arrived at 2:30 Wednesday and fell up into the now extinct OD Motel. By this time I was totally buzzed on SOS adrenaline and raced to Fat Harold's with all due speed. Everything then slipped into the SOS dream world of Electric Lemonade, pivots, and sliding Belly Rolls.....

What always induces the OD trance is the music, but even your ex-musician Shagging Boy (raised on James Brown, The Platters, Don Covay, Wilson Pickett, et al) was unprepared for the onslaught of the thumping/visceral/vertical love-making body of music assembled by the Powers-on-High of the ABSC deejays. This singular American Art Form -- Rhythm & Blues Music -- shall then be the theme of this testimonial to Fall '96 SOS.

Our SOS playlist is the continuation and refinement of the monster that was created in the mid-fifties by the Atlantic and Chess stables, and goes straight to the main nerve of Shaggers. Al Green's hypnotic *Your Heart's In Good Hands* is near the top of the masterpiece list; the Reverend's insinuating voice combines holiness, innuendo and genuine testifying to the universal human conditions of love, spirituality, and hope. Besides which, the song inspired me to a level of creativity on the dance floor I had not previously known. Vance Kelly's *Wall To Wall* predictably became the Pavlovian anthem of Fall SOS. This is R&B stripped to its basics: fatback drumming, pounding bass, absolutely hellacious chucking/ripping guitar and the thick, rich, black and inflective voice of Vance Kelly. Yes, Saint Joe still comes down amongst us -- as a holdover from Spring SOS in *Call The Plumber*. Recorded in 1983 just before Turner's death, it is a masterpiece of improvisation ("I was talking to the butcher, he said you sho' was sweet; now I know why the icebox is all full of meat"), timing, and plain hilarity. The long instrumental fills gave us time to dance, while

Turner's voice creates a primeval mood unique to OD/SOS. Gene Petty (at DUCK'S on Friday night) said it all at the conclusion of Turner's *Wee Baby Blues*: "The greatest of all time -- Big Joe Turner." But, the women singers -- oh, the women singers... the pure, urgent sex that Sarah Washington transmits via a Lexan circle known as a compact disc. I tell you that *And I Will Always Love You* very nearly induced a swoon. I had never heard it till Wednesday night, when the hyper-silky-smooth Ruth accompanied me to the floor at DUCK'S. The pulse of humanness begins the song; from there the opus is both exhilarating rhythmically and heartrending lyrically. But when you're pivoting at warp speed who can weep? Thank you, Dolly Parton, for giving us your soul through this song. Of course the *RoadRunner* song continued to be fun, but did you hear the original by Bo Diddley? I did. Please, enrich yourself by seeking out this version.

Have you ever heard a number that strikes to the soul? No matter if the words are slurred into R&B doggerel, it's the FEELING. This happens when I hear -- and move to -- *Jesus Will Fix It*, by the pandemic Al Green. This has a rhythm and message so basic that it is narcotic in effect. Pitched up to shag speed, this is the most inspiring example of stomp-down spirituality. But back to the women.... The Mother Of Us All (Aretha) did *Brand New Me* a couple of years ago and, yes, it killed me. Then, some ex-second generation Supremes did a stunning, neo-disco remake (over which I very nearly wept). Now, Irene Reed comes up with a sedate version which kills me all over again.

Why did my eyes well up with tears when I heard (at DUCKS TOO) the remake of *Don't Worry Baby*? Is it because I nearly wept over this beautiful/sophomoric melody when I was 15? Is it because it is simply so engaging that I will cry when I hear it till I'm 80? Then there is the lustiest female voice of our time: Regina Belle. Her *Could It Be I'm Falling In Love?* is irresistibly playful, sexy and driving. Best new male voice of Fall SOS was, hands down, David Brinston. His *Trouble Maker* and the melodically gorgeous *Hit & Run* have the Billy Stewart-like true Beach Music chord structures that actually transport you across the dance floor (not to mention forcing you to sing along). Brinston's Junior Walker inflection is completely engaging and soulful.

Number One Smoothie: *Some Enchanted Evening* by the latter day Temptations (yes, Melvin Franklin's sub-woofer basso profundo is there, thank God). Co-winners of best stompdown shuffle beat are Zydeco Ace C.J. Chenier with *Can't Judge Nobody* and Uptown Blues maven Robert Cray's *Well, I Lied*. And so it can go on and on... so how do you keep up with all this music of ours? Easy! Jerry from Kinston, NC, is always at the curb just down from DUCK'S vending deluxe cassette anthologies of the Best of SOS. Listen, and listen again to the revelations of Our Music: the music of SOS!

Thanks to Jerry, Bill Ramsey and Christy McNeil for their aid in writing this piece.

Best Wishes for a Complete and Speedy Recovery:

Howard Wiener, who was recently hospitalized for two weeks(!) during a bout with pneumonia;

John Belt, who is recovering from a car accident (not his fault!) which sent him to the hospital with a cut leg requiring stitches, bruises, and pulled muscles.

Sincere Condolences to **Charlie Price**, whose Mother recently passed away.

New Members in Nov.

WELCOME, new members!! Geraldine Baker, David Loeb, Lesley Loeb, and Sheila Peck

Craig Hutchinson: Living Legend

Club member **Craig Hutchinson**, local swing guru, was one of sixteen dancers from around the country who were inducted at this year's third "Living Legends" event at the Little Creek Naval Station near Virginia Beach. Craig has worked tirelessly at teaching and promoting all types of swing dance, including Carolina Shag. We heard through the grapevine that he and his partner, Lucy Renzi, wowed the crowd with their unique style of swing. "Seeing the old timers dance was really a treat," he said, "and the music was superb." Congratulations, Craig!

FREE - Carolina Shag Lessons

Every Wednesday night at 7:30 sharp, **FREE BEGINNER SHAG LESSONS** are given by NVSC members at Deja Vu at Blackie's in Springfield, VA.

Dance afterward to beach music by **Craig Jennings and Guest Deejays**. 8:30-11 p.m.

AND THE WINNER IS ...

CONGRATULATIONS to **Judy Lance**, who got lucky and won the 50-50 last month!

PLEASE SUPPORT THIS IMPORTANT EFFORT TO RAISE MONEY FOR OUR CLUB! Tickets are just \$1 for one, or seven for \$5!! YOU might be the lucky one the next time!

TREASURER's Report by Bill Hopkins

As of December, we have \$1,180.28 in the bank.

Last Chance to be Included!!!

NVSC COOKBOOK

The NVSC Cookbook, First Edition, will soon be published and available for purchase. Don't be left out! Get your favorite recipes in NOW, and be included in this special Holiday Edition!!

Idea: A collection of the favorite recipes of NVSC members. The money we raise will be used to increase the NVSC Treasury.

Take a Minute: We have some *good cooks* in this club, as we have seen at our covered dish parties. **Come on, Guys -- and Gals -- send in your favorite recipes and we'll do the rest.** (Of course, we'll list your name with your recipe, so you'll be properly credited for your culinary masterpiece.)

Cost: A nice, handy volume will be available for a *pittance* -- a few dollars, (@ \$5). You could buy several to use as gifts for the Holidays!

Need: Your favorite recipe (or two) -- ASAP!

Please Submit: To Janis Grimes, 703-536-7362. Time is Limited! Please Hurry -- Do it Now!!

The Shagmaster Says....

- The basic step is all you need to know, but it's not all there is to the shag.
- Shag embodies an attitude of coolness, a youthful fun-loving, happy atmosphere, and lots of camaraderie.
- The heart of shag is the improvisation, the individuality and style earned through long hours of practice.
- 1 & 2; 3 & 4; 5, 6.....



From the Editor....

Best Wishes to All for Peace and Love, Joy and Happiness during the Holiday Season.

Do you have an idea, a suggestion, a thought? Would you like to submit an ad, an article, a column, your *Shagger Profile*? Just let me know, okay?

See ya Shaggi'

