



# Shag Rag

Shagger Newsletter

*Dedicated to the Preservation of the Carolina Shag and Beach Music*

Vol. IV, No. 7

Keep on Shaggin'

July 1997

## From the President - By John Belt

IT'S PARTY TIME! Don't know if you're as excited as I am, not just to party, but seeing old friends from other clubs -- watching new friends having a ball -- new dance steps to learn -- telling old shag stories -- hearing new ones.

Seeing all the hard work come together, there are many thank you's to go out: Thank you, **Charlie, Valerie, Vesta, Pauline, Betty, David, Janis, Joanie, Craig, Gary, Dave, and John**; and the Committees: Hospitality, Decorations, Dance, Advertising, Promotions, Vending, Dance Floor and **Jake**, and all of their committee members. The list goes on and on and on; however, space and time do not permit me to name them all.

Lastly, I would like to thank you, all that are participating in our Capital Shag Classic. You have helped to make Northern Virginia Shag Club once again an important stop on the shag map.

P.S. To **R&R Caterers, Pip Taylor of Kilroy's, and Vincent of Lulu's**, thanks for your support of the FREE POURS!

P.P.S. Congratulations to **Jerry and Andrea Crews** on their recent marriage!



We're Havin' a Party ..... ♪ ♪ ♪

## Carolina Shag Workshops

with

### National Competitors Bill and Brenda Barber

Learn the Basic Fundamentals,  
Intermediate and Advanced Steps

When: Saturday, August 16th

Location: To Be Announced

Three Workshops: Basics, Intermediate & Advanced

Basics	10:30 a.m. - 12 noon
Intermediate	12:30 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Advanced	2:15 p.m. - 3:45 p.m.

Cost: Members -- \$10 per workshop  
Non-Members -- \$15 per workshop

**YOU DO NOT NEED A PARTNER!**

**DANCE PARTY SATURDAY NIGHT!**

To pre-register for workshops and private lessons, call:  
Janis Grimes - 703-536-7362

*PRIVATE LESSONS will be offered during the weekend*

## A History of the Northern Virginia Shag Club from 1992 to 1997

by Patricia Parrott

It began the night **Rick and Libby Hendrix** decided to go dancing. **Dee Bassett** was there. Most everyone was dancing West Coast Swing. But Rick and Libby danced a smooth, sexy Carolina Shag. Dee took one look and said, "That's what I want to do!" It took a while to form a small band of shaggers, each struggling to learn to shag from Rick and Libby, and to teach each other. The first rather crude but formal meeting took place in June 1993, at Blackie's, Deja Vu. Fifteen people paid \$15 dues that evening. (Notably, the membership fee remains today at \$15, and all 15 original members are still on the rolls.)

In January 1994, a small group of people met at Dee's house with a common goal to share the dance and the music; the first "official" club meeting took place. Dee was elected as the club's first president, and she went right to work, with the help of others, to meet all the requirements of the Association of Carolina Shag Clubs. A logo was designed, required ACSC meetings were attended, Virginia Beach Shag Club sponsored the club, the newsletter was entitled *Shag Rag*, by-laws were established and the club was incorporated, among other things. Club officers elected the first year included **Debbie Nichols**, vice president; **Libby Hendrix**, secretary; and **Dave Rapson**, treasurer. Members of the Board of Directors included **Larry Camp**, **Janis Grimes** and **Gary Salpini**. The Northern Virginia Shag Club was officially proposed for membership in the ACSC in September 1994. At that time we danced every Wednesday night at what was then called the Juke Box Cafe in Springfield.

The 1995 slate of officers, headed up by **Charlie Price**, picked up the ball and ran with it. The new officers included **Donna Harrington**, vice president; **Patricia Parrott**, secretary; and **John Belt**, treasurer. Members of the Board of Directors included **Pauline Easby-Smith**, **Janis Grimes** and **Rick Hendrix**. They worked as a team to promote the dance, the music, and the club. Membership soared! **Donna Harrington**, **Pauline Easby-Smith** and **Pat Parrott** asked just about everyone new they met, "Do you shag?" "Do you like beach music?" The dance location moved from the Juke Box back to Blackie's, Deja Vu. By the end of that term there were more than 200 members. Membership consisted of not just locals from Northern Virginia and those from neighboring D.C., and Maryland, but also states north and south of us. D.C. Hand Dancers and East and West Coast Swing dancers are attracted by the music to our Wednesday night dances. That's another thing so great about beach music!

The club began to receive outside notice and acclaim. Deejays came up from the South to display

their unique style of beach music. Shag instructors of renown came to show us how the shag is really done and teach us techniques and steps. *The Washington Post* featured the club with an article and photo in the Style Section, Sunday edition.

Our monthly newsletter, *Shag Rag*, was, and still is, considered one of the best in the entire Association of Carolina Shag Clubs. One of the reasons for this is that the Editor, **Janis Grimes**, solicits, welcomes and prints articles from the general membership. She has said over and over, "This is Your newsletter." For a while the "Roving Shag Reporter," identity unknown, kept everyone on edge not knowing what or who would be reported on next. Another column, "Road Trips With Gypsies," tells of interesting experiences on shag trips. The "Shagger Profile" column helps us to better know our fellow club members. The latest column, "Dear Gabby," provides members an opportunity to write in with questions. Gabby answers all of them, but you are strongly cautioned against taking the advice given. **Pat Parrott** was the first to have an article from the *Shag Rag* reprinted in the S.O.S. *Carefree Times*. It was a live reporting from Myrtle Beach SOS '94 Fall Migration using titles of beach songs throughout. Since then, many *Shag Rag* articles have been reprinted, including the infamous "The First Time" by the Virgin Trippers (see April 1997 issue of *Shag Rag*). Janis has diligently performed the job of publishing an excellent newsletter every month since 1994, keeping us entertained and well informed of all advertised shag events up and down the coast. She is to be commended. Comments that have been heard repeated over and over by folks outside NVSC: "It's fantastic." "One of the best." "I read it immediately from cover to cover." People seem to enjoy the personal touch our newsletter has, and we have every reason to be proud of the *Shag Rag*.

Any reporting on the history of the Northern Virginia Shag Club would be remiss without mention of member **Craig Hutchinson**, local guru of West Coast Swing, member of the Living Legends Hall of Fame, and Feather Award nominee. Craig has been very instrumental in promoting shag locally as well as nationally. According to the recently published book entitled SHAG, he was the first to bring shag out of the southeast. Back in the 1980s, Craig saw **Charlie Womble** and **Jackie McGee** dance in Myrtle Beach and invited them to a national swing dance competition in Oklahoma. That event opened the door for shag to become known competitively coast to coast. Also, he was the first to include shag as a division in the Virginia State Open Swing Dance Championships. This brought shag to the attention of a very large dance community and interested many local dancers.

Worthy mention goes also to **Chris Pax**, **Bill Hopkins**, **Janis Grimes** and **Dan Shames**. They've put a lot of time and effort into learning and teaching the dance, and have entered the competitive shag and swing circuits, bringing further

recognition to the dance and to our club. Add to that **Donna Harrington** and **Keith Abernathy** demonstrating their "K.D." step on the Virginia Beach instructional video, our own NVSC Cookbook, worthy charitable events, and a video of our Wednesday night dance made for viewing on local cable TV. Last but not least, there has been at least one known union in marriage as a direct result of the formation of the shag club.

The club's first deejay was **Bert Nelbach**. **Craig Jennings** is the current deejay. Craig plays his beach music three times a month and arranges a guest deejay to play one week. It's great that Craig is also on the 1997 Board of Directors, because his enthusiasm for the music and interest in the success of the club shows through when he is working.

In 1997, the club has a new president, **John Belt**, and has expanded its weekly dances to include other dance events: Super Bowl parties, St. Patrick's Day celebrations, Christmas parties, Valentines parties, pool parties, etc. At the time of this writing, the 1997 Board of Directors is busy planning the Second Annual Capital Shag Classic.

The First Annual Capital Shag Classic, held June 28-30, 1996, at the Howard Johnson's Hotel in Alexandria was a great big thumbs up success, thanks to John Belt and all his worker bees, including the 1996 slate of officers. **Charlie Price** had accepted presidency for the second term, 1996. The new officers included **John Belt**, vice president; **Valerie Swiger**, secretary; and **Bill Hopkins**, treasurer. Members of the Board of Directors included **Janis Grimes**, **Rick Hendrix**, **Patricia Parrott**, **Chris Pax**, and **Fred Whitman**. Everyone has their own personal opinion as to why the club's first weekend event went over so well, but the writer believes it was in part because (1) the club members worked together as a team in high anticipation of success; (2) the attendance was just right . . . not too many, not too few; (3) the atmosphere was informal, carefree, and friendly; (4) the usual great music, excellent dancing, good food, great people; and (5) the NVSC has somehow generated the interest of many old time shaggers and previously established shag clubs of the southeast. They look to us to help keep shag growing and willingly give us their support and the benefit of their knowledge and experience.

The 1997 Board of Directors is busy planning the Second Annual Capital Shag Classic. Club officers are **John Belt**, president; **Valerie Swiger**, vice president; **Vesta Jones**, secretary; and **Pauline Easby-Smith**, treasurer. Members of the Board include **Betty Abshire**, **Janis Grimes**, **Craig Jennings**, **Joan McKinney** and **David Rodgers**.

The objective of the Northern Virginia Shag Club has remained the same since **Rick** and **Libby** met **Dee**: to promote Carolina Shag and Beach/Shag music. For those involved long enough to see the

growth, it's been an interesting phenomenon to watch. Carolina Shag! A dance that gives you a belly roll, a sugarfoot, and a boogie walk to do to gut-wrenching, heart-pounding rhythm and blues. Carolina Shag, a dance that almost died, has caught on and grown larger and larger, and now, due to books, film and the efforts of many, it will live on and on. All in all, what we have in NVSC is a club and a dance done to music that has unlimited growth potential. (Read in the July 1996 issue of *Shag Rag*, "The Return of the Shag" by Robert P. Crease.)

All new members are warned, however, that there is a medical alert concerning an affliction specifically affecting shag club members that spreads proportionately as membership increases and with each beat of the music. You may be subject to this condition. For your own safety, read the April '95 issue of the *S.O.S. Carefree Times*.

Finally, to all new members of the Northern Virginia Shag Club: Know that you are warmly welcomed. Enjoy the dance and wonderful beach music. Understandably, not everyone will become afflicted with the same level of addiction to the dance and music, but there will always be one or two newcomers who are bitten by the same shag bug that has bitten so many others. To you, welcome to the community!

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COMMITTEES and DIRECTORS :	
Capital Shag Classic . . . . .	Charlie Price
Charity . . . . .	Pauline Easby-Smith
Communications . . . . .	David Rodgers
Dance . . . . .	Janis Grimes
Hospitality . . . . .	Vesta Jones
Membership . . . . .	Valerie Swiger
Music . . . . .	Craig Jennings
Newsletter . . . . .	Janis Grimes
Promotions, Sales . . . . .	John Belt
Social . . . . .	Betty Abshire; Joan McKinney



**AND THE WINNER IS . . .**

CONGRATULATIONS to **David Rodgers**, 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!

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## Shagger Profile-- Sara Brodsky

Occupation: Director, Best Foot Forward (Dance Studio)

Birthday: February 7

Hometown: Boston, MA

Marital Status: Single

Motto: Less is more

Dream: To be able to always map out a life in which I can work to live, rather than live to work

Inspiration: People who always seem to find time to give back

Favorite Dance Tune: Too many to choose!

Hobby: Singing

Luxury Defined: Marble bathtub with Jacuzzi

Drink or Wine: Merlot

TV Program: Frazier

Books at bedside: "Midaq Alley" by Naquilo Mahfouz; several mysteries

Last Words: No matter how frustrating it gets, remember: Dance for the joy of it!

## New Shag Division at Swing Fling Competitions Here, August 1-2-3

The 4th Annual Swing Fling Dance Festival produced by Barry Durand will feature a new Shag Division in the dance competitions to be held at the National Airport Hilton here August 1, 2, and 3. Advertisements for this event say that **Charlie Womble** and **Jackie McGee** will be here -- which means that shag workshops and private lessons will be available. More details TBA.

BEST WISHES  
FOR A  
SPEEDY RECOVERY  
TO  
AUDREY BORJA  
AND HER FOOT!  
AND  
NANCY HARPINE ADAMS  
WHO WAS IN THE HOSPITAL  
RECENTLY



*Congratulations  
and  
Best Wishes  
Steve Adams  
&  
Nancy Harpine  
on their recent marriage!!*

## FLASH! Wedding Will Be Included

Latest news from the Beach is that the very touching and most entertaining wedding of **Brent Key** and **Kelese Douglas** at the 1997 SOS Grand Nationals in Atlanta will be included on the videotape! Blessed Event to be announced.....

## (Psssst! Pass It On!!)

*Next SOS... NVSC members  
will rendezvous at the Barrel  
(formerly known as the Pad,  
across from the Boulevard Grill)  
at 9 p.m. each night...*

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## Understanding Obsessive and Compulsive (Shag) Behavior . . .

The best example of obsessive or compulsive behavior I can think of involves the eccentric billionaire Howard Hughes. His obsession with germs led to his compulsive behavior causing him to avoid people. He went to great expense, living in a sealed room, etc., to safeguard himself from any contamination.

Hughes' actions seem almost normal when compared to the shagging phenomenon, the driving force of which appears to be a need to reach a euphoric state. This happens when the brain releases encephalons; natural substances having a morphine-like property that can dull any pain or discomfort. They are released during intense shagging and they cause something similar to a "runner's high." As the body becomes accustomed to this effect, it begins to take more and more shagging to produce the same euphoric high. It is not long until an individual is helplessly addicted, and forever dependent.

We've all seen this dependence in the eyes of shaggers arriving at the beach for an S.O.S. event. They have that crazed look that means "I need to boogie!" If you try to talk to one of these individuals before their first dance, you are wasting your time. Of course, we understand. We've probably already had a "fix." We politely wait until that crazed look turns into a pleasant glow as the song ends and they make their way off the floor. What a difference: now they sport that "freshly shagged smile."

Here are the top ten warning signs that you may be shag contagious:

- You carry corn meal or baby powder with you at all times
- You have tried without success to explain S.O.S. to someone who doesn't shag
- You have gone to a shag party, thereby neglecting house or yard work
- You have skipped a meal to continue shagging
- You have gone shagging while injured or otherwise impaired
- You have postponed surgery, or some other major event until after a shag function
- You have a personalized license plate that refers to, or has the word shag on it
- You have worn jewelry or clothing that only another shagger would understand
- You have become immediately depressed at a party when someone stopped the music and announced "take your seats, it is time for the entertainment" or "we're ready to give away some door prizes" (usually zillions of them, and none worth more than \$10)
- Someone mentions to you that the weather forecast for your upcoming beach trip is less than

perfect . . . and you don't care. Or, you have returned from a beach trip without a tan. Perhaps you went and never got closer to the ocean than the dance floor at your favorite lounge!

Don't panic if you have experienced some, or all, of these symptoms. You're not alone. There are thousands of us who are afflicted with this wonderful disease. Help is just around the corner at your local shag club gathering. Join the group and shag your blues away! *The much reprinted article by Mike Honeycutt of the Twister's Shag Club.*

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## Happy, Happy Birthday

### July Birthday Babies:

- 1 - Fred Whitman
- 8 - Linda Jean Harrill
- 10 - Larry Boyer
- 10 - Patricia Pepper
- 13 - Joan Salvadore
- 14 - Steve Bethke
- 15 - Jean Sellers
- 15 - Helga Taranto
- 17 - William Devenney
- 17 - Tim Foster
- 18 - Mary Camp
- 22 - Gloria Sacco
- 22 - Bill Shecter
- 23 - Diane Farhat
- 24 - Sandy Powers
- 25 - James Kirby
- 26 - Jerry Crews
- 28 - Dickie Gee
- 29 - Vesta Jones
- 29 - Mitchell Owens
- 29 - Gary Salpini
- 29 - Karen Wagley

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## New Members in June

WELCOME, new members!! Kathryn Quattrone

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**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.!) **Valerie Swiger's** condo is at CANVASBACK -- Contact Beachcomber Realty, 800-334-3798



**WINNER -- Cool Condo Award**

