



NORTHERN VIRGINIA SHAG CLUB

# Shag Rag

Shagger Newsletter

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

Vol. V, No. 1

Keep on Shaggin'

January 1998

## From the President . . . by Vesta Jones

Northern Virginia Shag Club is off to a wonderful start in this New Year. Our 1997 Holiday party had record attendance (many thanks to all who made it a wonderful party -- did you all know that Betty Abshire was at the VFW cooking at noon and was helping clean up at midnight!). We finished 1997 with a record membership (270), and the highest end-of-year treasury balance in our history. And we're starting the New Year with an energetic new Board.

These 1997 successes were the result of lots of hard work by the outgoing Board. Under John Belt's leadership, the club grew to new levels last year -- and we all had good times at Kilroy's -- thank you, John, for all you have done ... you always have a way of making everyone feel welcome. Other outgoing Board members are Valerie Swiger (who wears more hats than any other 5 people I know), Pauline Easby-Smith who, as treasurer, brought "law and order" to the books, and Joan McKinney, who has the coolest head in a tough situation of any I've ever worked with -- I'd choose her to be on my team when things get tough!

The great times are possible because for four years individuals have pitched in and done what needed to be done, (and many things that were just a good idea.) Our club is growing in size and reputation. We're known as a very warm, friendly group of shaggers that loves to learn and practice, welcome strangers and make new friends. That reputation comes not as a result of the efforts of 9 board members, but from every one of us smiling at newcomers, asking them to dance, welcoming visitors from other clubs and pitching in to help when help is needed. Our success is a club success and I am very proud to be President of such a wonderful group. I look forward to this year -- so many wonderful things lie ahead -- let's shag!

## Carolina Shag Workshops

with

National Living Legends of Dance  
National Shag Competitors  
**John and Joan English**

Learn the Basic Fundamentals,  
Intermediate and Advanced Steps

**YOU DO NOT NEED A PARTNER!**

**When: Saturday, January 10th**

Where: Blackie's Steak House, Commerce St., Springfield, VA  
For directions, call 703-971-4200

3 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

## DANCE SATURDAY NIGHT!

**Kenwood Country Club, River Road, Bethesda, MD**  
Directions: 495 North towards Rockville, take Exit 39 East, River Rd. towards Washington. Go to the 6th stop light, at Springfield Drive. Turn left into the Kenwood.

**8-12 p.m. - Cost: \$10 -- CASH BAR**  
Light Snacks Provided

**Everyone is Welcome to Attend!**

PRIVATE LESSONS are available with John & Joan English during the weekend  
Cost - \$40 per hour -- To schedule Private Lessons call Janis Grimes - 703-536-7362

News/Info -- please contact

Editor: Janis Grimes, 703-536-7362

## A Challenge to the NVSC . . . by John Mullen

Do you remember when we first started Shag dancing? We felt awkward and shy, embarrassed to show our stuff. We actually shied away from the more experienced dancers, knowing that they would not want to dance with us. After all, what did we know how to do, the basic? Maybe an underarm turn or two? What to do? Dance with someone who is just learning to dance the Shag.

We dance to have fun, but we also dance to improve our skills. One way to improve our skill is to practice lead/follow. Dancing with the same group of people can improve our technique and we might pick up a pointer or two or even learn a new step. But what about our lead/follow skills? When we only choose partners we know and who are at a similar skill level, they already know the steps we know. So how are our lead/follow skills being tested? We know exactly what the other is going to do and we make up for each other's style. We are not challenging our lead/follow abilities and they become weak from lack of usage. Well, here's a little something that might help us hone these skills and even help our club.

For the experienced follower, dancing with someone less experienced will test the ability to follow and provide the inexperienced dancer some practice and confidence. We will learn more about different lead styles and we will learn more about how to follow. However, when we accept this challenge, we must follow the lead provided, right or wrong. In this way, we allow the leader the essential and necessary feedback to see the results of their lead. And they WILL learn. We should also not critique their lead unless specifically asked to do so (or unless there is physical pain involved). After all, we are trying to encourage rather than discourage.

For the lead, we should leave the fancy footwork for dancing with the experienced partners. Few actions make a couple look odder than when one partner is dancing circles around the other. Doing so makes the couple look out of balance; it could embarrass the follower, and it makes our lead look self-centered. Few things look better than when a couple dances at the same level with self-assurance and class.

Another point to bring up is that we should not ever teach on the social dance floor unless it is specifically requested. We are out there to have fun, and so are they. Nothing can spoil an evening more than to be criticized. We should never criticize ourselves either.

Remember when we started Shag dancing and we were gaga over the proficient dancers? We felt intimidated and nervous. Take the time and patience to dance with the newcomers to the Shag. Welcome newcomers by dancing with them and encouraging them. Watch their skills grow and mature as we refine our own lead/follow talents. It will make our club a friendlier place for newcomers. This is an investment in our future dance partners and an investment in our Northern Virginia Shag Club.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Shagger Profile -- Valerie Henson

*Occupation:* Medical Technologist (DNA testing on National Marrow Donor Program)

*Birthday:* September 23

*Hometown:* Vienna, VA (raised in the Navy - I'm from "all over"!)

*Marital Status:* Divorced

*Self-Portrait:* Recovering Type A

*Dream:* To be able to dance well without working so hard at it

*Inspiration:* My son, Jacob

*Bad Habit:* I'm not telling!

*Hobby:* DANCING! Shag, swing, C&W and Aerobic Dancing; traveling as much as possible

*Luxury Desired:* 72°, slight breeze - and a hammock!

*Drink or Wine:* ICE COLD WATER w/lemon slice

*TV Program:* Any of Star Trek series

*Books at bedside:* Simple Abundance: A Day Book of Comfort and Joy

\*\*\*\*\*

## ATTENTION SHAGGERS

### YOU'RE INVITED!!

## SKI CLUB of WASHINGTON 's

### January Beach Bash

January 31st - 8:30-12:30

Cost: \$10 (\$12 at the door)

7:30 FREE SHAG LESSON by Joan McKinney

Cash Bar - Snacks provided

Dance to Beach Music at Rock Creek Kay Cee Club

5417 W. Cedar Lane, Bethesda, MD.

Info: Pete Campbell at (301) 258-2954

Mail check payable to SCWDC to: Pete Campbell,  
156 Lamont Lane, Gaithersburg, MD 20878

## Holidays Happen. . . by Vesta Jones

Some of our club members may have been inconvenienced recently when Blackie's canceled our dance night on short notice because of a private party. Some of you didn't receive the phone message and were turned away at the door. Some members may have felt outright indignation that it could happen to us. Some may have thought, "Oh good, a night to stay home/shop/catch up." Whatever your situation, the Board of Directors sincerely apologizes to you who were inconvenienced. We do understand that Blackie's is in business to make money, and when they have an opportunity to make a large sum of money in a single evening, we may be pushed aside for one night. This happens everywhere during the Holiday Season. We, the Board, will endeavor to be better informed in the future so we can plan ahead and provide more advance notice when this happens again.

## Happy, Happy Birthday

### January Birthday Babies:

- 2 - Sam Lewis
- 9 - John Belt
- 9 - Janis Grimes
- 9 - Craig Jennings
- 10 - Edna Skiados
- 11 - Debby Armstrong
- 11 - Lorraine Busey
- 14 - Ruth Browne
- 14 - Marc Fisher
- 14 - Dick White
- 16 - Pauline Easby-Smith
- 20 - Hannah Combs
- 21 - Liz Hendrix
- 22 - Lavinia Gadsden
- 22 - Cheryl Hatchell
- 23 - Charlie Price
- 27 - Mary Ann Lerch
- 27 - Tim Poe
- 29 - John Price
- 30 - Margie Bryce

## New Members in December

WELCOME, new members!! Kent Edie, Beth Edmonston, Michael Edmonston, Cathy Metcalf, Diane Stickler and Phillip Tidmore

### Treasurer's Report . . .

As of December 1st, we had \$3,250.26 in the treasury.

## DIRECTIONS to N. Myrtle Beach -- the Absolute SHORTEST ROUTE\*

(\*6 1/2 hrs. drive time Springfield to NMB)

(You'll be OFF the Interstate -- so GET GAS before  
you're off the main road!)

95 South to Lumberton, NC

Take Exit 14 (Rt. 74 EAST) -- TURN LEFT at end of exit, heading EAST.

Pass Rt. 130; go through Fairmont.

Take "Rt. 41 WEST." (It really goes South, but it says "WEST"!!)

At Lake View, take Rt. 9 SOUTH.

Stay on Rt. 9, pass Nichols and Loris,  
to Rt. 17 South

LEFT at light onto Main Street into N. Myrtle Beach -- then you're HOME!!

### For Hotel and Condo Info in North Myrtle Beach:

- Ambassador East, 507 S. Ocean Dr. 803-249-3531
- Bel-Aire Motel, 102 N. OD 800-342-0078
- Buccaneer, 401 S. OD 803-249-1466
- Helms Vista Motel, 300 N. OD 803-249-2521
- OD Beach & Golf Resort, oceanfront  
at Main Street (by Spanish Galleon) 800-438-9590
- Summer Sea Inn, 109 S. OD 803-249-4411
- Beachcomber Realty 800-334-3798
- Coastal Condos 803-280-0005
- Blockade Runner, 1910 N. OD 803-249-3561
- Days Inn North, 1321 S. OD 803-272-5131
- Marion Earl Motel, 1401 S. OD 803-272-5181
- Ocean Sands, 1525 S. OD 803-272-6101
- Red Tree Inn, 1415 S. OD 803-272-5353
- Sands Ocean Front, 74th Ave. N 800-845-6701
- Seaside Inn, 2301 S. OD 803-272-5166

• = Near Main Street

(If you can't get a room in NMB, there are plenty of places to stay a little further down the beach.)

## ATTENTION!

If you (or someone you know) would like to be a vendor at the 1998 Capital Shag Classic, please contact Valerie Swiger at 703-281-9193 for details.

# HUMOR CORNER

## Dance-aholic Test

Count 1 point for every YES answer.

1. You listen to dance music at times when you cannot possibly dance -- i.e. on your car stereo, with headphones while taking public transportation, on airplanes. Give yourself an additional point if you have actually taken your hands off the steering wheel while driving in order to clap your hands at the spot in the music where you would clap if you were dancing.
2. More than 50% of the t-shirts in your wardrobe are dance-related. Give yourself an extra point if any of them are no longer the right size or are too worn to wear, but you keep them anyway for sentimental reasons because they remind you of a special dance event.
3. When you are debating whether or not to buy a new article of clothing, a chief factor in the decision is whether or not you can wear it dancing.
4. You go to non-dance social functions with other dancers but you cannot carry on a conversation for longer than 15 minutes without talking about dance. (This includes gossiping about people at dance class!)
5. You have to explain at least once a week that you missed some over-hyped television program, a business function or social event because it conflicted with dance class.
6. What you eat for dinner depends on whether you're going dancing afterwards (nothing too heavy, no garlic or onions).
7. Even though you are an advanced dancer, you drop in on the beginners classes at least once a month just in case they are doing a beginner dance you've never learned.
8. At least once a month you phone or e-mail another dancer to find out whether he/she is going to a dance class. Give yourself another point if, when you find out he/she is not going dancing, you go anyway.
9. You subscribe to more than one dance-related magazine or newsletter --The Grapevine, Rokdim, Nirkoda, Let's Dance, New Zealand Folk Dancer, etc.
10. At least two gifts per year (received or given) are dance-related -- clothing, music, video, money for dance camp, etc.
11. The photos on your desk at work include at least one of you at a dance-related event.
12. You plan business trips and vacations so as to avoid missing your favorite local dance classes, i.e. leaving the morning after the class and/or arriving the afternoon before the class.
13. You get information about dancing in the area of your vacation or business trip, and pack dance clothing so you can dance while you're there. Two extra points if you pack extra dance gear on business trips just in case your returning

afternoon flight is delayed and you have to drive from the airport directly to class instead of going home to change clothes.

14. Your car is adorned with (1 point for each):
  - a. Dance-related personalized license plate
  - b. Dance-related bumper sticker
  - c. Dance-related license plate holder
15. You have, at least once in the past year, spent more time driving to a dance event than you knew you would actually spend dancing, i.e. one hour each way commuting to dance less than two hours.
16. You use your computer for dance-related activities. (1 point for each):
  - a. You netsurf for dance-related websites.
  - b. You have e-mail relationships with other dancers in which you write about dance-related activities
  - c. You check "alt.rec.folkdance" for news of dance events
  - d. You subscribe to a mailing list organized around dance-related topics.
  - e. You maintain a dance-related website.
  - f. Your e-mail address, password, or screen-saver is dance-related!
17. If you have pets, at least one of them has a dance-related name -- a cat named Debki, a dog named Zwiefacher, a bird named Polka.
18. You don't know the last name of at least five dancers, but refer to them descriptively instead as something like "David Who Usually Dances with Shoshana" or "Rachel The Tall Blond Who Wears Leggings and Long T-shirts."

### SCORING:

**15 or more.** Mayday, Mayday. Houston, we have a serious dance problem. Don't be surprised if your friends organize an intervention to confront you with your addiction. You can deal with problem directly by checking your phone book for the local 12-step-hop program in your area.

**11-14.** You're a borderline dance-aholic. With some effort on your part you can take back control of your life without outside help. It may be enough to cut out dancing between dance classes.

**6-10.** Not to worry. You're one of those social dancers. You can take it or leave it. You can walk off the dance floor anytime. Dance-aholics view you with suspicion.

**1-5.** Are you kidding? Are you taking this test as a joke? You probably don't know a step-hop from a pivot. Get outta here -- you wouldn't even watch dance-related television programs!

\*\*\*\*\*

**No. VA Shag Club On The Web!**

**<http://www.sbolnet.com/shag>**

.....

## Very Mysterious Indeed. . . by Chris Pax

**Problem:** Every Wednesday, when the shag classes are over and the music begins, a few dedicated troopers are really working pretty hard, carrying more than their fair share of the load when it comes to making sure that all the beginners and newcomers are welcomed and get a spin or two out on the dance floor with an experienced dancer. To these dedicated troopers, a thousand thank-you's for helping our club's warm and friendly reputation, and take heart: Help is on the way...

**Solution:** The Mystery Dancer Contest! Every Wednesday night, one man and one woman from either the Introductory or Beginner classes will be secretly designated as the Mystery Dancers. Only the contest coordinator and the Mystery Dancers themselves will know who they are -- yes, it's THAT MYSTERIOUS! The Mystery Dancers will pay special attention to club members who ask them to dance, because the very first club members (one male, one female) to dance with the evening's Mystery Dancers will be given a card worth 5 points. Every week, new Mystery Dancers are secretly chosen, and two winners (one male and one female) are announced. After twelve weeks, the two club members with the most points (one male and one female) become the Mystery Dancer Grand Prize Winners!

We hope this contest will be a fun way to encourage and remind club members to dance with the new people who are just starting out with their dancing. If each club member made it his or her business to dance with just one or two beginners every week, this would give some considerable relief to the few who have been doing more than their fair share, and also give newcomers a wonderful variety of styles and personalities to meet and dance with.

Imagine (or remember!) what it would be like to be a beginner... I've just finished the class, and now the music begins, and with a sigh and a bit of a nervous knot in my stomach, I resign myself to sitting on the wall to watch. Or maybe, if I'm bold, I'll dance with the teacher (a safe, known entity!). But no, look, someone is coming over to dance with me! And when that dance finishes, there's another one waiting! In fact, through much of the evening, club members keep coming over, introducing themselves, and inviting me out onto the dance floor. What a friendly bunch of people...

**Information:** The contest begins January 7, and will run for twelve weeks. The Grand Prize Winners, to be announced in the April **Shag Rag**, will each receive a certificate that is good for a FREE Private Lesson with Bill & Brenda Barber (worth \$50!),

either at our Capital Shag Classic in June, or at SOS in Myrtle Beach. If you have any questions, ask me, Chris Pax (contest coordinator).

## Northern Virginia Shag Club Dance to Beach Music

by Craig Jennings

every Wednesday night at  
**Lulu's**

at **Blackie's** in Springfield, VA

\$2 Cover

For Directions, call 703-971-4200

**FREE Shag Lessons**      **DANCE from**  
at 7:30 p.m.                      8:30 - 11 p.m.

**!! Please Remember !!**

**Support Your Dance Floor**

**Buy your drinks at the bar in Lulu's!!**

**You can order food right at the bar, too!**

.....

## AND THE WINNER IS . . .

CONGRATULATIONS to **Harold Stier**, who got lucky and won the 50-50 last month! **Pauline Easby-Smith** won the 50-50 at our Holiday Party.

**PLEASE SUPPORT THIS IMPORTANT EFFORT TO RAISE MONEY FOR OUR CLUB'S CAPITAL SHAG CLASSIC WEEKEND PARTY!** Tickets are just \$1 for one, or seven for \$5!! YOU might be the lucky one the next time!

*"Perhaps what most moves us in winter  
is some reminiscence of far-off summer.  
For we are....dancers, pursuing the summer....  
in boots and skates, all winter long.  
There is really but one season in our hearts."*

