



# MICHIGAN SWING DANCE ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



## Thighs Wide Shut

by Joanie Fuller

Oh, those pesky thighs. What can I do to make certain I keep 'em closed during West Coast Swing competitions? I hear voices saying, "keep 'em closed and keep 'em tight." That's not always easy when you're being tossed around in the J&J finals by an outta control tornado wearing men's clothing. So, how do I make my legs appear svelte, sleek, and tight? Velcro? Super glue? Not even the most delicate of thighs are easily kept under control in the heat of a two-minute competition with funky music blaring and hundreds of spectators waiting to be impressed.

With all the creativity West Coast Swing allows, you would think that our body parts would move in harmonious synchronization. Notttt! Just because you can move the top part nicely doesn't mean that your thighs and feet are gracefully following along--or, that they're adding to the look you had hoped to create; namely, dance diva extraordinaire.

Often times, the thrill of mastering one technical element is overshadowed by the onset of yet another imperfection, and it isn't long before someone points out a new schleppey habit that needs addressing: feet, tummy, arms, head, and those wiggly thighs. Go ahead; face your demons, for they come in all shapes and sizes.

I see lots of dancers with "thighs wide open," and even though this stance may help to avoid tipping over in blustery weather, it simply isn't pretty. Not only must we learn all the whips, wraps, and neat footwork, we must look clean and competent. This includes keeping your legs and feet in those pesky, yet "proper," foot positions, and keeping your weight down so that moo-ving your

thighs doesn't become an insurmountable task.

At a recent private lesson, my instructor was unable to keep his mouth wide shut as he noticed my thighs moving wide open. He proceeded to demonstrate the proper way to dance with thighs SHUT. The best part of this exercise was witnessing this big guy glide across the floor with his thighs tightly pressed against a small piece of paper as he demonstrated the proper technique for keeping the thighs closed. "Pardon my giggle," I said, "but I think my reality check has bounced? Am I really expected to dance like that?"

Each one of the elements of dance works to improve the other so I try to practice them one at a time and then together. Proper foot positions are supposed to help keep the legs closed. I said "proper," didn't I? So, if you have improper foot positions, you can be sure your technique is gonna take a beating along with your ego.

I enjoy saturating my brain with visions of hot dancers. I give myself daily doses of old U.S. Open tapes. Then I copy what I see. This is difficult, unless you're a monkey. I do this for a couple hours every evening in front of that old K-Mart mirror. Then, when the visual wears off I take a break, go climb a tree, and eat a banana. The next day I do it all over again. This visualization is invaluable for feeding my obsession and

fanatisizing about the dancer I COULD become if only I had a heftier bankroll to spend on lessons, a good therapist, and cosmetic surgery to finish off the job.

•••••



**Warm Congratulations to our newlywed couples!!**

**Therese and Bob Krall**

**&**

**Valentina and Jimmy Barrios**



## **DANCE ART COLLECTIBLES RETURNS!!**

They'll be at the May dance (really) with lots of their wonderful dance related posters, photos and memorabilia. They have sizes from small to very large so there is something for everyone. Don't miss it!! 10% discount on unframed posters and 15% off framed posters to MSDA members.

## **DANCE LESSON**

Last month, Joann Podleski taught her personal favorites: playfulness while dancing and "high jacking" your partner. Plus, she and her husband, Chet, did a terrific showcase WCS for us. Thanks so much, Joanne! ❖

This month, our own MSDA DJ and dance teacher, Bill Scheff, will take over the microphone and lead us through Intermediate Hustle including Free Spins for the Ladies and the Execution of Leads & Pickups for the Men. Intermediate (or above) level dancers only, please.

## **NEXT PARTY**

**APRIL 22**

**at the AMBER HOUSE**

**Lesson 3 PM**

**Dance Party 4PM-8PM**

***Our parties are at the Cabaret Ballroom located inside 'The Amber House, 7012 E Nine Mile Road, Warren, MI. 810-754-3434***

**NEW MEMBERS**

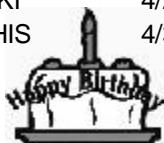
The MSDA warmly welcomes the following Dancers to the club. Thanks so much for your support!

- PATRICIA REDIES
- GILLES FOUQUART
- KARL STREIBEL
- GAIL STRIEBEL
- PAT ERICKSON
- BETTY WOO



The MSDA has a birthday party every month for those with birthdays during that month. We announce the members' names, have a birthday dance especially for them and serve cake. We also have a small gift for those present at the party in their birthday month. Please be sure to open it before leaving the party...it needs to be laminated.

- TERRY DROTAR 4/1
- CHARLES SPARRE 4/1
- NANCY VETTER 4/2
- YVONNE SCHALES 4/3
- LOUISE DAY 4/5
- RITA YOUNG 4/5
- KATHRYN AUGUSTIN 4/6
- RON HIVELEY 4/7
- CARMELA VITALE 4/7
- MARGARET ROSS 4/8
- JAMES DYSARCZYK 4/9
- RIAN KLEFSTAD 4/9
- DOLORES KALOUSDIAN 4/10
- RALPH RAIMI 4/10
- JEFFREY NEST 4/12
- SAN MIYAMOTO 4/15
- LEHMAN ORLUCK 4/17
- RONALD RELLOX 4/18
- BRENDA BARTON 4/26
- BETTY WOO 4/27
- DON KEISIC 4/28
- LOUISE ZALESKI 4/28
- JANET DEROCHIS 4/30



**FUTURE PARTIES**



- May 20
- June 10
- July 22
- August 12

September 23

Please note: Some of the dates are not on the 3rd Sunday due to holidays or convention dates.

The birthday cake for our parties is provided by Dave Michalski. He gives us a great discount and will give any MSDA member a discount too. Dave's shop is located at:

**DAVE THE BAKER'S  
SHOP HAS  
MOVED!!!!!!!**  
 Gallery of Cakes  
 29457 5 Mile Rd.  
 Livonia, MI 48154  
 734-427-9202  
 Hours:  
 Tues - Fri, 10 to 6  
 Saturday, 10-2:30  
 Sunday, Closed



**BARRY DOUGLAS WORKSHOPS & POTLUCK DANCE PARTY**

April 8, 2001, Amber House, Warren Salsa, West Coast Swing & Hustle classes. Prices vary depending on how many classes you take. Starts at 10:30 AM. Potluck Dance from 4:30 until 9:00 PM. \$1 off with a dish to pass. **GREAT** discounts for MSDA members. See attached flyer and [http://amberhouse-danceclub.com/barrys\\_workshop.htm](http://amberhouse-danceclub.com/barrys_workshop.htm) FMI: 810.754.3434 or [wscheff@speakeasy.net](mailto:wscheff@speakeasy.net). Check out Barry's site at: <http://i-hustle.com>

**FLOORPLAY'S ORLANDO SWING VACATION 2**

April 12-16, 2001, Orlando, FL Rosen Plaza Hotel, 4 day ticket: \$50 15,600 sq. ft. Ballroom. Competitions, parties, workshops, raffles FMI: (407) 370-0097 and <http://floorplaydanceorlando.com/>

**STARDUST DANCE WEEKEND**

April 20-22, 2001, Miami, FL Nevele Hotel, New York State FMI: 1 800 537-2797 and <http://www.stardustdance.com/april2001.htm>

**SPRING SWING by DANCE FANATICS**

April 28, 2001, Amber House, Warren Dance and Jack & Jill Contest from 7 to 2 AM. \$15. \$5 discount for MSDA members. FMI: 810-446-8888 and <http://www.dancefanatics.com/>

**GRAND NATIONAL DANCE CHAMPIONSHIP**

May 24-28 Atlanta, GA 770-512-7848 and <http://jackieandcharlie>

**NEW ORLEANS DANCE MARDI GRAS Swing & Hustle Competition -**

July 18-23, 2001 New Orleans, LA - 318-798-6226 or Email: [nocdmg@aol.com](mailto:nocdmg@aol.com) <http://dancemardigras.com>

**BEAT THE HEAT**

July 26-29 Columbus, OH For the \$50 ticket, they feed you all weekend, breakfast, lunch and a buffet dinner!!! Last year they inaugurated a brand new floor. Only a 3 1/2 hour drive. 614-9399-1844 or email: [watsongeo@aol.com](mailto:watsongeo@aol.com), Buckeye Bop Club

**DISCO AMERICA DANCE CHAMPIONSHIP**

Aug 3-5, 2001 215-233-5507 or Email: [DonnaBoyledisco@aol.com](mailto:DonnaBoyledisco@aol.com) <http://www.discoamerica.com/>

**DISCOUNTS FOR MEMBERS**

**AMBER HOUSE offers TUESDAY LESSONS WITH TIM CONSTANT.**

7:30 to 8:30 PM for ECS and 8:30 to 9:30 for Carolina Shag. \$5 per lesson. **WEST COAST WEDNESDAY HAS MOVED TO THE AMBER HOUSE.** Details below under West Coast Wednesday. FMI: Call (810).754.3434. **THE DANCE CLUB** classes begin each month at the Amber House in Warren. Private lessons available. Mambo, Hustle, ChaCha - Tango - Waltz - FoxTrot - Swing - West Coast. Huge Dance Floor! Amber House, 7012 E. Nine Mile Road (Just W. of VanDyke) Warren, MI

**STARDUST DANCE STUDIO** offers our members a discount of \$1.00 off the admission fee for their Friday night parties. Everyone is welcome. Party is from 9 PM to 12 AM. FMI: (248) 356-5678. **See attached class schedule.** 10% discount to members. NO DISCOUNT IS OFFERED AT THEIR ANN ARBOR LOCATION.

**DANCE AVENUE DANCE STUDIO**  
Due to remodeling, all classes and dance parties have been cancelled. Group lessons may return by the end of April. Call first.

**ROYAL OAK ARTHUR MURRAY**  
Discount of \$1.00 for MSDA members off the \$5.00 charge for Friday night parties. Party..9:15 PM-10:45 PM. FMI: (248) 548-4770.

**TROY DANCE STUDIO**  
They offer \$1.00 discount on every event they hold. They have scheduled Theme Parties on Tuesdays. Theme parties have hors d'oeuvres and drinks included. Open House for new students includes free group lessons the last week of each month. FMI: Elaine Marrero, TDS. (248) 689-3393.

**WEST COAST WEDNESDAY**  
By Dance Fanatics  
Location: **HAS MOVED TO THE AMBER HOUSE!!!** 7:30, 8:15. Lessons by Tera Gehrking-Vitale. Dancing 9-11 PM \$1.00 off to MSDA members every Wednesday. For more info: 810-446-8888 or visit <http://www.DanceFanatics.com>

**DANCE ALERT**

Want to receive the latest e-mail news on dance related events in Michigan? Want to know where the hottest dance floors are? To subscribe to all the latest dance news, visit her website at: <http://dancemichigan.com>.

**NEW PAGES** have been added: **Instructors, DJ's, Bands and Event Coordinators may advertise for free.** Also, check out our Information Station for her list of Dance Floors in the area.

**ARGENTINE TANGO DETROIT Grand Opening May 18th**

7758 Auburn Road, Utica  
FMI: (810) 254-0560  
10% off all events to MSDA members. <http://www.argentinatangodetroit.com>  
LnBrtn@compserv.net

**CHANGE OF PACE CLOTHIERS**

Located at 2045 Orchard Lake Road, Sylvan Lake, MI  
248-332-1811. 10% discount offered to all MSDA members. They have men's & women's clothing, shoes & accessories! Wonderful quality, everything from funky to elegant. They also do expert alterations! Check out their wonderful sales rack. No discount there, but none is needed. Great buys on dance clothing!!!

**LYNCH'S**

Three Locations:  
Warren: (810) 751-1780  
Dearborn: (313) 565-3425  
Wyandotte: (313) 281-8108.  
15% discount to MSDA members.  
They carry various trims for costumes, teachers' shoes, tights, etc.

**HUBER & BREEZE**

30% discount on all Rentals, Sales, Repairs of New & Used Disc Jockey Equipment. Musical instruments & vocal lessons also available.  
33540 Groesbeck Hwy.  
Fraser, MI (810) 294-3950

**DANCE ART COLLECTIBLES**

By Linda Jaworski  
An incredible collection of gorgeous and/or entertaining dance related art and collectibles. What better gift for a dancer? 10% discount on unframed posters and 15% off framed posters to MSDA members. 33228 West 12 Mile, Suite 138, F. Hills. For more info: 248-488-0244 [ljaworski@aol.com](mailto:ljaworski@aol.com). **Linda will be bringing her art display to the MSDA dance in May!!!**

Lots of MSDA members travel to events around the country and bring back wonderful information about dance events. We really enjoy the reviews so please keep this info coming. Also, while you're there, please pick up flyers to other events. If you give me a copy of each one, I'll make copies and put them on the Information Station for everyone to pick up. Thanks so much. S N



**TRAVEL PLANS?**

We have a listing of clubs, associations, studios, and dance events in other cities throughout most of the United States. If you would like to check out the dance action in a city you're planning to visit, call or e-mail either Sharon. or, check out our links page at <http://msda.org/links.htm>. We'll try to hook you up.  
(248) 926-5484 or [sfnelson@att.net](mailto:sfnelson@att.net)



**PLEASE REMEMBER**

TO TAKE YOUR MSDA MEMBERSHIP CARD WITH YOU WHEN ASKING FOR DISCOUNTS AT STUDIOS AND EVENTS. THEY ARE HAPPY TO GIVE YOU THE DISCOUNT BUT SHOULD NOT HAVE TO TAKE YOUR WORD FOR IT THAT YOU ARE A MEMBER. BELIEVE IT OR NOT, SOME PEOPLE MASQUERADE AS MSDA MEMBERS.



**JUST A NOTE REGARDING LESS REQUESTED DANCES:** Even though this is a swing club, we play the occasional Argentine and other more exotic dances. These will be played toward the end of the evening. Please be aware that it's difficult to accommodate everyone's tastes.



**BE A JACKPOT WINNER!**

**REMEMBER THE 50/50 RAFFLE.**  
At each party, you can buy an arm's length worth of tickets for \$5.00. The raffle drawing is at 6 PM. Just see Steve Lenahan for tickets. Last month's pot was \$70.00!!



**GUEST INSTRUCTOR**

**Bill Scheff**

Bill Scheff is our guest teacher this month. Bill, owner of the Amber House and the official MSDA DJ, has been a full time dance professional since 1986. He also operates the Dance Club, in which he teaches ongoing dance classes at the Amber House, and hosts many parties and events for other dance organizations. Currently on the schedule are Tim Constant's ECS and Carolina Shag lessons on Tuesdays, Tim Johnson's West Coast Wednesday on Wednesday evenings, the MSDA's dances on the third Sunday of each month and, on April 8th, an all day workshop with Barry Douglas.

Add to this the wonderful Pot Luck Dinner Dances on the first Sunday of each month, Bill's annual Character's Reunion, and the private lessons he teaches, and you'll wonder when he finds time to host all the wedding receptions, graduation parties and other celebrations that go on at the Amber House.

How did the Amber House come about? Bill replies, "The Amber House was purchased because Characters was closed and we looked for a place for dancers to go. (Characters was the dancers' Saturday night hangout in Warren. It was so small that we had to dance on and off the carpet to get around the posts. ) I found this huge dance floor with no columns to dodge around so its a great place to practice and have parties."

Bill is heavily into technique when he teaches so he doesn't encourage drop-ins. "Each time a new person shows up, I have to start over and that's not fair to the people who come every week. It's important to start from the beginning and develop the right kind of style." It is possible to take private lessons and get caught up with his classes.

When asked about any pet peeves re: dancing, Bill said, "I've been dancing for 31 years and my main pet peeve is this business of lead and follow. There are guys who want to learn lots of steps in order to impress the girls. Often a guy will act as if he is a teacher, or will show her complicated steps to dazzle her. She

might just be getting into dancing and he throws her into steps she doesn't know, plus he might dance above her level. If he overleads, she has to compensate by resisting and this ruins what she's learned. Then the teacher has to help her unlearn it and almost start all over. It would be better to dance at the follower's level and let the teacher introduce the new steps."

"Another word of advice: to be a better dancer, learn the names of the steps. Names help you remember how to do the steps. Timing and counting are also very important. I still count after 31 years. Plus, if you learn proper foot placements, body positioning and how to rotate the body, i.e. the basics, dancing will be more fun. Feel the lead through the arms, check your fingertip resistance and make sure your body isn't collapsed. Then it's easier to lead and follow. Be one with the music. It's great if you don't have to think about your feet or what to do with your body...music takes control of your body at the upper level. You can just BE the music. That's the epitome and the goal of all the lessons.

**Check out Bill's new web site at <http://amberhouse-danceclub.com/>**

**A NOTE ABOUT eGROUPS**

I send all notices out via an online community known as eGroups. It has recently been changed to Yahoo! Groups. If you try to access the site, you will need to create a Yahoo! username and password to get in. There's a link to it from the home page of the MSDA site <http://msda.org>, or you can go directly to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/MSDA/join> and join there. If you want to send an e-mail to the group, you can do so using this e-mail address: [MSDA@yahoogroups.com](mailto:MSDA@yahoogroups.com). Yahoo! has added some useful features including a customizable chat room in which you can log on with fellow MSDAers and discuss who's going where and when. Very handy. S.N.

.....  
**Dance Web Site of the Month**

<http://www.dancescape.TV>

Check out the virtual DANCE UNIVERSITY, one of the many 'TV stations' on this site. "TV enables you to access easy-to-learn dance steps that you can do at a wedding, office party, fundraiser, or other social event. Check back often for the new dance sessions to be added to our system. REGISTER/LOGIN NOW for FREE access to "social" dance lessons, as well as other optional pay-per-view Internet television shows coming soon! Paid subscribers will receive access to our database of dance steps for Student, Associate, Licenciate (i.e., PreBronze, Bronze, Silver, Gold, and other syllabus) levels that outline both men's and ladies' steps, as well as timing, and direction."

MICHIGAN SWING DANCE ASSOCIATION  
SHARON NELSON  
2152 SHANKIN  
WOLVERINE LAKE, MI 48390  
<http://msda.org>  
[sfnelson@att.net](mailto:sfnelson@att.net)



**HEY, YOU GUYS!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**  
**THE PARTY IS SUNDAY,**  
**APRIL 22!!!!**  
(This is not the third  
Sunday.)



**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!!!**