

SWING AROUND THE CIRCUIT

FLAGSTAFF, ARIZONA



Dance instructor, competition dancer, and numerous swing dance club member, H. Leon Raper is shown dancing with his client Jacklyn Zeman. Jacklyn plays the role of Bobbie in the ABC soap opera "General Hospital."

Mr. Raper has been dancing for over 25 years and has studied with such teachers as Skippy Blair, Kenny Wetzal, Dean Collins, Willie Desatoff, Jack Pina, and numerous other top personalities. He was the founder and president of the former Jitterbug Club of America in Orange County, California and one of the founding members of the former Competition Swing Dancers Association in Los Angeles, California. He was recently guest speaker and instructor at an NTA workshop for dance teachers in Flagstaff, Arizona.

For a number years, Mr. Raper's dance classes have put many new people on the dance floor who never danced before. He says, "The only people that cannot learn to dance are those who are afraid to try. The desire to dance is a highly contagious disease for which I hope they never find a cure. The more you dance the worse the disease gets and the more it spreads to others. I feel dancing is the best physical and mental therapy known to man. It helps bring new relationships together or helps restore relationships that have fallen into difficulty. It helps build one's self confidence, shows people how to meet new people and build that bond of friendship with others that is a necessary component of a happy life."

WASHINGTON, D.C.

by Joy Florentz

The seat of government may be the nation's swing capital as well, where a variety of couple dancing styles can be found every night of the week. From dance halls to nightclubs, this sometimes stodgy city comes alive at night and provides swingin' relief for the overworked. There are many places to swing dance in the metropolitan area, which includes the District of Columbia, northern Virginia, and suburban Maryland from the District line north to Baltimore. Multiple choices make it tough deciding where to go.

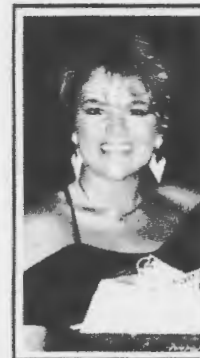
Everybody seems to be discovering the DC swing scene these days; from the Washington Ski Club with its 5,000+ members to the unsatisfied masses of the disco and/or bar scene to the ballroom types who have begun to venture out of the protected studio environment into the "everybody's welcome" atmosphere of the dance halls. There are places to go to satisfy every manner of dance style, atmosphere, music and location. The dance halls that have dances once or twice a month with live music, and offer some food and/or drink refreshment, attract anywhere from 150 to 500 dancers per dance. Rock Around The Clock Club, Baltimore Bop Shop, Swing Baltimore and Washington Swing Dance Committee hold regular dances and are the mainstay of the DC dance scene.

An abundance of clubs and smaller dance halls offer taped music from one to seven nights a week, some country-flavored, some primarily ballroom, some exclusively vintage oldies. And then there are benefits: Advocates for Communications Technology, All Soul's Episcopal Church, Alzheimer's Association, Big Sisters, Buffalo Gap Dance Camp, The Falls Church, Maret School, Washington Area Music Association, Washington Free Clinic and Washington Literacy Council are organizations that hold benefit swing dances, raising money for a multitude of worthy causes. In addition, there are privately-run studios, as well as individuals giving workshops each month, often with practice parties after. Add to that the many regional weekends and competitions up and down the east coast, and you have a dance scene that is as rich in diversity as any in the world.

DENVER, COLORADO

by John Devorick

Two Little Gals from Colorado went to the Phoenix Swing Dance Convention... Fourth of July weekend. They represented their state and brought home mother and daughter honors! Anita Deaton, took fifth place with Alan Ono in the Novice Division, while daughter, Andrea, took second place with Louie Juarez in the Champion of Champions. We'll let you figure out which is the mom and which the offspring!



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