

H. Leon Raper Dance Instructor



For many years now Mr. Raper's dance classes have been bringing the joy of dancing to the people of Northern Arizona. His classes have put many new people on the dance floor that never danced before. He says "the only people that can not learn to dance are those who are afraid to try or have a physical incapacitation that would prevent them from doing so." His dance classes welcome all: Marrieds, singles, couples and you do not have to have a partner. Dances he has offered are West Coast Swing, Country/Western (2 Step, Line Dances, Shuffles, etc.) Waltz, Latin (Cha-Cha, Rumba, Mambo, Samba), Jitterbug, Flying Lindy, Shag, Balboa, and advanced competition material such as aerals, lifts and drops. He has the technical expertise to teach all levels of dance students, from beginner to advanced, in the same class.

Mr. Raper says "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." He does not understand why there are so many people sitting along the sidelines watching others having so much fun dancing when most could be dancing instead of just watching.

Mr. Raper has been dancing for over 25 years and has studied with some of the most respected teachers in the business such as Skippy Blair, Kenny Wetzel, Dean Collins, Willie Desatoff, Jack Pina, and numerous other top competition swing dancers. His competition dancing experience includes that of over 400 West Coast Swing Dance contests, including a World Championship Contest

at the Palladium in Hollywood California. He is a member of the National Teachers Association (NTA), member of the United Country Western Dance Council (UCWDC), charter member of the Los Angeles Swing Dance Club, member of the Greater Phoenix Swing Dance Club, and member of the Arizona Country Dancers Association (ACDA). Of organizations which no longer exist he was the founder and president of the Jitterbug Club of America in Orange County California and one of the founding members of the 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 where he provided the attending teachers with information and instruction pertaining to teaching West Coast Swing Dancing. He has also been a guest instructor at many other workshops.

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SWING DANCE JOURNAL

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The Music and Dance is Indeed Alive and Well in the Southeast!

by Michael Payne, President,
Jacksonville Beach Bop Association, Inc.

"I thought this kind of music and dance was dead east of the Mississippi ..." —Terry Martin, past President, Southside Imperial Swing Slub, St. Louis, MO.

Terry said that years ago when he and Pat first found "Boogie on the Riverwalk[®]" in Jacksonville, Florida. He hasn't missed this once-a-year, three-day party since! "It's the best party anywhere, period!" Terry now says.

"... it's more than the music, it's more than your friends being there, it's even more than the dancing ... and almost everyone is dancing! It's a whirling salute to swing dancing ... and to good feelings! Smile, and you start feeling the fun!

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"Boogie on the Riverwalk[®]" is, without question, the best event in the country, and I have no reason to say that if it isn't true! After all, I have to drive 30 hours each way and pay to get in when other functions pay me to attend!" —Jerry Crim, President, Supreme Swing, Tulsa, OK.

Since they found us, Jerry and Jodi haven't missed one of our parties either!

The music and dance is indeed alive and well in the Southeast, and "Boogie on the Riverwalk[®]," which attracts around 1400 dancers from around the country, is only one of many, many great parties held in the Southeast each year.

"The good feelings started when you walked into the room. The pulsation of the beach music' filled the air with body-moving rhythms. One views a thousand or more smiling faces, each one loving every minute of just being there. You can see it, feel it, ... and like magic, this feeling of happiness begins rising wonderfully inside of you. It's a whole room full of jubilation and suddenly, you're a part of it! You start smiling too!

"... the dancing ends around two in the morning, and around the dance floor you'll always find a few brave souls, danced out, sitting feeble, wrecked....it usually takes a week just to get your feet moving again after the dancing...!" —Jere Salyers, President, South Florida Swing Dance Society.

In Florida, Alabama, and Tennessee we call our the Beach Bop, Bop, or Bee Bop. In the Carolinas and Georgia it's called the Shag. Even though the styles vary greatly, the music is about the same as what swing daners are used to, and we do an eight-count to a six-beat basic movement.

The Boppers do not usually compete. There is no competition at "Boogie on the Riverwalk[®]," instead we party hardy! We are a laid back group who just want to have a good time! The sharing of steps or moves with someone from another area is common.

Shaggers, on the other hand, do compete, and they take their dancing seriously ... some even call it a religion! Many of you were introduced to the shag by Charlie Womble and Jackie McGee, eight