



Jennifer Mitchell

When I was first asked to write a little something for the Mardi Gras, Diamond Rodeo newsletter, I thought, what am I going to write? But, the fact is, there is so much to write about. I first came here 4 years ago, and to this day I cannot stay away! This place has become so important to me over the past 4 years that I find myself, like everyone else, feeling like I'm missing something huge when I miss a Friday night at "MG". It's not only the dancing at Diamond Rodeo that I love. It's all the friendships I've developed over the past few years that keeps me coming back. Mike always has a smile when I pull up to the club parking lot, Becky always knows my drink when I come up to the bar, Joe & Sam always know what dance and song I'm going to request... And Walter, he just always makes me laugh! All the friends I've met through dancing here are just as great. It's great to see people of all ages, shapes & sizes and different backgrounds coming to this place, because they probably feel the same exact way I feel! Mardi Gras is addicting! Now, I'm glad I got a chance to write something about MG. I got my chance to thank you all for making the Diamond Rodeo such a special place!

Jennifer Mitchell

Hello to all

Let's go back four years ago when my cousin brought me here for the first time. I had never been to a country night club in my life. "This is really cool", I thought. I began coming often, and as most people do when they start coming,



Bill O'Brien

they sit their butt on a stool and watch. Soon after, Michael's wife, Colleen, asked me "Bill, when are you going to get out there?" My response like every beginner was "I don't know any dances." From that point on, I got on the dance floor and had a lot of help from my friends, I also started taking beginner classes. Now get this, I went non stop for 6 weeks straight on Monday and Wednesday nights with my beginner classes. On week-ends I came here and took the lessons and then danced with guidance from some great friends. The only nights that I was free was Tuesdays and Thursdays. Since then, I still take lessons from Gail McKenna, who is a true professional instructor. She has the patience, energy and drive to see those who take her lessons succeed. When all of us learn the dance, It makes her day. Gail, thank you for all the dances you have taught me. I have learned soooooo many dances, my mind can't remem-

ber all of them. That's when you will hear me say "oops". But I come to the Diamond Rodeo to have fun and dance. And yes, to pick on Gail (did I say that!) I would never pick on her. Now, just a tiny bit about me. My favorite hobby is Amateur (HAM) Radio, computers and all forms of communications. My profession is in cable tv and computers. I install and service digital and analog cable tv. I also setup personal computers and do minor troubleshooting. If your cable tv or computer isn't working right, ask me and i'll try to help. May I give you some tips on line dancing? I don't know how woman can dance in high heeled shoes, a good pair of

leather soled cowboy boots is the #1 priority, but be careful where you buy them. Prices vary and most of all, know your size. Have your foot measured before looking. It is aggravating, but some stores won't have your size in stock. This can be very frustrating when it's the boot you really, really like. Another tip is when your line dancing, take small steps, not BIG steps. When you turn, take small steps using the balls of your feet. Use the rubber part of your heel to stop. When your dancing with a partner, the man leads. This means he stops you from turning.

Just dance and have fun.

Bill O'Brien

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Side - Bar
Comments

Club Hours

Wednesday 7 PM - 1 AM
Friday 7 PM - 1 AM
Saturday 7PM - 1 AM

MARDI GRAS
1500 Oaklawn Ave.
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Wednesdays
Fridays
Saturdays
Free Line Dance Lessons
with Gail McKenna
7 - 8 PM

This newsletter can be viewed on line at www.mikeponte.com/mardigras
Check out the club photos at www.mikeponte.com/country/clubphotos/index.htm



Celeste Boucher



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interview links
bioGraphy reviews



Sam Stevens

Since I have been asked to write a feature for the newsletter, I figured you'd like a perspective on some of my experiences at the Diamond Rodeo and some of the things that happen at WCTK. I first began hosting the Cat Country 98.1 Friday Night Dance party when I went from my brief stint at doing the evening show on WCTK to middays where I also feature the All You Can Request Lunch Buffet. Some people have asked how I learned some of the dances you all do at the club. When I worked in Burlington, VT, before coming to Rhode Island we used to DJ country dances up there so I was able to learn some of the line and couples dances at the time. About a year and a half ago, Pauly asked if I would be willing to work Wednesday nights at the club playing the music. I wasn't too sure if I wanted to start doing that again. He asked what else

was I going to do on a Wednesday night anyway, so I said all right. He has subsequently tricked me into working occasional Saturdays, but I really do enjoy it. Where else can you have a few beers and have fun with everyone and it is considered work? If WCTK let us do that at the radio station, we'd probably never go home. Since people are always intrigued by what goes on behind the scenes at WCTK, we'll unlock some of the mysteries here. We actually work much more than the time we're on the air. If I only had to work Noon-3pm, I'd have it made. We get in early before our shifts and each of us has our different things we do. Whether it's show prep, producing commercials, scheduling music and organizing contests and getting prizes. It takes up a whole day to get it done. Hopefully the end result is something you all enjoy hearing on the radio. One of the fun things I get to do is arrange for all our artist visits to the station so you guys can hear them on the air. Countless artists have stopped in for acoustic shows and interviews like Travis Tritt, Montgomery Gentry, Trick Pony, Keith Urban and the Dixie Chicks just to name a few. It is such an honor when they later perform in concert and they remember who we are! That bond is something you very rarely find with other musical formats. We also answer our own phone calls. When you call the request line, whoever you hear on the air answers the

phone. When you call up for a contest, we have several lines so we're able to get a winner relatively quickly. It's good to be on standby if you know something's coming up that you want to win. One hint though; Don't call early because you don't want to be caller # 1 when you should be the 10th one through. If you ever have any questions, you certainly can reach any of us via email. If you email the studio (studio@wctk.com), anyone could end up answering it. If you want to reach any of us individually, just click on one of our pictures. We will respond to you personally. Someone said to me recently, "It sounds like all you guys do is have fun." We try! Like every job, we have our stressful days, but it's our job to entertain, which we all try to do every day you listen. Friday nights at the Diamond Rodeo are always a highlight for us. It's a great chance to chat with you all, hand out prizes and have some fun putting the work week behind us. If you have any friends who have never been to the Diamond Rodeo and love country music on WCTK or just want to get out of the house for once, bring them on a Friday night. We're always happy to see new fans of Cat Country 98.1 and hopefully new faces on the dance floor!

Sam Stevens
Email: samwctk@aol.com



The Dance Floor works it's magic-yet again..



Michael Silvia & Michaela Greenberg

I suppose it is obvious to any of the regulars at the Club how Mike and I feel about each other. You have only to take a moment and glance in our direction to see how we have a tough time keeping our eyes off each other! Maybe we should apologize for that, but we truly are so much in love. And it all began on the dance floor at another club and continued to develop on the dance floor at Mardi Gras. Of course there were a few other locations where we had a chance to get to know each other, but our favorite outdoor entertainment will always be dancing. It was a magical night for me. I went out that night just to dance and come to find out, so did Mike. Neither one of us had intentions of meeting someone special. Somehow, we wound up dancing next to each other and I was helping him with some dance steps. He really was so adorable and so willing to learn, that I thoroughly enjoyed teaching him. Suddenly there was a partner dance lesson, so we wandered over there. We just kept smiling at each other through the whole lesson. We had such a great time! After a few nights of dancing together, there was that "customary" invitation to breakfast after dancing all night where we had a chance to get

the vital statistics and to see if we even liked each other! From there we found many things in common and that we truly enjoyed each other's company. It was inevitable that we would fall in love. We are both so very happy with each other and looking forward to spending a lifetime feeling this way. If this all sounds so corny, too bad. It's the truth. And we do believe there is magic to be found on that dance floor. One must only keep their minds and hearts open to it and it may find you, too!

Recently, Mike proposed. It was the most romantic moment of my life! And most of you know how much life I've lived! He proposed in the Poconos and since our return we have grown even closer in all aspects of our lives. Whenever we return to the dance floor, we are reminded of the magic that brought the two of us together. And we have sooo much FUN!

Michaela Greenberg
Michael Silvia



Toeing The Line

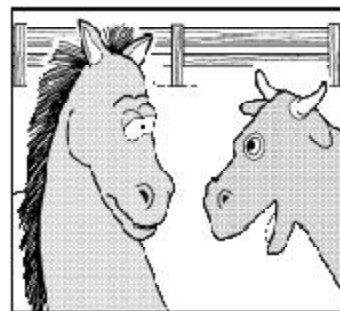
If thirty years of marriage to a wanna-be cowboy couldn't sell me on country music and Western-wear, you'd think nothing would. Well, that was all before the night my sister Marge asked me to come with her to Mustang Sally's for a night of country line dance lessons.

"Country line dancing?" I laughed. "Like on the commercial for that video where the women wear mini-skirts and cowboy boots? You should ask Ronnie instead of me, that's his kind of music!" But Marge insisted, assuring me it was fun, good exercise, and reason enough to get out of the house on a weeknight. So I joined her that first night,

and seven years, multiple teachers and a club's name change later, we're still there. Now, I'm not trying to say that I've become a boot-scootin' pro: you're more likely to find me, Marge and a few other friends at the back of the pack than in front leading the line. Sure, we might KickBall-Change when we're supposed to Monterey Turn, but we have lots of laughs and loads of fun (and usually manage a Tush-Push when we need one!) Life outside the club has changed too, the Cat Country 98.1 is on my radio all the time, and there is more than one cowgirl shirt in my closet. I practice my dances (sometimes several at one time) in my kitchen, twirling with my beautiful granddaughter, or camping with my husband and his horse. I've introduced line-dancing to several friends and relatives, and each week we meet at the club. I get a good work-out and an enjoyable night out.

I really love my line-dancing lessons. If the local club had them a few more times a week, I'd be there with my boots on! And if you'd told me seven years ago I'd be out dancing every week, I'd have laughed out loud. But then, thirty years of country music exposure should have prepared me for something, who'd have thought it could be so much fun!

Judy



"Do you want to do slap'n leather?"



Janice Sauco

Hi Everyone!

Since I wrote my last article about 2 years ago, I am still coming to the Diamond Rodeo. There are a lot of the same familiar, friendly faces that I remember from when I first started coming here, maybe starting in 1998. Many wonderful friends are made here. A lot of friends that still come and there are some that are sadly missed like Paul Cahoon who is now residing in Florida, Harry Pratt in Memphis, Ralph and Nanette in Utah. Do you know that on many Saturday nights, Ralph and Nanette call Jean on her cell phone and they speak with their friends at Diamond Rodeo? Some Saturday nights, in the middle of my dancing and socializing, I hear someone calling my name. Calling me to speak with Ralph and Nanette on the phone from Utah. They can't stand to be away from the Diamond Rodeo on Saturday night. Before their move to Utah, every Saturday night without fail, they would make the trek in from Ct. to dance with us, so they must keep in contact, even if just by phone.

There has been quite a few weddings that came from friendships made here at the Diamond Rodeo too! Dale and Heather's wedding took place

on Sept. 21st. Congratulations to all of them. It's wonderful to know that there have been many lasting relationships formed here. I am sure we all wish them many more years of happiness. We hope they continue to dance. I think that if a couple can have time to be together doing things that they both enjoy such as sharing friendships, being playful, laughing and having such an enjoyment such as dancing together, the relationship is sure to be a winner. By dancing, you must look at each other, touch each other and be in sync with each other and with the music in order to carry out the dance. In those same ways does a couple bond their relationship, their friendship with each other, their respect for each other and their willingness to bend for each other in everyday life. The way you bend and adjust for each other to do the best and most enjoyable dance, so you can keep the steps in sync and flowing with the music. Guiding, following, accepting, trusting, tolerance, and yes, sometimes, especially tolerance. Those words identify both dancing and a relationship. They have special and undeniable meanings for both. Dancing definitely benefits the body and the soul. Who knows? Your Prince Charming or Sleeping Beauty may be standing or sitting next to you. You may have held the door or he or she may have smiled once or twice. You may not even know it right away. You may suddenly get a wonderful, unsuspecting surprise, someone that may have been right under your nose all the while. Keep your eyes open and always behave like a lady or gentleman. You never know who is thinking nice things about you.

Janice Sauco



Wendy & Duffy

Hi everybody! For those of you who don't know me, my name is Wendy, and I've been coming to the Diamond Rodeo for about a year and a half now.

I first came to Mardi Gras in April of 2001. My best friend, Duffy, was coming down from New Hampshire for the weekend, and she had asked me to find something for us to do while she was here. I knew she liked country music, because when I had gone up to visit her a few weeks earlier, we went to karaoke and all she and her friends sang was country music. (That's when I started listening to country music!) I heard the ad on the radio for the free dance lessons, and seeing as we both loved to dance, I decided we'd try that.

Our first night there, we knew nothing!! We loved watching everybody doing the dances and having a good time. Well, being the brave girls that we are, we thought we'd go out there and give it a try. All I can say is, thank God for Glenn! He helped us through the first couple of times we came and kept us under his wing. Every time a dance would come on, we'd ask him, "Do we know that one?" At that point, all the dances were the same - names meant nothing! But, we kept on coming anyway.

Now, here it is eighteen months later. We know lots of the dances now, thanks to Gail McKenna, the absolute best dance teacher around. We have made lots of new friends,

and now we're the ones helping the new people! I still look forward to my Wednesday, Friday and Saturday nights of dancing. Who needs to go to the gym when you can get just as much exercise on the dance floor - and it's a heck of a lot more fun!

Wendy



Gloria Tetu

"Who, me? Go country dancing? NO WAY!" That's what I said eight years ago. Today, I don't know what I would do WITHOUT it. Hey, come on, I was into Stevie Nicks and Sting. My friend Pam and I went with some people from work to what was then Mustang Sally's. I wandered over to the Diamond Rodeo all by my lonesome and I was hooked.

I love the energy of the place. The lights and dance music radiates life in every corner of the Diamond Rodeo. I like to "people-watch", too. I've noticed moods change for the better when people begin to dance here. How could you not? The "regulars" here dance so well, too. Have you ever seen anything better than Peter and the guys doing the Hat Dance, for example? Just to sit and watch the excellent two-steppers here is enough to admire, let alone getting up there and doin' a Cotton-Eyed Joe. The older dances with a lot of the great new stuff Gail

teaches makes for a good country dance mix. Seems there's something for just about everybody, from the line dancers all the way to the swing dancing couples.

I enjoy the contemporary country played at the Diamond Rodeo. It's fun, it's fast, and dancing here really makes you work up a sweat. Why jump up and down in a boring aerobics class when you can come here for exercise and have fun at the same time?

I've made several good friends here. Maria, Chris, Manny, Janice and Paul, to name just a few. They always seem to have nice things to say and I have no doubt the atmosphere of the Diamond Rodeo has influenced me in a positive way. Thanks to the management and employees of Mardi Gras for giving me much joy. Your hard work and effort to make it the very best country dance club in Rhode Island has paid off. Good luck, and let's have fun for many years to come!

Gloria Tetu



Sam Stevens holds Toby Keith's beer while they get a shot (no, not whiskey) at the Tweeter Center.

(from www.wctk.com)

