

Wearing a different hat



Jason Giorgi

send you if I get a chance. Mike, I would like to thank you for doing the web site with all the pictures. I am able to see my friends, how they are doing and also remember the good times I have had and will have when I return. If any one has questions that I can answer (depends on if it has anything to do with the safety of the personal and mission). Please e-mail me and I will return your e-mail (let me know you are from the club, I don't open any junk mail).

Proudly, Jason Giorgi
Where the Stars and Stripes
and The Eagle Flies.

363ESFS.SFEM282@PSAB.AF.MIL

Back in January I reported that Jason was stationed overseas at Prince Sultan Airbase in Saudi Arabia. Thanks for your service to our country my friend. I hope to see you in that cowboy hat again real soon.

Mike Ponte

Well I just would like to say hello to everyone there and hope all is well. I understand you got a lot of snow. Things are going well where I am. They could be worse and may be getting that way soon. The only hard thing to deal with is missing my 2 little girls who are 1.5 and 4 years old. But I am here so they can have the choices and freedom I had in my life. We work very long hours appx. 80-85+ a week and are very busy with the mission that is before us. I work nights which helps a little because the weather is getting warmer and the sand storms can get rough out here. We have been extended for who knows how long, things change on a daily bases, but I know we will be here for longer than expected. I might have a couple more pictures to



Jason Giorgi

Wednesday-Line Dance Lessons at 7:00 with Gail McKenna
Friday - Line Dance Lessons at 7:00 with Gail McKenna
Cat Country Dance Party Night Every Friday
Saturday - Line Dance Lessons at 7:00 with Gail McKenna



**Wednesdays, Fridays
& Saturdays
Gail McKenna**



Side - Bar
Comments

Club Hours

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

**MARDI
GRAS**

1500 Oaklawn Ave.
Cranston, RI
(401) 463-3080

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



Quick Quick... Slow Slow



Diamond Rodeo Newsletter - Editor, Layout & Photos: Michael Ponte
Co-editor: Joe Macera
Writer, Columnist: Rita Polce

**March
2003**

interview | links
biography | reviews
**THE DAY I TURNED
UNCOOL**



Tad Lemire

For years I've been talking on the radio about how heavy I am. And I was. Back in the day, people used to run and hide when they saw me going for the "Steamship Round Buffet" on Sunday nights. In fact, I believe I could perhaps be the reason they shut that whole deal down! Well, then I lost a few pounds. Of course, the best part about being a few pounds lighter is that I love it when people come up to me and say "Wow... you're not NEARLY as big as I had pictured!" Let me tell you, there's no better feeling in the world. The other thing people have said to me in the past is "Wow...you're not NEARLY as OLD as I thought you were!" Believe me, as much as people like being told they're thinner, they LOVE hearing how young they are!

But the problem I've recently encountered is I'm no longer hearing this as often as I would like. I've also noticed, that it's not just that I'm not hearing it anymore. I'm not feeling it either. I'm 1/2 way into my 30th year. I'm entering the phase of my life that I'm afraid I will look back on as "the beginning of the end." I got a book from a friend for Christmas this year. It's called "The Day I Turned Uncool: Confessions of a Reluctant Grown-up." The author, Dan Zevin, talks about all the signs of aging. The day we take a new interest in Lawn Care; the day we order sauvignon blanc instead of Rolling Rock; the day we became attached to a major home appliance. The list goes on and on. Getting older isn't easy. Last weekend I went to the nightclub "The Living Room" in Providence to take in "Max Creek," a band that was big when I was in high school. I actually found myself standing at the bar contemplating whether or not it would be appropriate to ask the bartender to TURN UP THE HEAT! Most people would be shy about asking for a complex beverage. Not me. The cold was making my joints sore! In addition, it should be noted that after several hours of live music, I was exhausted. I figured the place was about to close, so we decided to leave. On the way home I looked at the clock. It was 11:50. Not only did I not close the place, I was sound asleep before the musical guest played their

first song on Saturday Night Live. I have a few more of my own confessions: I recently went on-line and voted in the comedy competition on "Star Search!" Had it not been for the "storm of 2003," I would have gone to a "Joe Bachelor Party!" What is wrong with me? I own a bread machine for crying out loud. It's not funny. If you've been through it, you know what I'm talking about. You should read the book. If you've ever been reluctant to do the "Tush Push" for fear you might pull something, or if you're appalled at the sexual activity "these kids" are engaging in when they play that song "Steam," then you should read this book. Most of all, if you find yourself reminiscing about "the good old days" when they used to have the "Steamship Round Buffet," then run on down to Barnes and Noble and pick it up. Actually, come to think of it, you better drive...it's much safer that way. If you're not 100% sure whether or not you've yet entered the "age of uncool," take a quick walk up to the Monkey Bar. Go on out onto the dance floor and do your thing. If you've made it long enough to dance through one song without getting weird looks, then relax. You've still got it, Bunky. But if you begin complaining about how loud and smoky it is before you even get a chance to break into your version of the Macarena, all I've got to say is: "Welcome

to the club!" I'm expecting the mid-life crisis is just around the corner for me. So when you see me this summer trying to get my big ole carcass up onto the mechanical bull, please do me a favor and tell me how young I look! Thanks.

Tad Lemire



Wayne Learned

When Joe approached me and asked if I would be interested in writing something for the newsletter I wasn't sure what to write about. Everyone that knows me knows how much I love Mardi Gras! Some friends of mine told me about the Diamond Rodeo 2 years ago last September. I had already been doing country dancing for about 5 years and was going through a divorce and needed a country bar where I wouldn't be running into my Ex. Being from the north shore of Massachusetts I knew I would never run into her in RI. I also moved closer to RI at that time so Mardi Gras was perfect for me. The crowd here really welcomed me, as I find common in just about every country bar I've ever set foot in.

As the number of friends that I have at Mardi Gras has grown, so has the number of

people that ask me about my cowboy boots. Chris and I often check out each other's boots upon arrival! Some have noticed that it seems like I wear a different pair every night I'm there! Well, that's not too far from true. My hobby is collecting cowboy boots. I am currently the largest collector in New England with 92 pairs. Although there is a guy in Riverside RI with about 60 pairs catching up on me fast! And a guy in Texas with over 1000 pairs that I know I will never catch up with! There are about 20 of us collectors that I know about.

When I first started dancing, my instructor really stressed getting a pair of boots to all that were in her class. She was preaching to the choir in my case, but I agree with her 100%. Dancing is much easier with a smooth leather sole and a solid heel than some of the footwear that is so common today. How anyone can do a shuffle with vibram soled work boots, platform high heels, or "sketchers" is beyond my comprehension! Boots also give good support to the ankles for all those quick changes in direction. And a boot that fits you properly will be more comfortable than a pair of sneakers. And if cared for, a good pair of boots will last you 50 years! I can't say that for any sneakers or shoes I ever owned!

Dancing being my second passion is what keeps me coming back to the Diamond Rodeo every night they are open. I'm always willing to help anyone learn a dance if I know it because I've seen a couple of the country bars in Mass that I used to dance in close down due to lack of business. I feel that I must do whatever I can to make sure that newcomers learn some dances so that they will know how fun country dancing is. A good steady customer base is what

keeps any bar going. And the more people that join the fun of country dancing, the more fun it is for all of us!

If you need any help learning a dance, or ever want to know anything about boots, just come on over and ask me. So put your boots on (or go get some if you don't have any) and get out on that floor!

Wayne Learned



Bubba

With all the snow lately I'm sure everyone has the same thing on their collective minds as I do. Fishing right? Well if you don't you ought to because it's just around the corner. Some of you who know me, know I love to fish, live to fish, same thing. I don't think there is any better way to commune with nature than to sit on the shore of a lake under a tree and pretend to fish. Some folks like to bring along a cooler, a chair, a book, loved ones, and or your best dog. What ever your particular strategy is I'm sure it will work. I know this may seem hard to believe but there are people out there who actually don't enjoy fishing, These next few words is for them.

ARE YOU NUTS OR WHAT?

What could be better than getting up before the sun, meeting your buddies for a real early breakfast, laughing at them because they're still dead drunk from the night before, piling into the truck and going fishing. All right maybe five or six naked women going along would be better, but that's another tale. Opening day is coming up pretty soon so go in the cellar, get your fishing gear ready, and wait at the door. I always loved opening day. Not so much for the actual fishing, but the brotherhood of the event. There are always the old buddies that have fished together for years, or the father and son's first trip together. How about the poor husband, who's wife just had to come along and ruin it for him. You can actually see the look of disgust as she shows off her fish and they're all bigger than his. Then the older crowd who are the solitary fishermen who wouldn't say shit if they had a mouthful. There is always something special to bring home from opening day, the sunrise, the ducks, the drunk bastard falling out of his boat, young boys and girls catching their first trout. My favorite opening day is always the next one. Because I can't wait to see what happens next year. One opening day it snowed and I got hypothermia so bad I had to strip off my clothes and sit in the truck while the stuff dried out. Of course I went right back fishing. Once my brother, sister, and I caught a whole bunch of fish and went right home to cook them. Then there was the time with Tad. He couldn't catch a fish if it was tied to his toe. He sang George Jones songs so often that the guys in other boats were asking for requests. He obliged them needless to say. He

wasn't catching any fish so he might as well sing. All the opening days have been memorable. Fishing is much more than just catching fish. It's being outside with friends or enjoying the solitude of a beautiful fishing hole known only to a select few that are brave enough to traverse the five miles thorough snake infested waters. Sitting on the boat while the sun comes up or goes down is always a favorite. Anyway, it's time to go. My gear needs to be cleaned and ready. If you haven't gone, try it. If you do go, bring a friend, brother, sister, or child who's never been before. Remember, it just for fun and there aint nothing better than fresh fish on the barbeque.

Bubba



C. J. Evans

Y - Dance?

Y - Knot Dance?

Myself, I'm here to wake the Living Dancing Dead, those people, who make dancing about as fun as waiting for the snow to melt on the windshield of your car before deciding, duh, maybe I'll use the scraper, cause it just ain't gonna happen. If your having fun dancing show it, share it. If your not having fun, perhaps you've been married just a little bit to long. Just kidding about marriage, it is a great institution. Why I have been institutionalized twice, I just can't seem to finish my sentence.

Well either through attraction, photosynthesis, or osmosis I have become part of this Mardi Gras crowd. Y? Possibly because I guess every Rodeo Circus needs a clown. That's right, C.J Evans, a legend in his own mind, a 50 year old postal employee who dances with the atomic nuclear enthusiasm of a 25 year old male stranded in an elevator with the entire Miss America Pageant during the swimsuit competition.

My name is Christos Joseph EVAngeloS, but prefer being called C.J. I know exactly what Johnny Cash meant when he sang about a boy named Sue. Some names are just tougher to go through life with!

I started dancing about a year and ten months ago, because of my Big Fat Greek Divorce therapy. Oh, like I'm the only one. My life is an open book that no one in his or her right mind would want to read.

It's strange, I can look at any couple and see whether a divorce is coming or country mile away, but when my emotions are involved I wear horse blinders waiting to be led to the glue factory for the emotional bankruptcy slaughter. So, now women are probably saying, "were there actually two women on this planet who said I do, to this guy?" Now guys are saying, "Take him out back, hose him down, give him his last meal and shoot him."

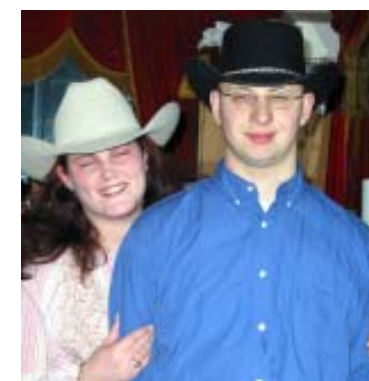
So what am I saying? If you can't laugh at yourself you don't deserve to laugh at anyone else's misfortunes. I just like to make people laugh and have fun with these dances, even if it is at my own expense. I'm use to it, I'm a mailman, I've been psychologically beaten by the stupidity I have seen in the Post Office for 26 years. Yes,

loony as a gooney of the non-violent variety, not disgruntled, just maybe a smidgen of Cranky Yankee. Besides dancing is a lot cheaper than sitting on some yuppie shrink's couch.

Now let me get this straight, are we talking cowboys and cowgirls in Rhode Island? Ya, you gotta be bent. Yes, it is amazing to watch the puenominum of people from all walks of life walk through the doors of the Diamond Rodeo saloon and be magically transformed into urban country line dancers and Two Steppers. It can and does happen because country dancing is a state of mind, you get back what you put into it. Now that certainly is better than a state of depression, a state of aggravation, a state of confusion, like when the dance is so old and no one remembers it. Everyone looks at the D.J. to see if it was some kind of joke.

Fat Chance! Welcome to my big fat Greek nightmare. You've opened up a pandora's box, Joe, I've got more to spit like Greeks do, But not now. To be Continued: Cut to the Real Reason. I truly Salute all you people who dance, keep the faith, and God Bless U.

C.J. Evans



Valentines Day

