

A DECEMBER TO REMEMBER

December was a great month at the Diamond Rodeo! We got a visit from Joe Schutt, who was my first country line dance teacher, eleven years ago. (Time flies when you're having fun!) I asked Joe to dance a few partner dances with me, and while he pretended at first that he couldn't remember them, we danced and he didn't miss a single step! It was so great to see him. He taught me more dances than I can remember.



Cindy Sebetes

December was also great for Bill O'Brien. On one Friday night, he actually got "end of dance" twice in a row! Bill always brings life to the dance floor. Although I used to sometimes get annoyed by all his "whoo!"s, I have to admit that when he's not there, it's like something important is missing! It's just not the same without him on the dance floor. Keep coming, Bill!
 Finally, December was wonderful because of the annual Christmas party. As usual, there was great food and dancing. But, this year, we all had the opportunity to help our troops. What a good feeling that was. I'm so glad I could be a part of it. Thanks so much to Jo-Ann, John, Mike and Peter for organizing it. You guys are awesome!

Cindy Sebetes



<p>Line Dance Lessons Wednesdays 7:00 - 8:00</p>		<p>Wayne Learned</p>
<p>Two Step Lessons Thursdays 7:00 - 7:30</p>		<p>Joe Macera</p>
<p>Line Dance Lessons Thursdays 7:30 - 9:00</p>		<p>Mike Camra</p>
<p>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</p>		<p>Fridays & Saturdays Gail McKenna</p>



Side - Bar Comments

Club Hours

Wednesday 7 PM - 1 AM
 Thursday 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 and Saturdays
 Free Line Dance Lessons
 Fri - Gail McKenna
 Wed - Wayne Learned 7 - 8 PM
 Thursday
 Two Step Lessons 7:00 - 7:30 with Joe Macera
 Line Dance Lessons with Mike Camra 7:30 - 9:00
 Karaoke from 9:00 - 11:00

This newsletter can be viewed on line at www.mikeponte.com



Quick Quick... Slow Slow



Diamond Rodeo Newsletter - Editor, Layout & Photos: Michael Ponte
 Co-editor: Cindy Sebetes Facilitator: Joe Macera

February 2005

GUNS & DOZERS

I was recently asked to write an article for the Diamond Rodeo newsletter. I rarely share personal stories regarding the radio station and artist visits, but I figured this would make for an entertaining piece that you all would enjoy. While in Nashville a few years ago at the annual Country Radio Seminar I attend, I had the invitation to go out to Aaron Tippin's property for an event called "guns and dozers." True to its title, we arrived at his property and there was a whole range area set up. Aaron has his own gun shop and is friends with



**Sam Stevens
WCTK -**

many men who work for the Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms division. They volunteered their time to keep the event safe as there were many radio people who have never handled a gun before (definitely not a problem here). You name it, they had it: revolvers, pistols, shotguns and rifles. I was absolutely ecstatic about being able to target shoot all day long. Many people who have never handled a firearm before came out of it appreciating how to use one properly and safely (and let's face it, target shooting is a blast).

Sam Stevens

WE'RE HOOKED

BY Karen Collins and Roger Wilson



Karen Collins

Roger and I are from Franklin, MA which is about 40 minutes North of Cranston. Roger is a self-employed tile setter and I teach English and History at Dean College, in Franklin. We were first introduced to the Diamond Rodeo, 3 months ago, by Roger's older brother, Rick. Both Roger and I had never done any line dancing at all and Rick was always trying to persuade us to learn. He'd been going to the Diamond Rodeo for about 5 years. We went one Friday night to watch people dance, and of course, the rest is "history".



Roger Wilson

Our first line dancing experience was with Wayne at Rick's house, in Hopedale, MA. Wayne would come over every Monday night to show us some of the line dances. We'd dance in the barn, because there was always plenty of room there. Even the horses enjoyed the country music. Finally, Wayne mentioned he'd be teaching, beginner lessons on Wednesday nights, at the club, and encouraged us to try his class. We were hooked, after one lesson, and eventually found ourselves driving 40 minutes from our house in Franklin, MA just to line dance with Wayne. We love Wayne's class because it's TRULY geared for beginners. He breaks everything down, step by step, as all the instructors do, but his class really lays the groundwork. Eventually, you feel confident enough to move up to the intermediate and advanced classes, taught by Mike and Gail. We always tell people that Wayne's class gives you your "C" legs. (C as in COUNTRY) Lately, we've observed many new people coming into the club, on a weekend night and almost immediately become both frustrated and discouraged because they cannot grasp the steps. Therefore, we strongly encourage any newcomers to take Wayne's Wednesday night class.

After about 2 months, Roger and I mustered up the courage (thanks to Wayne) to attend Joe's two-step class as well as Mike's intermediate class on Thursday nights. We continued with Wayne's class, and still do, but wanted to challenge ourselves a little further. Mike's class can be tough, but if you are consistent and attend his class on a weekly basis, you'll pick up the steps. Also, Mike is very easy to follow because his steps are so precise. If you watch Mike's feet, you'll see how he defines every step in the dance, whether he's teaching or just out there having fun. You definitely have to be fully invested if you want to learn to line dance. You can't just go on a weekend night and expect to pick up the dances easily. Some of them are as difficult as oth-

ers are easy. The lessons are well worth it and they help boost confidence.

If you watch closely, you'll notice that if the instructors are out on the dance floor and see someone new, struggling to learn the steps, they'll move next to that person and point out the direction or call the steps to that person. Even if they are not on the floor and see a person struggling, they will get out there just to help. And if they are out there adding their own flair to a dance, they'll immediately revert to the basics for any new person who is out there trying to learn. They are all extremely competent and professional.

Joe's class is fun and takes a lot of practice and commitment if you really want to learn to properly two-step. Joe is a great instructor/dancer and has a lot of patience with newcomers. He makes you feel very comfortable, always providing the kindest, most encouraging comments. Roger and I are still very rusty with the two-step and are always a little apprehensive about two-stepping on a weekend night because we don't want to get in the way of other couples. We both feel that the two-step is the most intimidating. However, many of the couples have incredible patience with the new dancers. I love dancing with Joe and Roger and I always look forward to his Thursday night lesson.

Just 3 weeks ago, we began taking Gail's class on Friday night, at 7:30. It's definitely challenging, but also a lot of fun. There have been times when I've wanted to exit the dance floor because I felt as though I had 2 left feet, but I hung in there. Although Gail's class is advanced, she is very good about stopping mid-stream to make sure everyone has the steps.

Finally, Roger and I can't say enough about the people at the Diamond Rodeo. We have met so many wonderful people and have made many new friends. We always look forward to our nights there. Also, most of the people are great about helping you out on the dance floor. The Diamond Rodeo has definitely become our "home away from

home."



ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT DANCING

I began dancing at the Diamond Rodeo last September. My daughter Stacy and her friend Suzie go every week and they thought it would be a good idea for me to get out and meet people. It was so much fun to be around people who were so enthusiastic about dancing. In fact, they are the best bunch of people, ever. I immediately felt comfortable around everyone. After losing my husband last



Jane Melanson

March and feeling so lonely and depressed, I decided to get off my butt and make some changes in my life. I knew I needed to be around people who were upbeat and fun loving and The Diamond Rodeo was just the place.

It was there I met Wayne, one of the instructors. Wayne was the first person to introduce himself. He was so kind and was very helpful to me and others who were trying to learn the basic steps of line dancing. I asked Wayne if he wouldn't mind coming to my house in Hopedale, MA, to teach a group of my friends and I some of the dances. Soon after, Wayne was teaching some of the beginner

dances in the barn, on Monday nights. My horses loved the music and enjoyed watching all of us dance. It was a riot.

Finally, when it got too cold in the barn, Wayne convinced us to come to the club on Wednesday's for his beginner classes. I haven't been able to stay away since. Wayne's a great instructor and has a great personality. He always makes the effort to ask people to two-step, even if they know nothing about it. He's wonderful about offering encouragement and promoting confidence. He doesn't care if you have 2 left feet. He'll still take you out there and make you feel like you've been two stepping all your life. On occasion, I will miss a Wednesday night, because the horses are my primary concern and they require a lot of attention. If anyone is ever in the area of Hopedale, feel free to visit Lazy Horse Acres and I'll be happy to show you around. We have very beautiful and fun loving horses here as well as 10 goats. In fact, 2 of the goats, Jingles and Belle are still babies.

I try to make it to Mike Camara's intermediate classes, on Thursdays. Mike is a great instructor and he takes the time with you to make sure you have all the steps. In fact, Mike and Wayne are so good about helping you on the floor (when they're not even teaching) if you are not sure of the steps. It's amazing how they can find you, out there in the middle of the dance floor, floundering. At one point, I was flanked by Wayne and Mike and it was a riot. The two of them were making sure I had the dance down pat. haha They have to be the two best instructors I've ever had the pleasure of knowing.

Another person who has been a true "guardian angel" to me is Pete DiBiase. I don't know where this guy came from but he is a great guy. There's not a woman who sits idle in that place when he's around. Pete will take ALL the girls onto the floor. He always makes certain that EVERYONE has the opportunity to enjoy line dancing, regardless of their size, inner/

outer beauty, or talent of dance. He's just an all around nice person. He always takes the time to greet everyone, when he comes into the club, after work. I can never forget his kindness and will always treasure his friendship.

Finally, nothing beats being able to check Mike Ponte's website to view all the fabulous pictures of the night. He and Bill O'Brien are awesome about taking their personal time out to snap photos of all the dancers. I'm sure it must be costly and time consuming for both of them to do this. Let me tell you, it's much appreciated by myself and others.

I will continue to come to the Diamond Rodeo as long as it stays open. I'M THERE! Thank you to everyone who, without knowing, has helped me through a very difficult time in my personal life. I look forward to many more fun nights at the Diamond Rodeo. Thanks to JR and Pauly and Walter for all your efforts in keeping the club safe and more importantly, OPEN!!!

Jane Melanson

Thanks for the kind words
Mike Ponte



Hi everyone, on behalf of myself, John, Peter and Mike, I would like to thank everyone for their donations and contributions to the troop fund-raiser we held at the Diamond Rodeo during the Christmas party. You will be happy to know that we were able to raise over \$600., exclusive of other gifts (Cat Country donated CD's, oth-

ers donated games, warmers, magazines, etc.)

Peter and I went out shopping and we were able to hit a tremendous bargain which helped incredibly. We went to Target and bought the high quality thermal tops and bottoms, (which were on sale for half price), plus some lounge pants for the guys to be able to use to either keep warm or hang in (also at 50% off). Then when we got to the register, we were able to open a Target charge just for this one purchase, received an additional 10% off the purchase, and they matched the purchase amount with a donation to the Tsunami Relief Effort that day (it was a one day promotion they were running that we managed to get purely by accident). So we not only were able to get more for our money with the discounts, but were able to help the Tsunami victims as well.

We then went and bought some Red Sox and Patriots Merchandise to include in the package (t-shirts, banners, etc.) - go New England - and send some additional games (ex: cribbage, texas hold-em, things like that).

I picked up some international phone cards (so they can call home) and flea collars (for their boots to keep the sand fleas off them) as well to include in the packages, and John has mailed them to Pedro and his troop. Thank you all again for your generous support. We couldn't have done it without you. God Bless you all.

Jo-Ann Sagat

It's February and that means the days are getting longer. Hey, has anyone seen this guy?



Bill's Corner



William H. O'Brien III



This is Walter. You will know it's him because he is the only bouncer that wears blue shorts and a patriotic shirt. Walter uses one eye to look at woman while the other eye seeks out trouble of any kind. We appreciate the fact that Walter and his troop of bouncers are protecting us. They swarm the place along with the Cranston Police Dept. Walter is a warm and friendly guy and loves to have fun with us. So the next time you see him, shake his hand and tell him he looks good in those shorts.

Talk about rustic camping, We are in an area were our cell phones won't work



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