

music as a teenager, joining a rock & roll garage band. After his high-school graduation in the late '60s, Strait enrolled in college but soon dropped out and eloped with his high school sweetheart, Norma. In 1971, Strait enlisted in the Army; two years later, he was stationed Hawaii. While in Hawaii, he began playing country music, initially with an Army-sponsored country band called Rambling Country. They played several dates off the base under the name Santee. Strait left the Army in 1975, returning to Texas with the intent of completing his education. He enrolled in Southwest Texas State University at San Marcos, where he studied agriculture. While he was studying, he formed his own country band, Ace in the Hole. Strait's first single was released in the spring of 1981, and reached the top ten. His 1982 offering "Fool Hearted Memory" was his first number-one single, and since then he has had an amazing string of chart successes, including more than 30 number-one country singles. Every album he has released since 1981's Strait Country (more than 20 in all) has been certified gold or platinum. He holds many concert box-office records, having mounted some of the most successful United States concert tours in the 1980s and 1990s. In 1992, he made his silver screen debut with a starring role in a film called Pure Country. In 1995, MCA released a four-disc career retrospective called Strait out of the Box, which became one of the best-selling box sets in country-music history. You may have heard our awesome DJ's play "The Fireman", for two-stepping purposes. Here are the lyrics, in case you've been humming it in your head but have some blank spaces. (I'll make this a regular feature in this column, and if there is a particular line or partner dance done at Diamond Rodeo to go with it, I'll give you the step sheet, too.) And

oh yes, my personal request to our DJ's....how about playing MORE GEORGE? Pleeeeease???

"The Fireman"
Album: Does Fort Worth Ever Cross Your Mind

Well they call me the fireman, That's my name,
Making my rounds all over town
Putting out old flames.
Well everybody like to have a what I got,
I can cool 'em down when they're smouldering hot
I'm the fireman, That's my name.
1st Verse:
Last night they had a bad one
A mile or two down the road,
Well my buddy walked out
And left his woman burning out of control.
Well I was down there in about a hour or so,
With a little mouth to mouth she was ready to go
I'm the fireman, That's my name.

2nd Verse:
I got a fire engine red T-bird automobile,
In a minute or less I can be dressed fit to kill.
I work twenty-four on and twenty-four off,
When they get too hot they just give me a call
I'm the fireman, That's my name.
"I've never been one to set a lot of goals for myself, but I've always been really motivated to improve on what I've done. I look forward to the future and what it will bring. I'm sure it will be challenging and fun." ~~~G.S.

GIIVEN NAME : George Strait
BORN: May 18, 1952, Poteet, Texas
FAMILY: Wife - Norma / Son - George, Jr. "Bubba"
VITAL STATISTICS: Height: 5'10"
Weight: 160 lbs.
INSTRUMENT: Guitar / Piano
HOBBIES: Steer-roping, Hunting, Fishing, Skiing, Golf
FAN CLUB:
George Strait Fan Club
P.O. Box 2119
Hendersonville, TN 37077
(615) 824-7176



All of the other reindeer used to laugh and call him names...

Line Dance Lessons
Wednesdays & Thursdays
7:00 - 8:00



Wayne Learned

Two Step Lessons
Thursdays
7:00 - 7:30



Joe Macera

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



Fridays & Saturdays
Gail McKenna



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 Wayne Learned 7:30 - 9:00

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



Quick Quick... Slow Slow



Editor, Layout & Photos: Michael Ponte. Co-Editor Cindy Sebetes
Facilitator: Joe Macera - Contributors: Al Foster, Bill O'Brien, Esther Scittarelli
December 2006

The Newcomer

I felt awkward just standing there, waiting for the lessons to start. I'm a runner at heart, sporting my sneakers on the hardwood dance floor, but looking around at everyone else made me think I should look into getting a pair of boots. When the lessons began, Wayne introduced himself and asked if there were any first-timers. Of course, I just had to red-flag myself by raising my hand. I felt like such a goof, but I tried my hardest to push that feeling aside. The other girls danced so well, and I knew I could do it, too.



Marie Cespedes

Wayne was teaching "Diamond City" that night. He apologized in advance to us newcomers, because "Diamond City" is full of syncopated steps and fancy footwork, but he told us to just go for it and have fun. I was already there, so I figured I might as well try. Wayne wore a wireless mike to call out those tricky steps. He broke it all down, adding sections a little bit at a time, until we got all four walls down. Then came a practice song, which was followed by the real

deal, "Comin' to Your City" by Big & Rich. Learning the dance really wasn't so bad, because everyone was friendly and helped out along the way. No one makes you feel like a jerk for messing up, either. People don't want you to mess up. They want you to get it. They want you to have fun. When the lesson was over, I flew out the door, straight home, and for the next week, I lived, breathed, ate, and slept "Diamond City". Luckily, I had the Big & Rich CD to practice to! By the following Wednesday, I knew both the song and the dance by heart. This time I stuck around after the lessons, and I met some of the "regulars". Everyone is so open and friendly. Just striking up a conversation with someone can lead to an instant friendship. That's exactly what happened with Joe Macera. I gabbed on and on about how I've only been listening to country music for a month but how I'm hooked and I love the dancing. Joe was instantly encouraging. He gave me newsletters to read, invited me back for Two-steppin' lessons, and introduced me to his friends. I feel pretty lucky to have met him. He took me under his wing and made me feel like part of the Diamond Rodeo family. He even taught me a few couples' dances so I wouldn't feel left out! I took my newsletters home, and I was surprised when reading Marlena's article "Always Wanted to be a Cowgirl". I could relate to a lot of

what she wrote. She's been line dancing for just over a year... I wondered, a year from now, could I be as good a dancer as she is? She's a role model without even knowing it! So, I figured I'd gather these thoughts and write about my first impressions of the Diamond Rodeo. Here's to all the newcomers, in hopes that you'll become "regulars" as quickly as I did!

Marie Céspedes



The Country Girl In Me

Talk about mid-life crisis. One day last winter, when my life was falling apart around my family and me I realized I'd spent my whole life doing for others. I started remembering my Dad singing old Country Western music and playing those tunes on Sunday mornings on the stereo. He would sing those songs for my Mom who he loves dearly. Every time there was a family gathering you would see the love and togetherness they alone shared when we, their children, saw them dancing. I always wanted that kind of love in my life.

To make a long story short, I simply changed my tune and started listening to CAT Country on the radio. My heart just lifted as I started just feeling the music. Then a friend mentioned a place called Mardi Gras and that maybe I could go there and start doing some-

thing for myself. Since I'm a nester and never had much of a childhood or social life I was afraid but went anyway. Amazing. It was like AHHHHH, a place in this world for just me, like the first time going to the carnival, Like Wow. This is my childhood playground. The people at the Diamond Rodeo are my childhood friends now. It's 2 whole chapters of my life that were missing and somehow the gap was being filled in

I've been going to the diamond rodeo 1 or 2 times a week now and my heart still just leaps out of my chest sometimes as I feel like the little girl in me gets to come back out and play again.

CINDY L. GAGNON

First Impression

The anniversary of my first year at the Diamond Rodeo is December second. I want to start by thanking all of you, up front, because I tend to go on a bit. You've been a warm and welcoming family and I'm grateful for the great experience of having spent the last year with you all. I'd like to share with you my first impression.



Ernie Levesque

My niece Michelle Littlefield had been after me for years to come to "Mardi Gras". If you know Michelle, then you know that while "no" is in her vocabulary, it is generally reserved for her. You can say "no" but it is

at best a delaying tactic. Last Thanksgiving, I acquiesced and agreed to "follow" her up. We rolled in about 9:30. The energy in the place was palpable. I think it actually scared me for a second. It was that feeling you get just before a riot breaks out. The feeling passed as quickly as it came. The passing was due in large part to the fact that everyone seemed to be having such a good time. I was in awe of it. There was no rest. The music was nearly non-stop and the dances... The dances were all different. How could that be? I was doing a mental calculation and I came up with about 80 different dances every evening: That couldn't be right?! The truth is that it is probably around 50, and that is just amazing.

The dancing was so unique. It was a precision chaos. It had all the interest of a Rube Goldberg machine. All the parts are moving toward some ultimate goal but every once in a while one of the parts does something ad hoc and improvises. People expressing their personality in dance! The night goes on like that. And just when I think I can't be surprised any more; the DJ announces Renegade! Has a dance ever had a name that expresses itself that well? I watch as it starts. They dance to the left and twirl to the right. They reverse and switch sides; they reverse and switch sides again. They stomp and whoop. What happens next is so fast I'm not sure that it really happened. It appeared that all of the women went against the line of dance and ended up with new partners. I don't know anyone well enough to tell by who is now dancing with who, but sure enough after the next set of stomps and whoops, they do it again and again! As the song ends another is mixed in. The new song is faster. The

stomps are louder. The whoops are longer. The smiles are broader. It's intoxicating! Finally, when it ends, I find that even though I haven't danced a step, I am out of breath. There is sweat on my forehead! And all I can think is: "I have to learn that dance!". I did learn that dance and a few others. The intensity that was once unnerving is like an addiction. I find that I long to come back and despair at the end of the evening. If you made it this far then, thanks again; for reading, and for being a part of such a wonderful experience.

"We raise up our glasses against evil forces.". Here is to year two.

SHOULD I WARM UP BEFORE DANCING?

Sure you should, muscles can be cold and tight and injured easily if not careful. Five minutes of stretching should be enough. Its very easy to hurt a shoulder joint on ladies and gentlemen when leading a partner. Even knees and hips due to wrong turns or wrong shoes on the floor (sneakers).



Al Foster

Be careful with your body, it only takes a minute or two to prepare for a night of dancing. I'm sure there has been plenty of times the next day when we have said "man, I'm sore today, I danced a lot last night."

Al Foster

Soptlight on Dance Excellence!

They are great to watch..these two..week after week! Their expertise at technique and smooth as silk two step moves tell us they are well syncranized together..A pleasure to watch..even if you don't dance yourself.



Esther Scittarelli

Two steppin' performed with impeccable style. Totally unaware of the impact had on onlookers at the ease at which they perform their fluid moves..an act hard to follow. Their west coast swing syncopations are equally impressive! Don't even know their names for certain..Just know they are no novice act when it comes to dance eloquence. A great and well matched couple, too! Perhaps that's the trick! At any rate spot light on these two great dancers who together could win a competition hands down.



eachother..as much as we onlookers enjoy watching your dance excellence!"

Esther Scittarelli

Country Music Profiles

(I'll be contributing to the newsletter from time to time, profiling some of country's best artists. You dance to their music, so you might like to learn a little about them....)



Gloria Tetu

The King of Country Music George Strait. Who better to begin with than the best? His live shows are hailed by critics and fans alike. With 53 Number One songs (Billboard's all-time leader for number one country singles) and 74 Top 10 and 78 Top 20 hits, George might just miss a favorite or two. George has sold more than 62 million records. He has 26 different platinum or multi-platinum albums. George Strait has more #1 songs than any other single artist in history (including Elvis). Country superstar Strait is the newest inductee into Nashville, Tennessee's Country Music Hall Of Fame. Strait's induction, in a category for artists who achieved national prominence between

1975 and the present day, will be his second. Out of all the new country singers to emerge in the early '80s, George Strait stayed the closest



George Strait

est to traditional country. Drawing from both the honky tonk and Western swing traditions, Strait he revitalized them for a new generation. In the process, he became one of the most popular and influential singers of our time, sparking a wave of neo-traditionalist singers such as Dwight Yoakam, Clint Black, Garth Brooks and Alan Jackson.

Strait was born and raised in Texas, the son of a junior high school teacher who also owned and operated a ranch that had been in the Strait family for nearly hundred years. When George was a child, his mother left the family, taking her daughter but leaving behind her sons with the father. During his childhood, he would spend his weekdays in town and his weekends on the ranch. Strait began playing

Continued on page 4

Bill's Corner



William H. O'Brien III

Merry Christmas, Happy New Year to all, It's that time of year where we either tell Santa in an email or go sit on his lap and tell him what we need. We get into a

"Festivus" mood with family and friends. We get very happy at this time of year and that's a very good thing. We think about the New Year, 2007, we think about what we want to change or keep in our lives as the New Year approaches. My web site has changed; you can find me and all of my club photos at www.w1pro.com .

See you on the dance floor.....next to me!

"End of Dance"

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