

## OKLAHOMA CITY SWING DANCE CLUB

# DOWN BEAT CONNECTIONS

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July-September 2008

### *Mad Hatter Theory of Dance Lessons*

*By Skip Culiver*

"Take some more tea," the March Hare said to Alice, very earnestly. "I've had nothing yet," Alice replied in an offended tone, "so I can't take more." "You mean you can't take less," said the Hatter: "It's very easy to take more than nothing." Alice's Adventures in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll

I remember being struck by the scene in Alice's Adventures in Wonderland in which Alice is offended because she is offered tea but is given none - even though she hadn't asked for tea in the first place. So she helps herself to the tea, the bread and the butter. From my perspective as a dance instructor, I believe that the best way for a person to become a good dancer is to listen to Alice when she says, "...I can't take more" because "I've had nothing yet." The Hatter would have us believe that "you can't take less"; however, that is exactly what many dancers do when they are motivated by the promise of accelerated proficiency, into taking more advanced classes before they have a sufficient mastery of the basics to assimilate the new information. In this "terpsichorean reversal," these underprepared dancers work harder and learn less!

Matt Auclair, a six-time National Swing Dance Champion and one of St. Louis' foremost instructors says, "it is not uncommon for an enthusiastic, new swing dancer, who is continually exposed to more accomplished dancers at different club activities, to begin taking Intermediate level dance classes before he or she is ready; and then, to become a less competent dancer as a result. Over the years, I have found that the dancers who learn Imperial Swing the fastest are not the impulsive ones who take self-directed shortcuts in their training; instead, they are the disciplined ones who practice regularly to become proficient with the basics before they attempt to learn more challenging dance moves." Auclair concludes, "the time that these dancers initially spend on practicing the fundamentals invariably pays off as an investment in time saved in the future because their progression into more advanced training is much less likely to 'plateau' for deficiencies in their understanding of the Basics."

It may very well be true, as the Mad Hatter says, that in the topsy-turvy world of Wonderland, "if you can't take less," then "it's very easy to take more than nothing"; however, we do not live in Wonderland! In our realm above that netherworld, where we can easily "take less" unintentionally, I imagine that the Hatter might say, "it's not very easy to take more than nothing!" I asked Matt if he had any final thoughts on this "Hatter" (pun intended). After giving me one of his exasperated "no more questions" looks, he said, "Skip, I really don't like to drink tea very much (except for Crystal\* Light, of course); I think about rabbits only on Easter; and besides, who ever said that learning to swing dance is easy!"

\*Note: Matt's wife is named Crystal.

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Henry H. "Skip" Culver, Jr. is a member of the West County Swing Dance Club in St. Louis Missouri. He is a Gold Seal Instrument Flight Instructor and the author of the bestselling book on navigation titled: IFR 'Pocket Simulator' Procedures. In 2000 Skip turned his attention from aviation towards the dance floor. He became a Certified Swing Dance Instructor in 2004, and then with over seven years of detailed notes from various classes and workshops in hand, he began assembling the Imperial Swing Dancing manual which he published in June of 2007. Skip is a frequent contributor of articles on swing dancing to different club newsletters throughout the United States.

# Club Events

## CLUB DECORATING 10:00PM

**Saturday July 5th, August 2nd, & September 6th**

Help decorate your club for the next months theme! We begin decorating at 10:00 am.

## PRACTICE PARTIES 8:00PM

**Friday, July 11th & 25th, August 8th & 22nd, and September 12th & 25th**

Get that extra practice at the OKC Swing Dance Club practice parties. The party starts at 8pm! All levels are welcomed and encouraged. *The Last Friday Practice party of the month is bring a guest night!!!*

## SWING DANCE BIRTHDAY PARTIES 8:00PM

**Saturday July 19th, August 16th, and September 20th**

Birthday Parties are THEME parties. Contact Mickey O'Dell for the appropriate theme of the month! We will have a cake to celebrate the monthly birthdays. We encourage everyone to bring a snack to share! The cost is \$5.00 unless it is your birthday month and you plan to dance in the birthday dance!

## SWING CLUB HOSTING BALLROOM MIXERS! 8:00PM

**Saturday July 26th, August 23rd, and September 27th**

No partner? Not to worry! We will have plenty of people to dance with. The cost is \$10.00 and wine and cheese will be served. No Jeans allowed!

## DANCE NIGHTS OUT

### Wednesdays

Join us at Friends. 3705 West Memorial (*located on the Northwest corner of Portland and Memorial in the shopping center*) for an evening of dancing. Guaranteed swing music from 7-9 pm. NO COVER!

### Thursdays

Head to Chisholm's at the Biltmore Hotel (*located at 401 S. Meridian Ave, OKC*). Swing music from 7-9pm. NO COVER! Great Music played by one of our club members, Stuart!!

## MONTHLY PATTERN DVD'S

Sign up now to receive your copy of the monthly patterns.

This is available for the Yellow, Green, and Blue classes.

No pre-payment is necessary but, pre-orders are encouraged to guarantee availability.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## PRIVATE LESSONS AVAILABLE

West Coast Swing	Paul Ramirez	405-816-3267	dancer3319@sbcglobal.net
Ballroom	David Martin	405-819-1956	dvdlmartin@aol.com
Ballroom	Brock Geeslin	405-819-6406	josephgbrockney@aol.com
Ballroom	Kerri May	405-476-2985	
Country	Donnie Ainsworth	405-301-4758	dla2@cox.net

### FREE CLASS!

#### Foot Works 1: Mondays at 7pm

New classes are available for Pink, Purple, Yellow, and Green students. These classes will help you as dancers improve your footwork in a fun environment! Participation is encouraged by all.

*Foot Works 2 will continue in September!*

### RHONDA'S DANCE BAGS



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# UPCOMING LOCAL AND NATIONAL EVENTS

## Grand Prix of Swing

**July 25th-27th**

The event will be held in Kansas City, Missouri at the Embassy Suites. See [www.usaswingnet.com/Kansascity](http://www.usaswingnet.com/Kansascity) for more information.

## Lone Star Invitational

**August 15th-17th**

Country event held in Austin, TX. See [www.lonestarcountrydance.com](http://www.lonestarcountrydance.com) for more information and to register online

## Dallas Dance

**August 28th-31st**

You won't want to miss the BEST event in the Nation! See [www.dallasdance.com](http://www.dallasdance.com) for more information and pricing.

## Desert City Swing

**September 5th-7th**

Beat the heat in Phoenix, AZ at the Point Hilton Squaw Peak Resort for a weekend full of dancing. See [www.desertcityswing.com](http://www.desertcityswing.com) for more information and online registration.

## Music City Swing Dance Championships

**September 12th-14th**

Come to Nashville for a weekend full of exciting dance competitions. The event

## Tulsa Fall Fling

**September 18th-21st**

This is a great event and a lot of fun to attend! To see the schedules and location go to [www.tulsafallfling.com](http://www.tulsafallfling.com)

## Meet Me In St. Louis

**September 25th-28th**

Come and party with the best at this event! Take advantage of their online registration at [www.meetmeinstlouisdc.com](http://www.meetmeinstlouisdc.com).

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## **Need to get the word out?**

### ADVERTISE IN THE NEWSLETTER

Any member owning a business or providing a service is encouraged to consider placing an ad in the newsletter.

**Please contact Amanda for current prices.**

Oklahoma City Swing Dance Club  
4361 NW 50th St., Ste 400  
Oklahoma City, OK 73112

Phone: (405) 943-1950  
Email: [okcswingdanceclub@yahoo.com](mailto:okcswingdanceclub@yahoo.com)

Mailing Address Line 1

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Mailing Address Line 3

Mailing Address Line 4

Mailing Address Line 5

**We're on the web**  
**[www.okcswingdanceclub.com](http://www.okcswingdanceclub.com)**

### **Important Reminder!!!**

*Sunday Swing Dance Classes are cancelled for the months of July and August.  
Sunday classes will resume in September!*

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## **Congratulations to Our Competitors!**

*The OKC Swing Dance Club supports all of your efforts.*

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**Want to Stay up to date on the latest happenings in the club?**

Register to receive important emails on our website!

Go to [www.okcswingdanceclub.com](http://www.okcswingdanceclub.com) and enter your email address in the yahoo groups option.

