

# WORLD LINE DANCE NEWSLETTER



## 2011 JG Line Dance Marathon

What do you get when you combine an event in Raleigh with temperatures in the high 90's hosted by the extraordinary Jean Garr? A smokin' HOT, HOT, HOT event!

This event is called Marathon for a reason. With 138 workshops and 171 dances, it's enough to MAKE YOU SWEAT and by the end of the weekend you're ready to FALL APART.

You can see what I mean by accessing the schedule at  
[http://www.worldlinedancenewsletter.com/Sked\\_JgLDM2011.html](http://www.worldlinedancenewsletter.com/Sked_JgLDM2011.html)

We arrived on Wednesday night with what has become a bit of a not too pleasant tradition of Tajali's luggage not arriving again! We decided to go ahead to the hotel and come back later to see if it arrived on the next flight three hours later. As soon I walked in to the hotel, I GOTTA FEELING it was going to be a good weekend as several friends were sitting in the lobby bar. We checked into our room and then headed back to the bar to meet up with those who were there. At midnight Taj and I headed back to the airport with fingers crossed that her luggage had arrived....it had! HALLELUJAH!

The Sheraton Imperial is great and staff are friendly and accommodating. The shuttle takes people back and forth from the airport, Waffle House, Cracker Barrel, Walmart and other places and they do it efficiently. They're always friendly and do what they can to please everyone. The lobby area is ideal for everyone to congregate and socialize with chairs and couches as well as the lobby bar, a Starbucks and a restaurant. A lot of people took advantage of temperatures in the 90's to use the pool and there is a huge hot tub. This is one of my favourite event hotels where everyone can DIP, DIVE & SOCIALIZE!

Jean has an amazing staff and volunteers who do an awesome job to ensure that this event runs like clockwork. You know this event doesn't just happen. So much organization starts almost right from the time one year finishes to planning the next one. From laying and taking down floors, to ensuring that the sound systems work in each room, to a well organized registration desk, to ensuring that water is always in each room along with bowls of candies, to large schedules posted outside each workshop, to keeping demos and workshops on schedule and more, it is a finely tuned group of people who are the heart and soul that make Marathon happen. Staff and volunteers, you're DY-NO-MITE! Thank you! The event could not run without all these dedicated people who do this so we can dance.

There is the annual Cookie Party which is for teachers from all over and a time to meet each other. Hosted by Carol Craven the past few years, this year Gerard Murphy filled in since Carol wasn't able to come. Gerard had a full room and led a fun networking activity that had instructors connect and meet each other, sharing some info that they might not typically share with other instructors. Several people commented afterward about how great it was to meet people that they "heard of" or "knew of". Gerard, you have THE WAY of bringing people together!

# WORLD LINE DANCE NEWSLETTER



There were so many good moments at this event this year besides dancing. I love to sit back and watch people and some people at the event just had me captivated. I'm always amazed to see Jim Harvey on the floor for almost every dance. He knows them all. I don't know where he gets his energy. I just know that I want to have half as much as he has when I'm his age. The room erupted in cheers and applause when Jim won one of Guyton's banners in the raffle too. It was a PERFECT moment!

Have any of you ever watched Maurice dance Tush Push??? Those who were there when it was played on Friday night were mesmerized as Maurice moved his body in a way that only he can. Talk about A WALK ON THE WILD SIDE!

Dancing Ooh I Like That is so much fun when you have a large crowd. Louie looped it three times and even then I still didn't get back to my original partner! This is just the most fun interactive dance for an event like this.

Watching Bryan McWherter dance Waka Waka and Yes You Won't kept me smiling. He reminds me of a younger version of John Robinson with his energy!

If you want an event where you can SHAKE YOURSELF LOOSE and chock full of instructors, you won't do better than this one. There was such diversity and range of levels with something for everyone. This year's event included the following..... I hope I didn't miss anyone!

Dan Albro (Rhode Island)  
Lawrence Allen (Michigan)  
Nigel Amon (England)  
Michael Barr (California)  
Beth Carole Beach (North Carolina)  
Mary Beal (North Carolina)  
Scott Blevins (Indiana)  
Michele Burton (California)  
Will Craig (North Carolina)  
Bracken Ellis Potter (California)  
Tajali Hall (Canada)  
Juliet Hauser (California)  
Karen Hedges (Missouri)  
Ruben Luna California)  
Lynne Martino (New York)  
Bonnie Mathews (North Carolina)  
Dan McInerney (England)  
Debbie McLaughlin (England)  
Marilyn McNeal (Florida)  
Bryan McWherter (North Carolina)

Guyton Mundy (Florida)  
Gerard Murphy (Nova Scotia)  
Christopher Petre (Connecticut)  
J P Potter (California)  
Niels Poulsen (Denmark)  
Mona Puente (Texas)  
John Robinson (Kentucky)  
Maurice Rowe (Florida)  
Lou Ann Schemmel (California)  
Carol Shackelford (Massachusetts)  
Walter Tallman (North Carolina)  
Leslie Thompson (Georgia)  
Michael Thompson (Georgia)  
Johnny Two-Step Houston (England)  
Frank Trace (Ohio)  
Arlene Verity (Massachusetts)  
Joey Warren (Tennessee)  
Junior Willis (Tennessee)  
Suzanne Wilson (Florida)

# WORLD LINE DANCE NEWSLETTER



It was a good crowd for Thursday afternoon when the event started with instructors who teach dances other than their own. The rest of the weekend, choreographers must teach their own choreography, except in the classics room where many instructors pulled out some great oldies to revive. With five rooms to choose from, and some awesome choreographers, it's hard to pick and choose what to take. I took Nigel's workshop PARTY FREAK, choreographed by Kate Sala. Nigel kept telling us the dance was Party Freak, not Freakin' Party. He has a great sense of humour and it was a great way to start the event. This is a fun dance which fits the music well. I followed up with Joey & Debbie's teach of SOUL FOOD which we all enjoyed because Debbie sings the woo woo hoo bit everytime. I followed that up with Amy's ARE YOU READY taught by Tajali. Super choreography that hits the music so well. Everyone loved it and it's one of Amy's dances that I think will be a huge hit. I hadn't had the chance to learn Maggie's GAMBLING MAN yet so I finished my afternoon off with Mona Puente's teach of that one. I wanted to take Lou Ann's workshop of Rob Glover's MIDNIGHT SWING, but by then it was already 6:00 and my stomach was begging for food! Bryan McWherter taught his classic PHLOOR PHILLA which "philled" the floor later that night. John Robinson taught Ria Vos' nightclub, BITTERSWEET MEMORY. Beautiful dance and song. Lou Ann also taught Rachael's PAPI and her workshop was full of dancers who wanted to learn this new one. Ruben taught a couple of easy fun dances, WOBBLE and DR. WANNA DO. Wobble was another floor filler at night and there was no HOLDIN' IT DOWN as all levels of dancers jumped up on the floor to dance when the music came on. On Thursday afternoon alone, 29 dances were taught.

A combined room dedicated to beginners and classic dances was welcomed by many people with an abundance of beginner workshops for beginner/improvers. There was something for everyone and no one could complain about a lack of dances!

The dance floor was full from the time dancing started on Thursday night. I'm not a great judge of numbers but estimated around 250 dancers filled the main hall on Thursday night and both JP Potter and "Wildman" Louie kept the dancers happy. They did a great job of mixing new and older classics and ensuring that the dances taught during the day were played at night. An additional room for beginners, classics and requests was manned by Debi and Gale and they did a super job of playing whatever dancers wanted played. A room open for social dancing during the day was available for those who wanted to just dance or practice what they had learned.

Workshop demos started at 9:00 a.m. on Friday and Saturday and everyone was eager to see what new dances were going to be introduced at Marathon. With six rooms going from 10:00-7:00, it was a matter of having to pace yourself to avoid being brain dead by the end of the day and be able to enjoy open dancing that night. To give you an idea of just how many dances were taught, on Friday, 64 dances were taught in 51 workshops!

With so many classes, I'll mention the ones that I did and the ones that really stood out for me during demos, along with the ones that people mentioned that they liked. So many people have sent in their reports and everyone has a mix of favourite dances. One thing many people commented on was the high caliber of dances being taught this year and there were many times I wanted to be in three rooms at the same time. There are a lot of "keepers" from this year's event. One thing I'd like to see are some repeat workshops so that you can nail down a dance or take it if you missed it first time around.

# WORLD LINE DANCE NEWSLETTER



THAT KINDA LOVIN' - Guyton Mundy. This is a gorgeous advanced smooth, 2 wall dance that captivated many in the room. With a few turns and 3 restarts, it was a good thing it was at the start of the day rather than at the end! Did you know that none of Guyton's dances at JG this year had arms?!? When he mentioned that in his workshop of My Motivation, the class erupted in applause. He then told us that he'd make up for that next year. Guyton, YOU'RE AMAZING and you've so changed the world of line dance!

NOTHIN' BUT THE MUSIC - Debbie McLaughlin. Another dance I have to nail down with another teach. This is an awesome dance. I love watching Debbie dance. She's subtle but sharp and she makes all dances look so easy!

SOMEWHERE WITH YOU - Junior Willis and Scott Schrank. Love the dance and the song. This is a dance that I think should get a lot more attention. It just feels good to dance and you can get lost in the music.

THESE CASTLE WALLS - Joey Warren. I didn't take this class but those I spoke with who did said they loved the music and how well the dance fit. It's on my "to learn" list.

MY HERO - Niels Poulsen. Gorgeous nightclub that flows so well to a great song. Niels had some great dances to release at this event.

TALKING TO THE MOON - Joey Warren. Still my favourite dance. Great track and great choreography with that wonderful turn that hits the music beautifully. Lots of turns and a couple of restarts that are easy since they occur in the same spot.

HURTS INSTEAD - Dan McInerney. I was in another workshop at the same time this was on so missed it but this filled the floor at night and is beautiful to watch. The dancers really get into the song. I love the music Dan choreographs to and I could watch him dance all night. I haven't been able to get the song out of my head and it's the next dance I HAVE to learn.

BIG BANG - Will Craig. I really like Will's choreography. One of my favourite dances of his is Swim Away and it's one that isn't done often enough. Big Bang is a nice intermediate dance with no tags/restarts and it's a great song.

5-10-15 SWING - Scott Blevins. I knew my brain wouldn't function with taking a 96 count phrased dance after doing 5 workshops so didn't take it but loved watching Scott demo this one. I need to learn this over summer so I can dance it at WOW.

HOLD ON TIGHT - Scott Blevins. The room was packed for this workshop. I have to admit that I don't associate Scott with country music but I'm so glad he did a dance to this beautiful song, I Won't Let Go, by Rascal Flatts.

STREET SOUL - MIL. I never got around to learning this dance when it came out so was happy to see Marilyn teaching it this year. The room was packed for this teach.

# WORLD LINE DANCE NEWSLETTER



FANGBANGER'S CHA - Scott Blevins. I didn't learn this as it was on at the same time I was learning Street Soul. I heard many people say it was their favourite dance over the weekend.

MY MOTIVATION - Guyton Mundy. This was a 5:00 teach and my energy was quickly disappearing because Janet and I had gone for a glass of wine before the class. We both went back to take Guyton's workshop and our energy quickly came back. This was my second teach on this one and it solidified the dance for me. I love this one and I love Guyton's teaching style.

ARE YOU READY - Amy Christian-Sohn. This was a hit over the weekend and anytime it was played, people applauded afterwards. This is such a cool dance to watch with all the arm movements, rolling knees and chest pops. Several times over the weekend people were practicing it in rooms or hallways and they were dancing it wherever and whenever they could.

LADY LUCK - Niels Poulsen . Really cool dance with some great footwork to a great song. A favourite for many over the weekend.

LOVE IS YOUR COLOR - Junior Willis. Another very nice dance from Junior. I like the music that Junior picks for his choreography and his dances have a nice feel to them.

SARA SMILE - Michael Barr. I've just loved Michael and Michele for years. Even though this is Michael's dance, when I think of one, I think of the other. I love Michael's style of teaching. I've always liked this song and the dance fit it well with it's 8 count "you and me" tag in the middle.

RAG TOP DOWN - Michele Burton. This was a fun lindy hop with some good footwork. Catchy song and the dance was fun to do.

LOVE LETTER WALTZ - Frank Trace. I heard some really good comments about this dance from people who took it. I liked the demo and it's a nice dance to "Love Letters" (Bonnie Raitt and Elton John) Those who took it commented on how much they enjoyed this dance.

SWEET DELIGHTS/SEA SHELLS - Dan Albro. I wasn't sure who to watch during demos.....Dan and his wife Kelly or John and Junior! Great partnering and those who took Dan's classes loved his instruction and his dances. Dan and Kelly are two of the nicest people around too!

I haven't been able to get any official results from the choreography competition but there were several entries in all levels. I can say that Malene Jakobsen's waltz, Say Grace, won 1st prize in the country intermediate category. Sue Ann Ehmann's dances Too Many Girlfriends and Too Much Booty Shaking came in first in beginner and intermediate non-country. I haven't been able to get any clarification from anyone on this so I hope this is correct. Will Craig's dance 2 Nite won 1st place in the pro choreography.

# WORLD LINE DANCE NEWSLETTER



I'll end my report by saying that I thought this was a superb event this year. My goal at events is always to make a new friend or two and that goal was surpassed many times over this weekend.

So many great new dances came out of this one and it's difficult to pick favourite dances because there were so many different ones. I will say that there were a high number of nightclubs this year.

Everyone I spoke with thoroughly enjoyed themselves. There were some comments made that I'd like to share that aren't criticisms as much as observations. Many people indicated that they'd like to see demos in the evening rather than morning. Many of the instructors go to bed early to be up in time for demos and wish they could stay and dance longer with everyone. It would also be nice to see some repeat workshops, particularly for the harder dances. I know this is Marathon but I wouldn't mind workshops ending earlier so that people could socialize a little more as well and not feel so rushed to do dinner and get ready to come back and dance.

Tajali has several photos on her Facebook page. If you're wondering about the bears, we started bringing bears to events to give to people who have become friends in the line dance community and it's our way of expressing how blessed we feel to have these friends in our lives. In Boston we did one for Zac.....ask him about the left and right foot markings J For JG we did one for Jean. Zac couldn't attend Marathon this year but he sent along Zac-Bear (thank you Betsy!) The photos on Taj's FB page.....well, Zac-Bear and Canada Bear had a "date" at Cracker Barrel. Who will get the next bear when we're at WOW? Hmm.....not telling! It's all fun and it helps to create some of the memorable moments that make the events special.

We're so lucky to have event directors who work hard to give us a top notch event and Marathon certainly lived up to its name. Thank you Jean and all those who worked hard to make this year's event memorable. I'm already looking forward to next year.

Sue Hall