

THE DOUBLE TOE TIMES

Volume 4, No. 6

A Clogging Newsletter

June 1986



Sunshine Cloggers Pirate's Ball Expo Centre, Orlando, Florida

Tandy Barrett is a hard gal to do a caricature of - the thing our artist did catch is her grin of delight when she's up on stage teaching and clogging!

The Pirate's Ball had a marvelous "feel" this year - a sense of fun and excitement and friendship that lasted through the whole weekend. The eight Treasure Chests were outstanding, with the Pony Express Cloggers claiming the Trophy for the third straight year, retiring it. Their humpback antique Chest was complete with its own beachfront (300 lbs. of Kissimmee sand), skeleton, palm tree, and assorted sea creatures. The Grand Prix Cloggers Treasure Chest contributed \$614.00, and a final donation total from all resulted in \$1,500.00 presented to Mr. Nick Foresio, Board Member of the Florida Elks Children's Hospital.

Continued on Pages 6, 10 & 11

THE DOUBLE TOE TIMES

PUBLISHER/EDITOR

Bobbie Adams

A Clogging Newsletter

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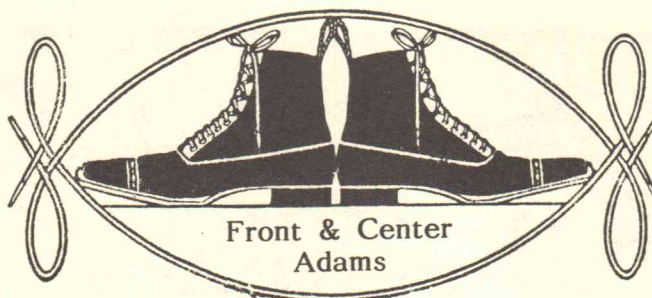
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The "fill-in-the-blanks" from our May issue was really a spoof folks! We've all heard those sweeping broad statements made about States, AND Clubs! I reckon some folks believe 'em, unless it happens to be our State or Club. I've heard this one - "They only do line routines in Florida!" - so often that I laugh. T'aint so, but I reckon y'all will have to come on down and see for yourself!

This paper is devoted to GOOD NEWS! Anne Murray had a popular recording several years back about a paper that printed only the good things that happened - no wars, no bombs, no murders, no core melt-downs. It is this Editors firm conviction that "ugly" folks will bury themselves, and they don't need us to help dig the hole.

I just readan article about a merchandiser who launched his business using this philosophy: "Sell merchandise at a reasonable profit, treat your customers like human beings and they'll always come back for more. A Customer is the most important person in this office - in person or by mail." The Company is L.L. Bean and after 37 years they still are a most respected firm.

You, the reader of this newsletter, are MY most important concern. What would you like to see on these pages? I have printed a Clogging-Buck routine this month - the first one in nearly three years of publication. They are such a bear to type, it may well be the first and last! Honest commentary is WELCOME from anyone, however personal aggrandizement or axe-grinding will be censored. Send along any questions - I probably don't have the answers, but can find folks who do! I particularly like Barb Kohlers article (May) on Tips for New Choreographers because I've often wondered how on earth folks put these marvelous routines together. Several people have written asking "how do we find a Hall for our Clogging group" and though the Morales Editorial in this months issue does not specifically address the "how", it does point out how to maintain good relations with a potential Hall landlord. Come on Clogging Readers - let me know what you'd like to read!

Son-in-law Tom Toor built and presented this Editor with a custom made light-box. Tom, and the light-box, light up my life!

At a recent clogging workshop, we heard a funny story told by a young man. "I had heard that _____ Instructor was pretty conceited and 'stuck up'. I decided to try to get to know him better, and then decide for myself. I did, and he is!"

Thanks Glenn! I've been trying to catch The Prairie Home Companion as often as I can. Lake Wobegon, harp music, a 1911 Train Depot, and the musical happenings of Victor Herbert. Ah yes - where the men are strong, the women are good looking and the children are all above average.

I have the happy task of handling Publicity for the CLOG National this year. If anyone needs printable information, please let me know. All known newsletter Editors will have received a packet by the time this issue of the Double Toe Times comes out. If any Editors have not received theirs, call me.

Mehl Renner sent a delightful letter and closed it with this phrase; "Keep up the good work with the newsletter. May there always be good double toe times!" Thanks Mehl!

Upcoming Events

June 6 - 7

NCHC Spring Festival
Greensboro, NC Contact Ruth Landis,
P.O. Box 1214, Cary, NC 27511

June 7

Texas State Square and Round
Dance Convention Full Clogging Program,
Corpus Christi. Contact John Thompson,
5826 Valley Point, San Antonio, TX 78233
(512) 656-1276 or 671-2857

June 13 - 15

35th Minnesota Square Dance Convention
Clog Program with Charlie Burns, KY.
Rochester, MN Contact Ida Seibel
9315 Union Ter., Maple Grove, MN 55369
(612) 425-2240

June 14 - 15

Cotton Blossom Clogging Festival
Contact Rodney Whitten, Rt #6, Box 276G
Columbia, SC 29210 (803) 732-3465

June 20 - 22

Silver Dollar City Clogging
Extravaganza (Competition) Silver Dollar
City, Missouri Contact Rex Burdette
Silver Dollar City/Marvel Cave Park,
MO 65616 MO (800) 492-7092
All other States (800) 641-4202

June 27 - 28

Summertime Stomp, Punta Gorda,
Florida Contact Jan Bohley, 760
Del Ray Place, Punta Gorda, FL
33950 (813) 639-1001

June 26 - 28

35th National Square Dance Convention
Indianapolis, Indiana. Full Clogging
Program. Contact Mike and Carolyn
Kell, 315 W. 4th St., Seymour,
IN 47274 (812) 522-8199

June 28 - July 4

11th Annual Nat'l Cloggers Festival
Provo, Utah Contact Cloggers
Festival, P.O. Box 903, Orem UT 84057

July 11 - 13

U.S. Clogging Championship Nashville,
Indiana Contact Peg McLerran
R.R. 2, Box 216, Solsberry, IN 47459
(812) 825-4072

July 18 - 20

Double Toe Times Competition Workshop
River Ranch Resort, Lake Wales, Florida
Contact Bobbie Adams, P.O. Box 1004
Longwood, FL 32750 (305) 834-8255

July 26 - 27

Illinois State Square Dance Convention
Peoria, Illinois, Contact - Orvie Haun
2213 1/2 Court St., Pekin, IL 61554
(309) 353-6624

August 1 - 3

Blue Ridge Mountain Clogging
Competition Georgia Mountains
Center, Gainesville, GA Contact Kerry
Thomas, P.O. Box 56571, Atlanta, GA
(404) 925-3842

August 6 - 9

Possum Trot Clog Camp, Fontana
Village, NC Contact: JoAnn Gibbs,
3452 Summit Ridge Dr., Doraville,
Georgia 30341

August 8 - 10

Central Florida Clogging Celebration
Expo Centre, Orlando, FL Contact
Jacky Egli, P.O. Box 1328, Longwood,
FL 32750 (305) 886-1563

August 15 - 16

Canadian Clogging Festival Aurora,
Ontario, Canada Contact Sylvia
Hunka, 5 Springhouse Sq. Scarboro
Ontario M1W 2X2 Canada
(416) 498-8032 or 261-1517

August 23

West Virginia Clogging and
Hoedown Championships, Civic Center
Charleston, WV Contact CBS
Travelers, 910 Scenic Dr. Charleston,
WV 25311 (304) 744-2952 or 344-1975

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Shirley Walters, Tandy Barrett, Steve
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john Circle, N.E., Rome, GA 30161
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August 29 - 30

Statesboro Clogging Festival, States-
boro, GA Contact: Buzz Ruis, Rt. 4,
Box 136, Lyons, GA 30436 (912) 557-6970

August 29 - 31

SCCA Clogging Convention
(Southern California) Contact P.O.
Box 7698, Mission Hills, CA 91346

September 19 - 20

Iowa Fall Clogging Workshop
Cedar Rapids, IA, Contact: Chuck
Lovig, Box 3011, Iowa City, IA 52244
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September 26 - 29

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October 12

Clogging Assoc. of Wisconsin Fall
Workshop. Contact Darlene Back, 6910
Sunset Strip, Wisconsin Rapids, WI
54494 (715) 3252722

October 17 - 18

Missouri Fall Workshop, Moberly, MO
Contact: Brenda Martien, Rt. 3, Box 444,
Ozark, MO 65721 (417) 485-2106

October 18

Louisville Area Clogging Assoc. Fall
Workshop Knights of St. John Hall,
Contact: Lonnie & Dana Curl, 413
Brooks Hill Rd, Brooks, KY 40109
(502) 957-5348

October 24 - 25

Jacksonville Clogging Jamboree
Contact: Sally Thompson, 1560
Grove Park Blvd., Jacksonville, FL
32216 (904) 642-4222

October 25

Iowa State Clogging Convention
Cedar Rapids, Iowa Contact: Bob
Kelchen, 917 Regent St., N.E.,
Cedar Rapids, IA 52402
(319) 393-8171

November 29 & 30

3rd Annual National C.L.O.G.
Convention Hamilton County
Trade Center, Chattanooga,
Tennessee Write: JoAnn Gibbs,
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Doraville, GA 30340
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State or National (Non-Profit) Clogging Organization and functions put on
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Upcoming Events through the month of the Event.

COMPETITIVELY SPEAKING

By Steve Smith
281 Boiling Springs Dr.
Lexington, Ky. 40505



BUCK vs. CLOGGING

Do We Need Separate Categories at Competition?

With "buck" dancing sweeping the country with fanatical popularity, there has been a division between those who have incorporated "buck" into their dancing style and those who have not. This has resulted in a fairly consistent generational division with oldsters "doing clogging" and youngsters "doing buck". Concern, consternation and frustration has been expressed by those who have just begun to feel competent with clogging — all of a sudden they are faced with a form of dance that seems alien to them.

Competition has been affected by this division. The insurgence of buck dancing has caused much discussion about the necessity for separate categories in competition for buck dancing and clogging. Those who have lost to "buck dancers" in a CLOGGING COMPETITION have complained that the winners were buck dancing, not clogging. As a result, some competition directors have attempted to deal with this dissatisfaction by dividing the two styles into separate clogging categories. These good intentions have been implemented to provide a category so that ALL dancers can compete with THEIR style and feel like they have a chance to win. However, a different set of problems have surfaced with this solution and are currently leading to much disagreement among dancers.

The major problem cited is that of defining "clogging" in such a way that it does not limit creative dancing. If clogging is defined as consisting of steps utilizing only the "8 basic movements" then many will view such a definition as restrictive. However, if creative clogging is allowed, then the festival director is faced with the problem of defining where clogging ends and buck dancing begins. If a restrictive definition of clogging is adhered to, then buck dancing can easily become an "anything goes" category. This is problematic in that buck dancing becomes everything that clogging is not.

This is a thorny problem with no easy solution. There are those who seek simplicity by stating that there should be no division. Some festival directors support this position for monetary reasons — it takes more trophies if there are two categories. On the other hand, traditionalists urge separation of the two styles so that traditional clogging can be preserved and not forgotten or mutated. "Cloggers"

who are not interested in buck dancing press for a separate category so that they can compete with the skills that they have worked so hard to polish.

The outcome of our explosive growth in clogging is not at all clear at the present time. One thing is for certain — complexity is escalating and it is being called "buck". Call it whatever YOU want but it is here to stay. Only its final form is in question.

Cloggingly yours,

Steve Smith



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Though "something" fell off of Tandy's plane in Atlanta, causing a two-hour delay, Judy "Airport Angel" May, clutching a photograph of Tandy, found her, whisked her to Expo Centre just in time for Tandy to teach her first routine and conduct a Bloomer Award.

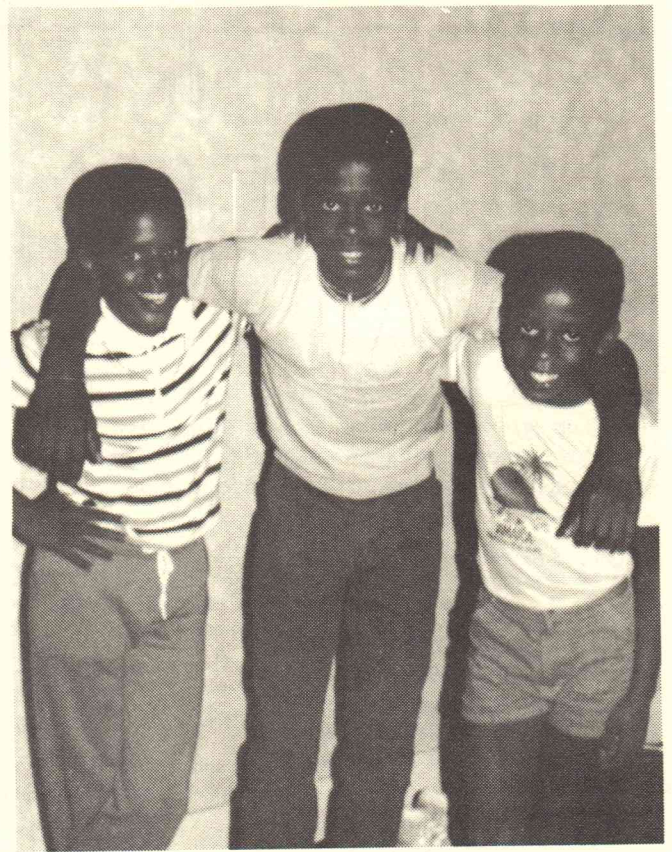
Cheyenne Saloon, in Church Street Satation, was packed with Cloggers at 11 PM, and someone exclaimed that it was the first time they had ever felt the third floor balcony shake.

Saturday's workshop with Scotty Bilz, Foreman Heard, John PerMar, Jan Bohley, Tom Toor, Sue Toor, Marge Callahan, Roy Moye and Tandy Barrett ran on an extremely smooth schedule. Emcees were Jan & Phil Bohley, Sue and Tom, Roy Moye, Jimmy Gallo, and Tina Thomas.

Costumed Pirates began returning to the Hall early, for a 7 PM Judging by Nick Foresio, Denise Michaels of K-92 Radio, and Dr. Charles Grant. It must have been difficult for there were some truly creative costumes. Everyone joined in to an awesome and fearful Grand March (swords and hooks everywhere) after which the unique Pirate Prizes were handed out. The Rainbow Cloggers from Perry, Georgia came from the farthest distance, the largest group was Rocky Water Cloggers, Melbourne, Fl.

There were outstanding performances both Friday and Saturday evening with our much loved Southern Night Cloggers, under the direction of Cynde Kichukoff, bringing the audience to its feet in a standing ovation. The Southern Night Cloggers are a "handicapeable" group from Orlando, Florida.

The after-party in the Grand Ballroom of the Howard Johnson Hotel held a totally unexpected surprise! The Expo Centre is part of a complex which includes the Bob Carr Theater. The Zev Buffman Broadway Series show of "The Tap Dance Kid" was playing in Carr Performing Arts Centre both Friday and Saturday with a Sunday matinee. From the Orlando Sentinel Star "The dancing in The Tap Dance Kid is so terrific that it makes this mild-mannered Cosby Show-like drama about a prosperous black family into a whopping good time. Ten year-



old Dule Hill taps real rings around his elders." Well it seems as though all of the Broadway cast were also staying at the HoJo and the three young men pictured here: Dule Hill, who played the lead role of Willie, Junior Hill and Hasoun Tatum also in the cast as dancers, heard all the dancing and music and came to watch. They graciously agreed to do some of the numbers from the show - and what a show!!

Perhaps the most delightful exchange was later as I was wearily leaving, out in the lobby Dule, Junior and Tatum were trading tap steps and clogging steps with a sizeable group of dancers. What a wonderful way for a Workshop to end!

Crafts for the Clogger

By Brad Rice
SCCA Hillbilly Herald January 1986

A few years back, when visiting relatives in Arkansas, I had heard of the Ozark Mountain Cultural Center and decided to give it a visit. Cloggers in that region still came out and performed in a more traditional manner; some barefoot, some with taps, and not a two of them doing the same step. The shops that surrounded the stage area, contained toys from the Appalachian Mountain area including the "limberjack". The limberjack is the dancing wooden doll that imitates the movement of a clogger. Jerry Duke once demonstrated the use of this doll at one of his workshops. I was surprised to find plans for making this doll, along with a variety of other toys and crafts, in a set of books called the Foxfire Books. The plans and instructions for the limberjack doll are found in Foxfire 6 edited by Eliot Wigginton, Anchor Books/Doubleday, Garden City, NY. This particular toy is lots of fun and a great conversation piece.

Ed. Note: The steel engraving is from the mid-1800's.





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Competition Workshop

July 18, 19 & 20, 1986

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Even without a crystal ball, it is evident that Clogging Competitions are gaining favor all across the United States. Large entries with competitors coming from a wide geographical area to Hee Haw, Silver Dollar City, Pacific Coast and Utah indicate that the challenge of Competition Clogging has an ever increasing lure.

The only requirements for a Performance were largely self-imposed. In Competition there are the Sponsors and Judges rules for each category, many with traditional background and regulations.

With the thought that many of us need training in the How-To's of Competition, The Double Toe Times is sponsoring a Competition Workshop July 18, 19 & 20, 1986 at the famous River Ranch Resort, Lake Wales, Florida.

JoAnn Gibbs will be on hand to co-ordinate the program. Our Instructors will be Buzzy Ireland, Barbara Kohler, John PerMar, Bob Johnson, Foreman Heard, Scott Bilz, and JoAnn Gibbs. Additionally there will time in our program for teams to be critiqued by our Workshop Instructors.

Those Instructors and Directors who think they will never be interested in Competition are in for a surprise! In every Club there will be a few who WILL be excited about solos, duos, or duets and ultimately a four or eight couple team will emerge, with or without the Instructor! Wouldn't it be more fun to join them? This workshop is for ANYONE who is interested in learning.

A word about The River Ranch Resort. "The Largest Western Resort in the Southeastern United States" is their claim. Only an hour from Walt Disney World, it boasts an air strip, golf course, skeet and trap range, boat ramp and dock, horseback trail rides, two huge swimming pools, Motel, Cottages, tent or full hook-up RV sites, three WOOD-FLOORED halls for our use, plus an optional Barbecue and live Rodeo on Saturday night. There is a full restaurant with red-checked tablecloths, plus food available at the Marina and the pool snack bar. River Ranch is casual - no need to bring dress-up duds, unless it is Cowboy Style. River Ranch is about 20 years old, and we found it to be immaculately clean, the windows in every building sparkling, the coquina walkways under the live oaks freshly raked. It will be very different from our City Conventions.

"It is not the critic who counts, not the man who points out how the strong man stumbled or where the doer of deeds could have done better.

The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena; whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs and comes short again and again; who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, and spends himself in a worthy cause; who, at the best, knows in the end the triumph of high achievement; and who, at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat."

THEODORE ROOSEVELT



Which way to the River Ranch Resort?

... More about the Workshop ...

All you ever wanted to know about Competition but didn't know what or who to ask! In answer to the many calls - the Workshop is not limited to just Instructors - anyone may attend. There will be no Spectators however. Every phase and category will be covered and "students" will be called upon to put into action what they are learning. JoAnn Gibbs is also bringing her collection of videotapes of winning teams to demonstrate each category. Additionally, a workshop packet is being prepared for each person.

For those who are already familiar with Competitions, this is a chance to polish your skills and work together with other teams and Instructors in a non-competitive setting. Several groups will be camping together in the River Ranch RV Park.

You'd have to travel many a mile and enter a lot of Competitions on a trial-and-error basis to learn all that will be covered during our Workshop Weekend! Call if you have any questions. (305) 834-8255 Bobbie

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JUNE 27 & 28, 1986



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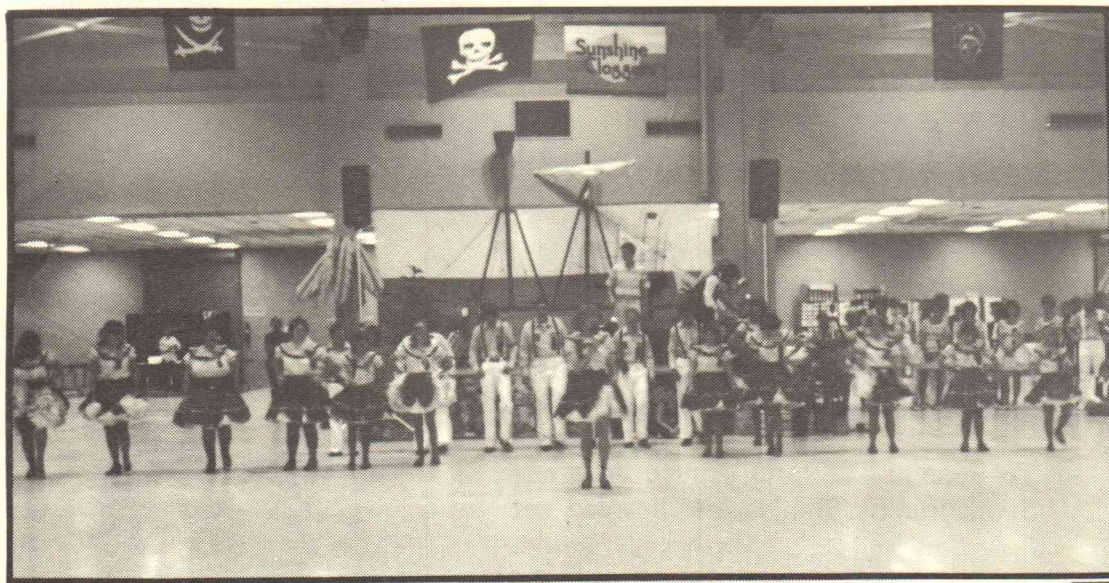
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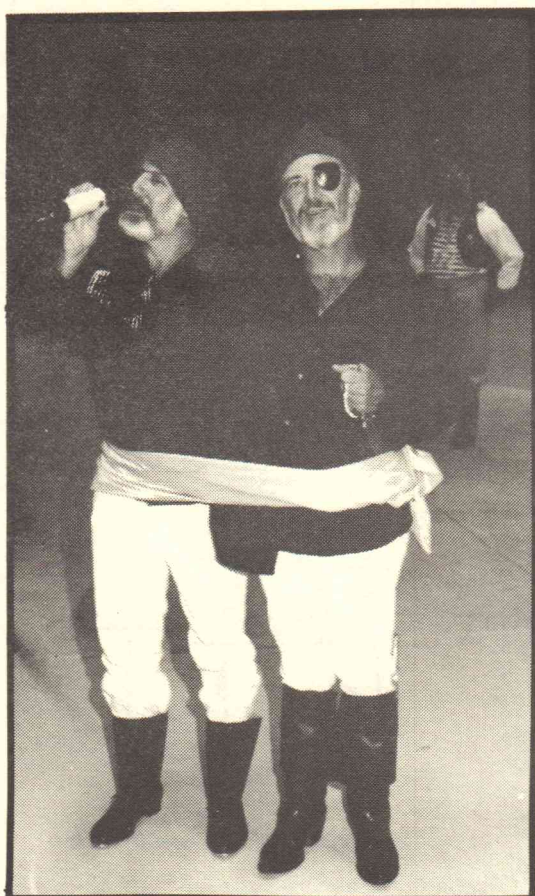


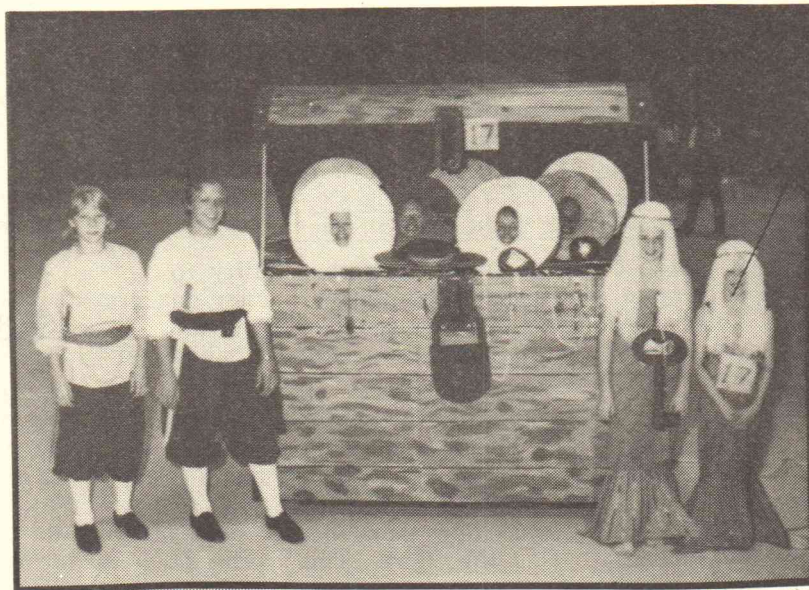
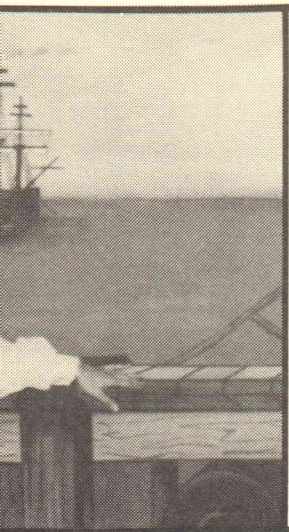
Pirate's Ball
Continued from Page 1

Top: Southern Night Cloggers "Stepwork"; Sue Toor; Tom Toor; Cindy Swarthout & Pete Sylvester, Chairmen.

Middle: Nancy & Helen Buckner - Door Prize Pirates; IRS Pirates; The Pony Express Cloggers and the Grand Prize winning Treasure Chest.

Bottom: Roy & Wayne Siamese Pirates; John Ward; Unknown Pirate; Treasure beach - Pony Express; Prize winning costumes - Rocky Water Cloggers.





Springtime Tallahassee

By Mary Holley

Submitted for Capital City Cloggers

Who wears a bathrobe, turban and clogs across the civic center floor straddling a stick to the tune of "Ahab, the Arab"?

Everyone who attended the Springtime Tallahassee Clogging Festival knows it was Rex Akridge, Director of Capital City Cloggers, as an unexpected grand finale to a most unique routine performed by nine groups of C.C.C. entitled the "Time Machine".

We appreciate the dedicated instructors who contributed their time, energy, and patience in teaching the many new routines learned here. Nine new instructors were critiqued at this year's festival.

The weatherman was most uncooperative the week-end of March 21-22, it was cold. . . and there was a conflict with the scheduling of Springtime Tallahassee, but in spite of these adverse conditions, the 7th Annual Springtime Tallahassee Clogging Festival was a big success.

Rex, as President of the Florida Clogging Council with the help of his "team", is busy planning for the Second Annual State Clogging Festival to be held in Tampa, Florida, May 23-24, 1986.

TELL IT TO THE JUDGES



By Don and Heather Griffith

Q. Don & Heather: Do judges like fast music?

A. We do not like or dislike music because it is fast or slow. How music relates to the dancers is what counts in clogging competition. The music must be fast enough to demonstrate the dancers' abilities and yet slow enough to show off all of their steps to perfection.

How many beats per minute should that be? Well, it will vary from team to team but should fall somewhere in the range of 130-150 beats per minute (BPM) for experienced dancers. The topic of speed is discussed in detail in three of the authors' books - Clogging Competitions: How to Get the Most Out of Them.

It is the clogging director's responsibility to determine the optimum speed for his/her dancers. This is best done at practice prior to competitions where there is time to experiment and to make mistakes.

As the team dances, the director should vary the speed of the music until that exact beat is reached when the best dancer looks smooth and the least experienced dancer doesn't look overly challenged. Count how many beats occur in 60 seconds to find the BPM. This is the team's optimum speed.



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Ball R	Heel(OTS) L	Ball L	Bounce L	Heel R	Ball R
Bounce R	Toe(XIB) L	Ball L	Heel(OTS) R	Ball R	
Heel(OTS) L	Step L	Stomp R	Slide L		

PART B

COMPLETE FOUR TIMES ON ALTERNATE FOOT

DT R	Slide L	DT R	Slide L	DTS(XIB) R	Hop(OTS) L
Heel R	Ball R	DTS(XIB) L	Hop(OTS) R	Heel L	Ball L
DTS(XIB) R	Hop(OTS) L	Heel R	Ball R		

PART C

COMPLETE FOUR TIMES ON ALTERNATE FOOT

Bounce L	Heel R	Ball R	Bounce R	Heel L	Ball L
Bounce L	Heel R	Ball R	Heel L	Ball L	Heel R
					Ball R

SEQUENCE: ½ A, B, C, A, B, C, A, B, C.

We are departing from our policy of not printing routines for two very personal reasons. The first is the music — a schottische perks up my ears due to my part German background. The second is that this Flop-Eared Schottische is delightful to watch being danced. I suspect it is difficult, and for an advanced dancer will be a challenge. If you have difficulty write John PerMar!!

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Bev & Bob Foland

Editors: Bill, Darlynn & Danielle Morales
Prattville, Alabama

EDITORIAL

Teamwork can accomplish much. In Valley Head, a community in northeast Alabama near Fort Payne, a dream was realized with the opening of Promenade Hall — a community center built by volunteer labor. This facility is now home to the Valley Promenaders Square Dance, Little River Cloggers, and Country Creek Cloggers clubs, as well as senior citizen activities. This is rather exciting news, for a couple of reasons. It is the first private hall built by a club in the state of Alabama, and despite hand-laid, tongue and groove wood floors, it is shared by CLOGGERS!

It is encouraging to see clogging starting to gain greater acceptance by square and round dancers in the state. This acceptance, however, may be conditional on our "manners". Some people are bothered by the noise clog taps make. Others are concerned about the damage taps might do to their floors. Both are valid concerns.

The noise problem can be easily controlled. Wear taps only in designated clogging areas. Do not wear taps into rooms where square and round dancers are dancing. They must listen to cues, just as we do. A break in concentration of one dancer can cause an entire square to fold, a much trickier problem than simply getting back on the correct foot.

One can easily minimize the probability of damage to a floor with common sense and a few precautions. First, the Stevens Stompers and Bell taps that are on the market were designed with floor

protection in mind. These taps will not produce the cutting edges or sharp divots that some other taps on the market are susceptible to. However, because screws and nails can work themselves out, a "professional" clogger will always check the bottoms of his/her shoes before going out on a floor. This shows consideration for the owner of the floor, besides being an important safety measure. Protruding nails have been known to snag and trip dancers, and loose taps have flown like missiles into a crowd, driving directors to read the small print in their insurance policies!!

Cloggers often fail to realize that a fine residue of powdered metal, wax, and other substances coats most taps. Wipe a white cloth across them sometime. Unless they are cleaned, they will likely streak some floors — particularly linoleum tile — with ugly black marks, which are a nuisance to remove. Mrs. Delores Breske, Director of the Alamo Cloggers of San Antonio, Texas, has made it a practice to inspect shoes before performances. Her dancers are required to clean their taps with steel wool (or a fine grade of wet/dry sandpaper, which will help repair damages from dancing on bricks, asphalt, etc.), followed by buffing with a rag saturated with ammonia or industrial cleaning solvent.

Pride and care of one's equipment will help ensure a professional performance, and hopefully open doors — and floors — to cloggers. Each of us must be responsible for the reputation of all. We control our own future within state square and round dance associations, and with the rest of the world.

Double Toe Times Editors Note:

The Morales first issue, as Editors of Heart of Dixie Clog Notes, is absolutely chock full of good articles!! Our Hat's Off!!!!!!

THE FICKLE FINGER OF FATE



Old Fickle is back Jack! Fickle just figgered that the Clogging World was gettin' in bad shape again, and Fickle just loves to tilt at windmills. Here goes nothin'.

First we'll talk about a good un. That bundle of energy Tandy Barrett sure did get those Pirates fired up. If she's on the agenda in your area you all are in for a treat. She told the Editor she rates Conventions in shirt changes -- The Pirates Ball was a **Five Shirt** workshop.

Now Fickle will move on to a topic that is problematical all over the Country. Clogging Organiza-
Page 14

tions and their membership and officers. Some of the States can't seem to get organized because there are too many Chiefs and not enough Indians. And then there are the States where everyone wants to be an Indian, and no one wants to be Chief. If a Chief appears at a propitious moment, for whatever reason, the Indians will react in a number of ways. Some will quit and go join another tribe. Some will rally round the Chief to get extra feathers in their war bonnet. Some will stay in the tribe and create Civil disobedience. Some won't give a hoot one way or another, just so they get their free dried venison jerky come winter.

Fickle would like to report that his Editor is plumb gettin' tired of folks who complain that they see only a few Clubs featured in this here paper. (And Fickle hears that other papers have the very same problem!) So Fickle has come up with the perfect answer -- "well bless my stars, when was the last time YOU sent something to the Editor?"

Old Fickle has decided to reform, change his ways, travel the straight and narrow an' not pick on anybody. Instead of picketing City Hall, he's gonna lay down on the sidewalk and think about it. Reckon his Column will be considerably shorter till he gets the hang of it!!

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CLOG COMPETITIONS

Criticism and Other Thoughts

By: Mehl Renner
Director - Misty Mountain Cloggers

Clogging competition is big now. What it has in the way of special appeal I'm not too sure of, but I would like to express a few thoughts on how I feel about it.

I guess the fact that we are Americans makes us very competitive by nature and thus the popularity of clogging competition. Someone once told me clogging should be considered a performing art and not a competitive sport. I'm inclined to favor this opinion, but certainly with mixed feelings. I have directed a group of cloggers and have taught classes since 1976. My clogging team has been involved in all kinds of events, including a number of competitions. The group has won a few, lost a few, and usually places, but I become less enthusiastic about competition as time goes on.

Let's think about the many variables that can determine the outcome of a competition: Who is running the competition?, Where is it?, Who can attend?, What are the age categories?, What are the clogging categories?, How much registration fee are you willing to pay?, Who is judging?, How much time is allowed?, etc.

Sometimes the event can amount to a large group of cloggers patting each other on the back. Other times they might be stabbing each other in the back. The 'I'm better than you' snobbishness is often evident. It doesn't always seem to be done in the spirit of friendly competition. No, I do not necessarily relish the thrill of victory. It means so much more to receive a strong round of applause from an appreciative audience which may or may not be entirely composed of other cloggers. This is to me much more rewarding than tall trophies won in competitions.

Granted, to win in competition can be exhilarating, shows that you can hold your own against other groups, and can encourage you to do better. In some ways, competition can force conformity to meet certain criteria to gain points with judges. In some clogging circles, clogging faster is supposed to be better. This is just not necessarily so, and I definitely disagree with this notion. Good solid footwork done precisely to the beat of the music at the intended speed is more impressive to me. Some tunes are almost indistinguishable because they are played so fast. I've seen some really good cloggers absolutely ruin an otherwise fantastic clogging rou-

tine because they think they have to put themselves in overdrive. This can amount to a real waste of good clogging talent.

I agree that traditional clogging needs to be preserved. Hopefully there will always be someone to do so. However, I personally remain more interested in creativity-total freedom of expression-to clog in whatever form or fashion you desire, as long as it is entertaining and fun. It has always been the philosophy of our group to simply do what we like and discard what we don't. Members are encouraged to learn and develop as many clogging styles as they wish, regardless of the origin. I define most of what we do as show clogging. Again, the goal is to entertain and have a good time.

It is interesting to find that some groups are totally immersed in competitions and others only in exhibitions. Our group does a little of both, but it is inclined to be primarily an exhibition group.

It does require a certain amount of good promotion to be a successful exhibition clogging team. There are plenty of good clogging groups, and someone desiring good entertainment will not beat a path to your door. You don't just register, pay your money, learn the rules and go participate. You must be invited. If anyone gets paid, it will probably be you. A good indication of the impression you have made is whether or not you are invited a second time. Your audience is your judge and you are going to know when you do an outstanding job.

It will probably get to the point where competitions that are extremely well organized are the only ones that will be well attended. Some are just terrible. One of the main problems is that there are usually too many categories at a given competitive event. It often becomes an ordeal, and the ability to endure becomes the greatest factor of all. Maybe there should be a competition strictly for duets, traditional, line routines, or whatever. I have never seen a competition that truly gives credit to a solo clogger and his ability to choreograph and develop footwork on a routine to his choice of music. This category is left out entirely.

Those who are very involved in competitive clogging will obviously not agree with some of my comments. While certainly not totally against competition clogging, I honestly have not always enjoyed it. Exhibition clogging I have always enjoyed. The intent of expressing my thoughts on these matters is that competition is not the only road to clog down. There are other alternatives, not any less worthwhile. The really important thing is to enjoy clogging. That is the only true way to be in first place. Is there really any other reason for doing it?



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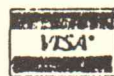
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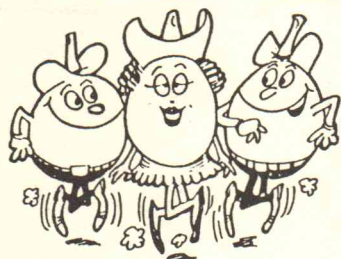
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