

WORLD LINE DANCE NEWSLETTER



Tampa Bay Line Dance Classic 2011

What's better than warm chocolate chip cookies when you sign in at an event? THE EVENT ITSELF!! How can a weekend do anything but be fun when you are greeted with a warm, chewy, yummy chocolate chip cookie to start off your weekend journey? The hotel staff at the Doubletree is always warm and welcoming and I was even dancing with one of the staff in the hallway who knew how to do Cupid Shuffle. Many people who work in the hotel told me how they look forward to having us every year and we enjoy this hotel, especially the ballroom area in the hotel, because everything is centrally located and easy to get from class to class. There are also two large malls and many restaurants in the area and the shuttle is happy to take anyone to places within a couple of miles radius of the hotel. In the International Plaza there is an middle-to-upscale restaurant section with places like The Cheesecake Factory and some very nice restaurants serving every imaginable type of food. This mall has stores like Neiman Marcus and Saks, etc. There is another mall that has more mainstream stores and lots of them. I think there was some heavy-duty retail therapy going on this weekend from the people I ran into at the malls. There is a sports-type bar/restaurant and a more formal restaurant in the hotel and I have to say the prices were reasonable and the food was very good. There's also a little gift shop if you needed aspirin or a souvenir or magazines. The pool is always a hit at this event and this weekend was no exception. I really hope that some year you will plan to stay over after the event and enjoy the After Party we always have on Monday night and also to visit some of the wonderful things to do in the Tampa Bay Area, especially the beautiful white-sand beaches and anything else you might want to do for a few days. I promise you won't want to leave!!

This was the first year that Jen and Jason Cameron took over the reins from Arline Winerman and they really tried to not make any drastic changes but will follow the lead of the attendees and what they like and don't like to continue to build this event into the premier event that Arline gave birth to, just as they have done with FUN IN THE SUN in Orlando and THE LINE DANCE SHOWDOWN in Boston.

The lineup of instructors this year was, as always, topnotch:

Sandy Albano, Barry & Dari Anne Amato, Michael Barr, Scott Blevins, Michele Burton, Zachery Detweiller, Bracken Ellis-Potter, Kathy "G", Lisa Johns-Grose, Dan McInerney, Debbie McLaughlin, Marilyn McNeal, Rosie Multari, Guyton Mundy, John Robinson, Maurice Rowe, Vivienne Scott, Frank Trace, Ria Vos, Junior Willis,

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Arline Winerman. It was the first US appearance of Ria Vos and what a wonderful addition she was. I hope you get to meet her and dance with her at some future event. It was great having all the instructors and they all were out dancing with everyone and enjoying the event all weekend.

Jen and Jason own their floors and they are really wonderful to dance on. No trips and slips and wondering what your foot is going to encounter on the next turn. LOL. I also liked that they didn't open up the second room at night because it kept the energy up for the entire weekend. I know that some people wondered why they didn't but they wanted to see if it would keep the party atmosphere going and I think it worked because I noticed that all levels stayed up and danced into the wee hours. Sometimes too much space can seem more like a cavern than a dance floor. That's just my opinion. I know they will listen to your suggestions. Not every suggestion can be implemented but I've noticed that the best events welcome the suggestions and take them under serious consideration and insert things or delete things as time goes by.

The three DJ's, Louie, JP, and Olivia kept the floors packed all weekend and the two main rooms were across the hall from each other so people were going back and forth to enjoy them both. I was happy to see the upcoming dances projected on the wall and I liked that there were two rooms this year because it keeps people in the generally-same area and just keeps the energy up for the weekend. The reviews were scheduled in ten-minute increments and everyone stayed on schedule. It made them real reviews instead of mini-lessons which tend to drag on forever. Everyone knew when to be there and then you could stay or leave so you didn't have to miss a lot of dancing.

I really liked having the open dance in the lobby area. I've always thought that was the perfect place to have lots of open dancing and it was so much fun to be able to go in there and review a dance and many times the choreographers jumped on the floor to lead the dances. It's a perfect meeting place and just a place to relax and have a bite to eat or a cup of coffee and dance to your heart's content. There was also a mini cafe set up next to this room for breakfast and lunch fare so you could grab a bite to eat or coffee or a drink and sit at one of the tables and eat with your friends. The beautiful weather this year also was fully visible from this room and it was easy to run outside and just sit at one of the outside tables for a few minutes and come back in. There were some GREAT vendors there this weekend, also. If you wanted jewelry, shoes, clothing, gadgets, whatever, it was there on display. I love having lots of vendors at events and I like that you are always passing them on the way to the dance rooms or your room so you can browse a number of times during the weekend.

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The reviews of the next day's dances were held at night for the Friday and Saturday classes and were done earlier in the day for the Sunday classes. I like having the reviews at night because then the instructors tend to stay up and dance with everyone instead of having the pressure of getting up first thing to do reviews. There were four rooms running all day and all of the easy dances were in the Timberwoods so that the people who were new to the event or wanted to only do the easier dances, knew where they were going to be taught. I heard lots of good comments about this. One thing that Jen and Jason do is that they try to have most of the instructors do at least one beginner dance and they also try to have instructors they know the beginners will love. Some of the ones that are especially talented at picking good beginner dances, choreographing, and teaching beginners (although they all could teach any level) are Frank Trace, Vivienne Scott, John Robinson, Rosie Multari, Lisa Johns-Gross, Michele Burton, Bracken Ellis-Potter, Junior Willis, Ria Vos, Arline Winerman, Barry and Dari Anne Amato, and Michael Barr, among others. I think the beginner room is soooooo important for events because it is THE introduction to a weekend event and I think these people represent the best ambassadors for introducing what fun a weekend event can be. People love all of them and they know what dances to choose to make every hour spent in lessons special. I want to thank each of you for taking the time to really encourage people to try, not only this event, but other events because the new dancers to events are what keeps this special hobby going and growing and you are an important part of that. I know you don't hear it from people but I hear all the time from people who were so impressed that some instructor took a moment to stop and introduce themselves or thank them for coming to your class or just say hi. It may seem like a small thing but I remember when I first started going to events that it was really special to actually talk to someone I had admired from afar.

The theme for Saturday night was WILD WILD WEST, so appropriate since Jason was co-choreographer of that dance many years ago. Everyone was dressed in country garb and it made me feel like a long time ago when we all wore boots and twirly skirts, and big belt buckles, and all kinds of stuff that made a night feel really special and "WILD WILD WEST country." In the time leading up to the show, Louie played many of the songs that we danced back then and kept the feeling of country going. I really enjoyed that. I thought the show was just the right length and variety and it was just fun. It started off with the team, Sweet and Sassy, directed by Christine Bass (and Junior was there for some reason for a short time. LOL.). Next, Guyton Mundy did a little skit called "What Is Line Dancing" and his "class" was hysterical. Junior had taught a clogging class during the

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day and his entire class performed the routine he taught. It amazes me how much they learn in his clogging classes in such a short amount of time. Jean and Jason and their group performed a Wild Wild West routine. Mary Melson (sp.) led Michele Burton and Rosie in a routine. I loved Rosie as "The Judge." Michael Barr, John Robinson and Guyton, Chris, Zac performed (and there were more people but I couldn't write fast enough). Barry and Dari Anne did a medley of dances with some clogging added in the routine. The Glitter Sisters, led by Trish St. Denis, ended the show. It was a fun and festive show which led to a raffle with a 50/50 drawing and lots of great passes being won by raffle winners. And then the evening dancing began.

I'm putting as the very last thing, the favorite dances that people have been sending me. There is no way any longer that I can tell you every dance that is good at an event. My personal favorites were pretty much what everyone else liked -- some I already knew and some were brand new. I don't know what the theme will be next year yet but I do know the dates, November 1-4, 2012, www.tampalinedanceclassic.com. I hope you will put it on your calendar and plan to come next year for the event, stay over a few days, join us for the After Party, and enjoy the Tampa Bay Area that we are so proud to show you. Jen and Jason will be updating the web site and sending out information soon. Come again and bring a friend so we can do it all over again!! Remember, you can contact Jen and Jason if you would like to order the videos of all the dances taught during the weekend and the show.

FAVORITE DANCE PICKS:

Be sure and look at the REPORTS FROM OTHERS for their picks because it's impossible to review every dance taught unless you see everyone's picks. The dances keep getting better and better and it makes it even more difficult to know which ones to take!! Here's some from previous reports and Facebook posts:

"My favs were No Llores, Caribbean Pearl, Just for me & Sara Smile in that order." (from Marjory Cacioppo)

Rose Williams: "My favourites were: "Free Falling" that Debbie taught, "No Llores" and "Language of the Heart" by Ria, "Sara's Smile" by Michel, "Show me the Love" that Marilyn taught and "Hold on Tight by Scott". I liked a lot more but the list would be too long."

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Jodi Ermlich wrote: "My faves were FREAK A LITTLE MORE and DEJA VU. JP did an amazing job Djing the main ballroom before Louie got there. It would be nice to see him do more!!

(From Marilyn McNeal)

NO LLORES (int). First dance by Ria this weekend and got much applause. Latin (cha rhythm) music by Gloria Stefan (love her music) and great steps. We had fun with this dance and it filled the floor at night.

LANGUAGE OF THE HEART (Int/Adv) NC2. Absolutely love this dance and the song is one that grabs you, like many nightclubs. A "must do" for me!

JUST FOR ME(int). Though I love NC2 and Waltz most, this easy Swing is one of my favorites this weekend. Great steps and the song sold me!

MARINA(Int) - missed this one due to my schedules reviews, but she had a full room for this Sunday teach. .

MEANT 2 BE(Johanna Barnes), advanced waltz, taught by Zac. Music is Misery by Pink - loved it.

LEAVE YOUR MARK, Debbie McLaughlin. Powerful music by Beyonce called I Was Here. Fast Waltz, great steps and I do believe this will be another hit for Debbie along with PREJUDICE - very cool dance and both of these filled the floor at night. Debbie is certainly a rising star in our dance world.

FREE FALLIN'(Rachael's dance), also taught by Debbie. GREAT dance and a challenge, but worth it.

Already knew these taught by Kathy G.

JAZZY GIRL (Jo Kinser). Great dance to catchy music. I hope this one catches on - we love it here in Ocala

WALKIN' THE BLUES(Jill Babinec& Deb Pancoast) - cool WC Swing.

A DRINK IN MY HAND(Sandy Goodman) - Improver level choreography winner from Chicago, and being danced everywhere.

HURT ME SO(Scott Blevins). Wow, this is another "Scott" dance that will be one of those keepers.

FREAK A LITTLE MORE by Scott filled the floor - easy one and fun to dance to "dance to the music!"

Guyton's JUMP IN THE LINE was hilarious, and as much fun to watch as to dance! Way to go Connie from Ocala!

I want to mention some beginner dances, also: Nightclub Fillestar(Bracken Ellis-Potter) great introduction to NC2 for beginners.

Boondocks (Amatos) was cute and a crowd pleaser. Danced just about all of Ira's dances, and Michael and

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Michele's too.

Danced all of Frank Trace's too, which are always popular.

Sweet Georgia Brown (Burton & Kurtela), French Toast & Love Letter Waltz (Trace) are already favorites in my classes.

My own classes for this weekend were SHOW ME THE LOVE (Simon Ward)

Love, love, love this dance, and got to teach it again to a full floor. You will enjoy dancing this to Wynonna's I Wanna Know What Love Is. Also, YOU BETTER STOP (Steve Rutter & Claire Butterworth). I personally love this dance. The choreography is great and the song Stop, by Jamelia is too!

GREG IN PA:

9am - No Llores with Ria Vos – I had read about this dance recently in the Line Dance Newsletter, so I was excited to give this lesson a go; doubly so since this was my first time meeting Ria as well. Ria is a superb instructor and she offered an effortless teach of her cha rhythm dance. The choreography hits the notes and timing perfectly. The second and third 8-counts required some extra attention due to a series of direction changes followed by a surprisingly different lock timing, but Ria was divinely patient and worked out the kinks. I love the track and the dance, and it's easily one of several favorites of mine from the weekend.

10am – Free Fallin (Rachael McEnaney) with Debbie McLaughlin – Although I took a teach of this from Rachael at Windy City, I was looking forward to a second teach due to the complexities of the timing since it makes a huge difference in finally feeling or not feeling the music. Debbie did a fantastic job, as usual, presenting the timing and everyone seemed to be dancing to the skin-tingling John Mayer track in no time. From the buzz throughout the weekend, this was a definite favorite of many of the dancers and obvious floor filler during open dancing.

11am – déjà vu (J.P. Potter) with Maurice Row – I'm glad that Maurice selected this popular dance of J.P.'s to teach. I've heard it played at other event weekends, and Maurice made it a joy to learn. Since déjà vu was a rather quick teach, Maurice was also able to include his own popular dance After Party. Two great dances in under an hour. Thanks Maurice!

12pm – Clogging Part I with Junior Willis – After watching the clogging performance at Windy City, I was nervous about trying Junior's lesson, but several friends nudged me into giving it a go. I had a BLAST and I'm

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so glad that I gave it a chance! Junior did an incredible job breaking down the steps and introducing us to 14 different clogging patterns. The naming conventions definitely made it easy to remember and we sequenced them to music to get a feel for the rhythm.

1pm – Prejudice with Debbie McLaughlin – I originally learned this from Rona K. at Windy City, but it's well worth a second teach so it was an easy choice to take it from Debbie herself. Although its phrasing can be off-putting, you can absolutely feel each phrase in the music. I've been enjoying dancing this since Windy City, and given its popularity at Tampa I'm sure this will be sticking around for quite some time. Plus, absolutely any chance to learn anything from Debbie is a treat. Her sense of humor shines, plus she's a dancer to admire on the dance floor so any aspects of style she offers make the effort worthwhile.

2pm – Walkin' Blues (Jill Babinec and Debi Pancoast) with Kathy G. - I first saw this danced at Windy City, but I wasn't able to make a teach there, so it was an easy choice to make for Tampa. I adore the track by Melinda Doolittle and the west coast rhythm dance Jill and Debi choreographed is amazing. I admit that I struggled with some of the timing during the lesson from Kathy G., but it all made sense once we started dancing to the music. I would definitely recommend going to music early and often with this one since it certainly helped me, as well as a few others that I talked to. Kathy G. also taught A Drink In My Hand (Sandy Goodman), but I missed that portion of her teach.

3pm – Hot Stepper with Dan McInerney – Maybe because the song was overplayed in the '90s, I wasn't in love with track selection when I first heard it. I went to the lesson to watch Dan's teach and to give my feet a break, but 8-counts into watching I jumped out of my seat to join in. When all was said and done I absolutely loved it. Dan has a great ear for music and went out of his way to choreograph steps to the song's musical highlights. For me, the fun was in hitting those highlights along with Dan's interesting collection of steps. It's both quirky and fun and helped me to enjoy Here Comes The Hotstepper.

4pm – Pay Your Dues with Maurice Row – Maurice is a high energetic instructor, and this dance is definitely an energetic match. The timing is quick, but once I got it, well, I got it. Lol. The key seems to be letting yourself simply move from step-to-step without stopping, especially through the opening syncopation. Natural inclination helped move me where his choreography wanted me to go. A friend taking the lesson also offered me some remedial practice with the hip-and-dip move $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way through, and with their help that clicked too. Lol.

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Oh... Maurice also recommended a Glee Cast version to the Destiny's Child track, but I have to admit that I prefer the original maybe for no other reason than that Destiny's Child sounds amazing.

*** Saturday, November 5 ***

9am – You Better Stop (Stephen Rutter & Claire Butterworth) with Marilyn McNeal – This was an easy choice for me since I love the track, and the dance simply looked amazing. Although the timing looks intimidating (12&a34&a56&a78&a), which Marilyn compared it to Cry Me Out (Malene Jakobsen), the “12&a” repetition through the song was easy enough to hear and follow. I can't offer enough praise for the flourish-and-flow of this dance to this track, and it's easily another weekend favorite.

10am – Love's Kiss with John Robinson – I'm a fan of the Lady Antebellum track Just A Kiss, so I was sold on John's demo of this dance. Although it's only 24-counts, John packed a lot into this NC2S, so it definitely doesn't feel short or repetitive by any means. I love the flow, and especially the Sweep-Cross-Side sequence that opens the second 8-count. John also taught his No Love Allowed, but I needed to slip out to catch the tail end of Sandy Albano's teach of Never Enough (Joey Warren) as a review for myself after learning it at Windy City.

11am – Hurt Me So with Scott Blevins – The quick of what I have to offer is simple: great track and great dance! Scott always seems to find winners when it comes to music and this is certainly no exception. Between this and Freak A Little More, Scott really hit two home runs. The choreography for Hurt Me So includes a lot of playful elements and you almost need to try it for that to make sense. The playfulness comes while dancing since moves hit some really strong notes in the music. I really love the closing “walk” type sequence of the dance. It's a long string of whole counts (I seem to recall Scott mentioning that it might be the longest in any of his dances) and it has you covering some ground at just the perfect places in the song. The track is fast, but I can already tell from its popularity during open dancing that the efforts made in learning it will definitely pay off. This is easily yet another favorite from the weekend.

12pm – Rude Boy (co. w/Amy Spencer) with Junior Willis – After Scott's Hurt Me So cardio session, I needed to relax a bit. I already had a teach of this from Junior at Windy City, so this was a fun-to-do refresher. Everyone in the class was smiling, and it's just one of those dances that has you feeling naughty in a good way.

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2pm – Leave Your Mark with Debbie McLaughlin – Debbie choreographed this waltz to the Beyonce track, I Was Here, which is stunning in its own right and definitely worth a listen or twelve. Her waltz is easily just as breathtaking, and absolutely approachable. While asking her about it, she said she simply choreographed what she felt did justice to the music. It didn't need to be difficult. A lot of waltzes are chockfull of recycled steps, but her choreography keeps everything interesting. One thing I love about it is the strength of the closing counts that then fall away and become tender like the music. Cheers again, Debbie, and another favorite for me.

3pm – Clogging Part II with Junior Willis – Junior had me hooked after taking Part I, so I was definitely excited to learn the show number that he put together for us to practice. The song he chose was My Cowboy to help fit the theme of the Saturday Show – Wild Wild West – and we all had a great time learning it. I can't say I was "accomplished" after two one-hour lessons, but I was more than happy to help with Junior's clog show number as a diehard, self-appointed representative of the middle-back-row where no one except maybe Louis could see me. Lol. If anyone ever debated about giving one of Junior's clog workshops a go – as they say – "Just Do It". You won't regret it.

4pm – Just For Me by Ria Vos – Here's yet another occasion where I was sold simply on the song selection. It's another swing rhythm track by Renee Olstead called My Baby Just Cares For Me. Any fans of Rob Glover's Midnight Swing, or any of its floor splits, will love it as well since Olstead's Midnight Man is used for that. I love the variety of steps in her choreography, and it's simply a joy to dance to the music. I'm trying to pull out some highlight steps that really sold me on the dance, but there are just too many to choose. Give it a go and you'll see what I mean. This was yet another easy favorite for me.

*** Sunday, November 6 ***

9am – Missouri Swings (Michele Perron) with Barry & Dari Anne Amato – Barry opened his teach of this by praising the musicality of the steps in Michele's choreography, and they wanted to help give it the kind of attention that it deserves. The Brenda Lee track Kansas City is a classic, and I have to admit that after we learned enough to go to music the first time, the steps simply pop and jazz from the track.

10am – Goodbye Kiss (co. with Joey Warren) with Debbie McLaughlin – I first had a teach of this from Debbie at JG, and it was a favorite of mine from that event weekend. Debbie started her lesson in Tampa by admitting that neither she nor Joey has taught it again since. She did promise they would be more diligent in introducing this at upcoming events, especially since the song is fantastic in its own right and has done incredibly well on

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both the pop and country billboards – Don't You Wanna Stay by Jason Aldean ft Kelly Clarkson. I was a fan of this when I first learned it at JG, and I'm still a fan, BUT as Debbie also admitted, this is easily a two or three teach dance. There is a lot to the choreography, but she apologized that it's required by the phrasing of the music. The dance is every bit as difficult as Debbie slowly revealed throughout the lesson. Just when we'd work through one tricky spot, Debbie confessed "it gets worse". But to her and Joey's credit, the steps and flow fit the music achingly perfectly. I'm looking forward to keeping this practiced now that I feel like I finally "Got It" – or at least I think I do. Lol.

11am – That Kinda Lovin' with Guyton Mundy – This was another second teach for me since I first learned it at JG. I guess I'm discovering that I'm something of a nightclub junkie, so I was glad for the second lesson on this since I haven't been keeping it practiced for myself. Regardless, Guyton had us rolling with laughter along the way with each of his "okey-dokey"s and "maybe"s.

1pm – Love On Top (Kate Sala) with Dan McInerney – One word – yay! I'm so glad to finally learn this after reading so much about it in the Line Dance Newsletter. I love the movement, energy, and controlled-bounce of this dance "You put my love on top, top, top, top, top." There is something infectious about it and I can't quite put my finger on what it is. Regardless, Dan did a 'top' job teaching. Ok, that was bad. Lol.

SEE YOU NEXT YEAR AT THE TAMPA LINE DANCE CLASSIC.

Carol Craven