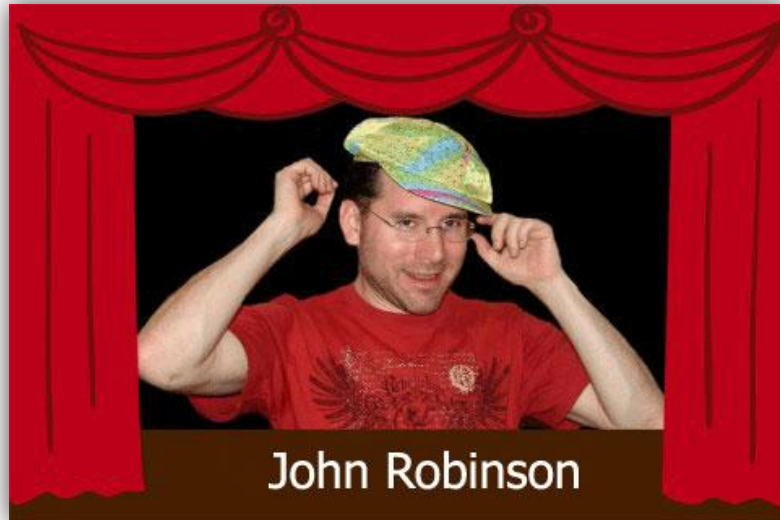


# WORLD LINE DANCE NEWSLETTER



## **Where were you or what did you see that made you say, "I want to do that!!"**

Back in the '90s, I had a "normal" job - I worked for a vitamin supplement company, Enzymatic Therapy. The health food industry has three large conventions each year, one in Anaheim, one in Las Vegas, and one in Nashville. At each convention, the company president made certain we attended some sort of cultural function; in Nashville, we went to a club called "The Wrangler" where we had missed the line dance lesson but the pattern partner class was just starting. My colleagues knew I liked to dance freestyle at company parties, so they encouraged me to take the lesson. I was shy and hesitant to get out there in front of everyone, but finally became convinced to join in and then really enjoyed myself. When I returned to Green Bay (Wisconsin, that's where I lived at the time), a friend called to invite me to a club that had free line dance lessons on Wednesday nights. I agreed to go with her and started attending the Grizzly Rose Saloon.

## **How did you get started with dancing?**

I'm a child of the '80s, and I loved moving around creatively to pop, new wave, freestyle and hi-nrg dance music back then. I had also made a list of 100 things to do before I die, and one of them was "take ballroom dance lessons." So I pursued that for three months when I was 19. I did not enjoy ballroom dancing because to me, the movements were too regimented and stiff. My teacher said I was a natural and encouraged me to continue (the studio actually invited me to be on their competition team but I turned them down). Instead, several years later I found country line dancing and was hooked. I started teaching line, pattern partner, and freestyle couples classes in 1994, a year after I began taking lessons; then started competing in 1995.

## **What made you want to continue?**

The camaraderie of the dancers. I didn't have much of a social life until I started country dancing. It seemed like one giant extended family at the time - no matter what club we went to, we felt welcome; dancers were friendly, nice, and FUN. Once I started teaching, I decided to try choreographing a dance (can you believe my first one was 96 counts?!?). Then I started traveling the dance event circuit to learn new moves for my couples classes. Seeing Scott Blevins and his team of dancers inspired me to improve my choreography. As the years went on, Scott became a "big name" touring instructor and I

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thought, "Hey, if some long-haired cowboy from Texas can turn this into a career, so can I!" So in 1997, I quit my job of ten years and moved to Colorado to teach dance.

## **What type of dancing/teaching do you do?**

Primarily progressive/modern line dancing, although I also enjoy (and teach) freestyle couples, especially west coast swing and fast two-steps! Most people are surprised to learn that I've had no formal training (other than

those 3 months of ballroom when I was 19) - they usually think I have a jazz or ballet background. Everything I know has been absorbed through the years from all the classes, lessons, and workshops I've attended. Everything I do in dance is based on what feels good to my body and my soul when I'm hearing and interpreting the music.

## **What dances have you choreographed that you are most proud of (because I know some of you will have a zillion of them)?**

FRESH, which was my first international hit; Scooter Lee featured the step description on one of her CDs - (and I didn't even know it at the time!). DANGEROUS, which is my "signature" dance; incidentally, it was originally only 32 counts until my friend Susie said I needed to add more - the arm section came later after watching the Janet Jackson "Rhythm Nation" video. NEVER DANCE, which at 128 counts was quite an ambitious undertaking at the time! C'MON C'MON, one of my personal favorites. SLOW BURN co-choreographed with Kathy Hunyadi and KEEP IT BURNIN' co-choreographed with Craig Bennett, both of which were worldwide smashes and nominated for awards.

## **What has been a real thrill for you related to dancing?**

Spreading the joy of line dancing to so many exciting places: I've seen every state except Alaska, and I've taught and toured throughout Australia, Austria, Finland, Holland, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, and the United Kingdom. Taking first and second place in the choreography competition at the 1997 Dance Team Showdown was pretty amazing! Beating Pedro Machado to win my UCWDC World Championship title fulfilled a long-standing goal. Of course, all the awards I've won over the year have been marvelous and very appreciated. But, after all this time, the biggest thrill is still whenever someone comments that my dancing inspired them in some way.

## **What hobbies and interests do you have outside of dancing?**

Huh? I'm supposed to have interests outside of dancing? I collect CDs - I'm addicted to music - especially stuff from the '80s, hi-tech AOR (adult-oriented rock), freestyle, hi-nrg, trance, techno, new beat, classic synthpop and futurepop, industrial, etc. I enjoy spending time outdoors (to explore nature's beauty) although I rarely get to because of my busy tour schedule. I love to read, especially fantasy novels (dragons, magic, talking animals, quests, good versus evil stuff). I like watching movies (fantasy, sci-fi and horror are my favorites although I've discovered as I get older that I'm a sucker for romantic comedies too). I'm not into organized sports at all (football, baseball, etc.). And I love to eat, especially Mexican and Italian.

## **Where do you consider "home"?**

I've lived in Louisville, Kentucky, since 1998 but I'm originally from Door County, Wisconsin - I grew up on a dairy farm one mile south of Sturgeon Bay. Door County is one of the most beautiful places in the United States. I always feel calmer when I go back there.

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## **What type of job do you do or dream of doing (if you would like to share it)?**

I'm extremely happy doing what I do now. Before dancing, I had successful jobs as: paralegal, technical school tutor, customer service representative, project manager, editor, magazine publisher, and medical records specialist. I have always been interested in the earth sciences, so if I were to pursue a "dream job," it might be something related to that.

## **Share information about your family (if you would like to share it).**

I'm adopted; all I know about my biological family is my mother was French-German and my father was Puerto Rican. My adoptive parents - Joseph and Anguless (Angie for short) Robinson - had four children of their own: Dennis, Pat, Jim and Karen (who were all grown by the time I was adopted); and then adopted four more: myself, Scott, Tina and Laurie. My mother and eldest brother both died in 1997. My family is great and we get along well, but I don't see any of them very often due to my busy traveling schedule.

## **Who have been mentors in your dance career?**

Jo Thompson. Her charm, warmth, outgoing personality, professionalism, and inner strength inspired me to become a better instructor.

## **Just give us a general overview of you as a person and a dancer.**

Here are some of my philosophies: I firmly believe in continuing to better ourselves every day. Life is too short to dwell on disappointments and negative issues. We need to allow for one another's differences, realizing no one can be exactly like us - and not expecting everyone else to believe and act the way we do. Spread kindness and joy everywhere we go. Smile more. Laugh more. Dance, let go, and just have FUN!

***\*Picture provided by CJ***