



Original logo
created in 2001

High Desert Swing Dance Club Roots

By: Amy Braden - HDSDC Secretary

In the late '90s many of us were interested in and participating in dance events...mostly *Country*. There were dance performance groups lead by Karen Johnson, Sue Hebison and others, and dance lessons provided by Karen, Jack Graham and the infamous Frank and Rita Pierce. Dancers got their "dance fix" any where they could!

Sitting around a Pizza Hut table one night, Frank and Rita, Bob McCusker and Jacki Liddell were lamenting and wishing there was a *Swing* dance group in town. ***NEVER under estimate the power of a dream!*** This small group got the ball rolling!

In November of 1998, we held our first dance at the 7 Mile Hotspot, located at the corner of Eagle Road and Chinden, and we collected dancer names and addresses. Then, in December, a group of 8-10 dancers got together at Shorty's, to address and stamp 75 envelopes containing an "Idaho Swing Dance Society" proposal from Frank and Rita Pierce (included at the end of this article) that we sent to dancers we *thought* might be interested in forming a swing dance organization. Well, they were!

Frank and Rita's proposal quickly led to the birth of the High Desert Swing Dance Club (HDSDC) on March 27, 1999. Our original "club" consisted of 18 board volunteers and 60 members, with dues of \$30 per year. At that time, I don't think any of us realized what kind of involvement there was going to be as we started a club like this.

Fortunately, Frank Pierce had a strong passion for music well before finding his passion for dance. So he provided the sound equipment and CD music for our dances. In fact, at that time, he dedicated a whole room in his house just for music!

Like any organization the HDSDC has not gone without bumps in the road. Fortunately, we survived them, and in the big picture very little has actually changed over the years - the HDSDC continues to provide low-cost swing dance opportunities as it did in the beginning.

We truly owe a BIG "hats off" to Frank and Rita Pierce for their vision and role in creating our High Desert Swing Dance Club....and for GIVING OUR FEET WINGS!

As a side note, when the 7 Mile Hotspot was demolished its dance floor was moved to The Palace, that is now The Buffalo Club. So, today's dancers are dancing on the very same floor that our club's founders danced on fourteen years ago!

The following proposal, from Frank and Rita Pierce, on December 18, 1998, kicked off the formation of the High Desert Swing Dance Club.

Idaho Swing Dance Society

We are considering forming some sort of a swing dance organization and are wondering if you would be interested in joining us. We are not looking to start an exclusive club, more like a dance society open to ANYONE interested the swing dances (we don't want to limit ourselves to only one style.....like just country or ballroom). Here is a few ideas we have been tossing around and some questions for you to ponder:

PURPOSE: To prompt and enjoy non-competitive social swing dancing! To help each other become better dancers through education and camaraderie (dance instructors are especially invited to join). To sponsor dances, workshops, and other events promoting swing dancing. And, most of all, to have fun dancing!

MEMBERSHIP: Open to anyone and everyone, singles and couples. Should there be a membership fee? What do you think?

BENEFITS: There should be some benefits from belonging to any group (besides good times and good dancing). Perhaps discounts for card-carrying members from local shops, local dance instructors offering swing lessons, reduced cover charges for dances? Any ideas here?

ORGANIZATION: How organized should this group be? Should we have a president, secretary, treasurer, membership coordinator, committees, etc.? How often would they meet? Should this be a non-profit organization? We have very little experience with clubs, what have your experiences been?

EVENTS: Would we want to sponsor weekly dances, seasonal dances, special dances? The ideal organization would have a membership representing all types of dancing (country, ballroom, jazz, etc.) and to sponsor events that all could enjoy. Any suggestions?

We feel the "ideal" organization would be a mixture of several local instructors and dancers uniting together at "swing parties". But, we are willing to start small.....with a little help from you. Please take a few moments and fill out the attached questionnaire and leave it with us tonight or send it in the mail. Thanks.

Happy Dancing!
FRANK & RITA PIERCE