

Aggielife

Swing into the Groove

Swing dancing is easy to learn and is an intricate part of the culture.



PHOTOS BY KATHY STEMPIEN/THE BATTALION

BY KYLE WHITACRE
The Battalion

Modern Swing has finally taken hold of the post Generation-X culture that is looking for good times and ways to meet people that do not involve the mundane, mainstream ideas of dance clubs or bars.

As the Swing culture finally starts to infiltrate College Station, several places around town are now offering lessons. MSC University Plus offers lessons, usually in October, for \$25 per person.

Heather Feranec, a junior elementary education major, took the lessons with her boyfriend at University Plus after gaining an interest in the scene.

"We learned a lot of basic moves and steps and some harder moves we could tack on," Feranec said. "I like the music. It's a good alternative to the same old boring dancing. It's a very casual social dance. If they [the men] can lead, then you [the women] can follow. You can have just as much fun knowing the basics."

Other College Station organizations that offer lessons are the Silver Spurs and Aggie Wranglers, both of

which offer Jitterbug and East and West Coast Swing.

The Epicenter, the new four-in-one club in College Station, will offer dance lessons when its new Swing lounge opens.

Saturday the Hepcat Hop, a Swing party sponsored by The Guide, will be held at the Ramada Inn on Texas Avenue.

Free dance lessons will be given beforehand from 9:30 to 11 p.m. and then periodically throughout the night.

Aside from College Station, many places in Austin, Dallas and Houston offer lessons.

Swing dancing is characterized by a variety of different dances such as the Fox Trot, Lindy Hop, Jitterbug, East Coast Swing and West Coast Swing.

East Coast Swing is broken into three patterns called Single Swing, Double Swing and Triple Swing.

The difference in the three types comes in the first four counts of the moves.

Single Swing is similar to the Fox Trot in its slow-slow-quick-quick movements (slow being twice as many beats as quick).

Double and Triple Swing are done in quick steps.

Double Swing consists of step-touch-step-touch-back-rock. Step-touch is also called heel-toe as weight is put onto that foot.

A back rock is stepping, or rocking, back on the lead foot, which is left for the leader and right for the follower.

Triple swing is a series of three small steps done in the order 1-2-3 ... 1-2-3.

For the leader the motion goes L-R-L ... R-L-R...back-rock.

The steps are quick and bouncy in motion.

More complicated moves are incorporated into the basic steps.

Moving in and out of different moves and back to the basic steps becomes easier with time and practice.

The basic West Coast Swing is

looser than East Coast, not involving as much closed dancing and revolving more around style.

The basic West Coast move consists of three steps.

For the leader, first take one step to the left.

Second, take a step to the right.

Then cross your left foot behind your right foot and lean back (or forward) into a rock step.

For the follower, just reverse the feet (left to right).

The speed and pace of the song greatly affects the styles used.

Easy moves to add to the West Coast include the sugar push, the side pass and the tuck turn.

Harder moves include the spinning side pass and the basket.

With a few simple dance steps, it is possible for anyone to Swing with the best of them.



Liz Adams, a marketing graduate student, and Jonathon Acosta, a senior environmental design major, demonstrate basic Swing dance moves.

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