

NEO Swing

Aggie dancers to make appearance at 2000 Summer Olympics in Sydney, Australia

BY JULIA RECINDUS
The Battalion

The 2000 Summer Olympics are just around the corner and this summer the world will see 12 Aggie Swingcats participating in Sydney, Australia. NeoSwing, the American Olympic Swing Performance Team, was organized by three Texas A&M students: Erin Delcarson, a sophomore speech communications major, John Fonner, a sophomore biomedical engineering major and Jeremy Mitchell, a junior agricultural journalism major. The group will be representing Texas and Texas A&M during the American Performing Arts Series at the Olympics. The team includes a total of 35 swing dancers from Austin, Houston, Dallas and Oklahoma City. Delcarson, Fonner and Mitchell were discovered at the Texas Hall of Fame. The three were told to call The National Association of Performing Arts Education, which is the organization in charge of bringing American acts to the Summer Olympics. However, a minimum of 15 couples were needed so Delcarson contacted people from different swing scenes and organizations.

Rice University, University of Oklahoma and Southwest Texas University. Once the members were secured, it was time to look for coaches. The 1998 Lindy Hop Champions, Tena Morales and Camell Pipkin from Houston were suggested by one member.

"We went to a workshop and talked to them, and they were really interested," Delcarson said.

She said everything went very smoothly and the swing couple is now coaching the team on a voluntary basis. The team has now been together for a month and a half.

"We're borrowing from everybody's talents to put together the show," Fonner said. Delcarson and Fonner are both looking forward to visiting Australia.

"We can show what we've been working so hard for," Fonner said.

Delcarson said she agreed that she is eager to show-off the team's efforts in Australia and is looking forward to the trip for other reasons also.

"I'm excited about seeing the kangaroos," she said.

There is, however, one other goal the group must accomplish before they head off to see the wildlife and are seen by millions of people - the group must raise enough money for the trip by June 1.

The total cost for the entire troupe to go will be around

\$140,000. The cost includes expenses and costumes. The team will be dressed in red, white and blue. The ladies will be wearing blue dresses while their partners will be decked out in red zoot suits. On March 25, NeoSwing held its first community fund-raiser, "A Night of Swing" at the 3rd Floor Cantina in downtown Bryan. At the event the group performed a preview of their Olympic routine, and also hosted dance lessons on swing, lindy hop and hip-hop swing. Lindy hop is the original form of swing and is named after Charles Lindbergh. Delcarson said hip-hop swing has become "almost a new genre."

"It puts the music of today with the swing moves of yesterday to create a new style," she said.

The group hosted an all-night dance marathon lasting until 8 a.m. the following Sunday morning.

"We had two performances that morning, plus an all day workshop," Fonner said. Delcarson said the weekend was definitely a full one.

"We had 13 hours of practice, three hours of performing and 10 hours of dance-a-thon. It was exhausting but totally successful," she said.

"Members in NeoSwing were really impressed at how many people came out, how eager they were and how quickly they picked it up and how hospitable they were. We have a guy from the East Coast and he was blown away by the 'Howdys.'"

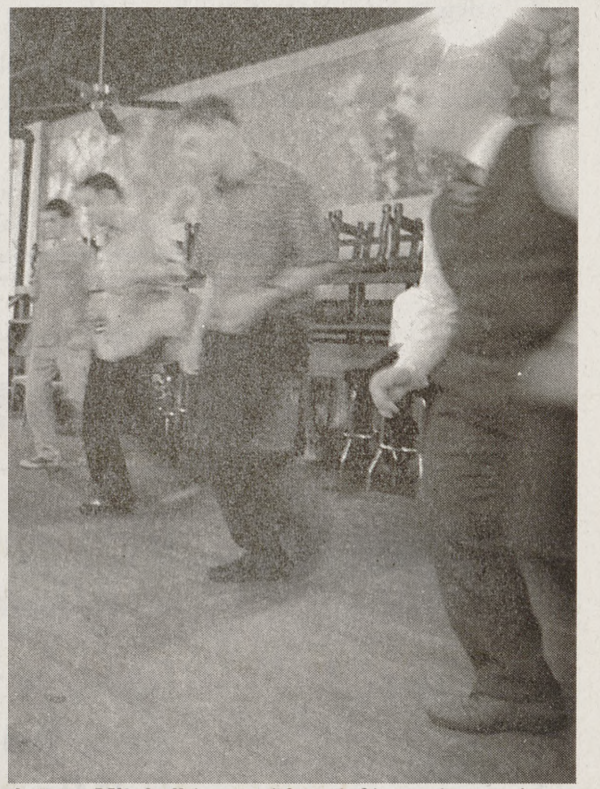
Swing Night brought in \$1,000 and the profits will be used toward getting the team to Sydney. The group is trying to find corporate sponsorship and are working on other future fundraisers.

"It's great [NeoSwing] originated with Aggies, and the University is really supportive," Delcarson said. "We're working closely with the Swingcats, so in that respect we might be able to hold lessons through Swingcats and use University facilities. Aggie Network and Aggie Moms are definitely willing to help."

She said that sources of help have not been limited to Aggies only.

"The Bryan-College Station community is helping out immensely, like donations. Some radio stations are doing free announcements," Fonner said.

NeoSwing will be hosting a workshop April 29 on Rice University Cam-



Jeremy Mitchell (second from left), teaches male steps at Third Floor Cantina Sunday night.



Erin Delcarson (third from left) teaches steps at a rehearsal Sunday night.

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- 1) What are your goals for managing your staff?
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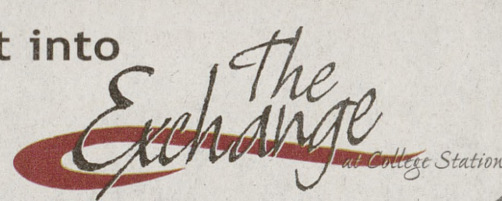
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- 2) What experience do you have that relates to the position for which you are applying? (include classes, seminars, etc.)
- 3) What changes do you feel would improve the quality of *The Battalion*? (Give special attention to the section for which you're applying.)

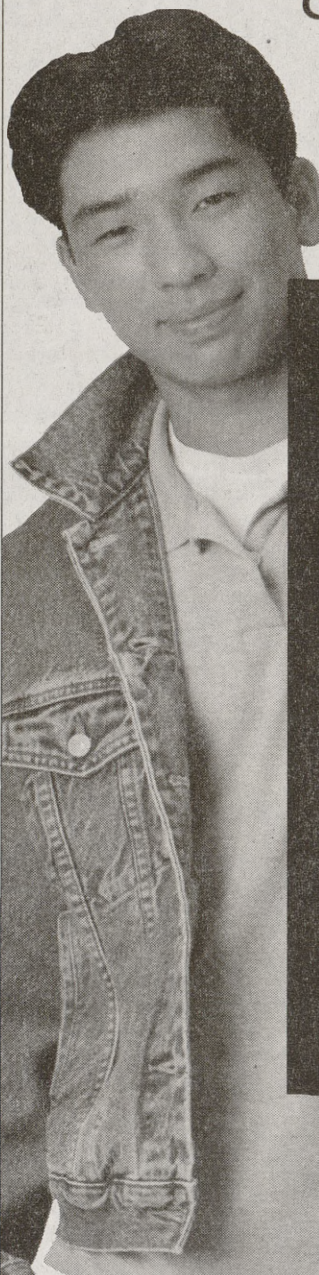
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*Deadlines: **Wednesday, April 12**, for editor positions, and **Monday, April 17**, for staff positions. Turn applications in at 013 (basement) Reed McDonald Building.

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Monday, April 3, 2000

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