

# Palmetto Ballroom Dance Club News



Volume 6 Issue No. 2

Florence, South Carolina

April-June 2006

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## Let the Summer Theme Dance FUN Begin!!!!

### Beach Party

June 9, 2006

Leatherman Senior Center

Come and hang out at the PBDC "Beach Party Night" including a Tango & Foxtrot dance lesson June 9th. This is a casual dress event with all the trimmings that go with a typical beach party. Music will be provided by "Just Us" Duo. So dress comfortably and be ready to have some fun.

#### 2005-2006 Board of Directors

##### Officers

Tom Simmons **President**  
Anita Stansbery **Vice President**  
Janice Flowers **Treasurer**  
Pauline Jelovchan **Secretary**  
Helene Ellis  
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###### Dance Instructors:

Tom & Ellen Simmons

###### Dance Theme and Decorations:

Ellen Simmons - Chair

**Publicity:** Joe DeVito

**Membership:** Janice Flowers

**Music and Band:** Tom Simmons

**Web Master:** John Wells

**Door Prizes:** Josie Marqueses

**Newsletter:** Joe DeVito

**Video Librarian:** Helene Ellis

#### *Pictures of Past Theme Dances*





## From the Desk of the President.....

Three months have past since my last message. Attendance has dropped significantly. The excitement generated by the television shows and movies seems to have waned. There are new shows in the works, but only time will tell if they have the same effect as previous shows. Our average attendance for the past three months has been 29 members. We continue to lose money. We need 47 members each dance to break even. Since we do not have that many members, it's easy to see we have a problem. The club will be able to continue to operate for an extended period of time. Unless there is an increase in membership, there will come a time when we will have to assess our position as a valid entity. I do not want to scare the membership, but we must face reality. Everyone needs to talk up the club with friends and acquaintances.

Your board met in April to discuss the club's finances and the upcoming summer dances. We were forced to cut back on our postage expenses. We were mailing notices and newsletters to people that have been to maybe one dance, or have not been to a dance as far back as early 2004. We will continue to send out notices to everyone who we have an email address on file. We will no longer send out monthly notices and quarterly newsletters by mail. The notice and newsletter are available on our web site ([palmettodanceclub.org](http://palmettodanceclub.org)). For our members without a computer we will hold a copy of the newsletter for you at the front desk. The club Secretary will continue to send a letter to guests for a two month period.

*“Everyone needs to talk up the club....”*

The summer theme dances begin with the June dance and will run through August. During this period the dress code will be relaxed to no coat and tie. Dance classes will be provided during this period. Just Us Duo will continue to provide the music. We will start with a “Beach Party” in June, followed by a “4<sup>th</sup> of July/Independence Day” dance. The August dance has not been determined yet. The board made a commitment to have the summer dances, now we need your support to make them successful.

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## Maypole Dance

By Tom Simmons

How many people have ever participated in a Maypole dance? It was the first for me. A special thanks goes out to Kay Roberson and Bonnie Belger from Lugoff for exposing our members to a traditional Maypole dance. The Maypole dance comes from Europe and Asia and dates back several centuries. Kay and Bonnie came down from Lugoff over an hour before the dance to decorate and set up the pole with all the streamers. We were slow learners, but it was fun once we got the flow and rhythm going. Their efforts were above and beyond the call of duty.

**Maypole dancing** is a traditional form of folk dance from western Europe, especially England, Sweden and Germany. Dancers dance in a circle each holding a coloured ribbon attached to a central pole, known as the maypole. By the movements of the dancers the ribbons are intertwined and plaited either on to the pole itself or into a web around the pole. The dancers may then retrace their steps exactly in order to unravel the ribbons.

Maypole dancing is extremely ancient and is thought to have Germanic pagan fertility symbolism. It is traditionally performed in the spring around the festival of May Day, but in Sweden it is during the midsummer festivities.



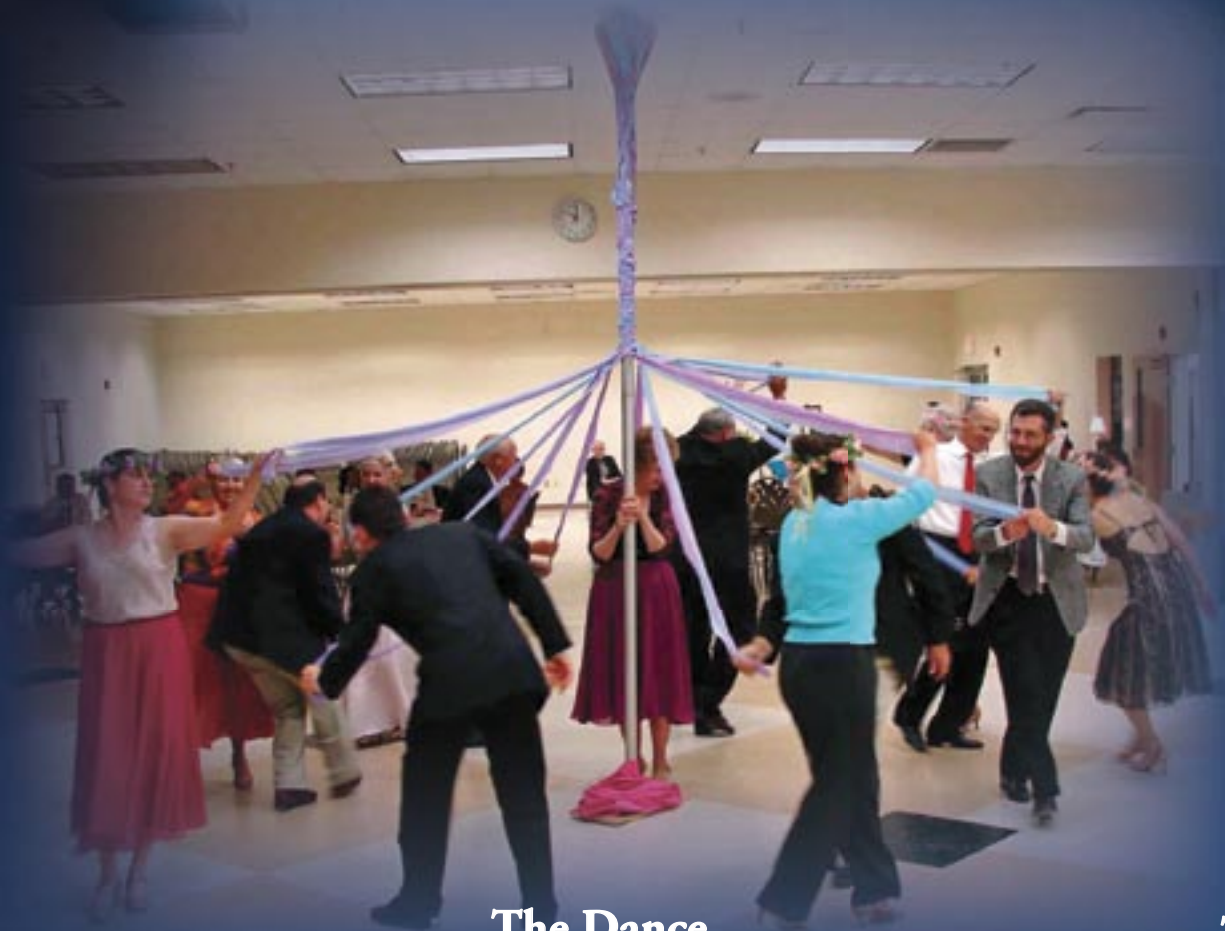
**PBDC  
SPOTLIGHT  
SHOWCASE  
TALENT AND STYLE**



**Tom & Ellen  
Waltz with Style & Grace**



**THE MAYPOLE DANCE**



**The Dance**



**The Result**



**March 2006  
Dance Party in  
Review**



**Door Prize Winners**





By Tom and Ellen Simmons

Has anyone noticed members practicing during the dance? We are fortunate to have a facility where we can dance on one end of the hall and practice on the other end without disturbing each other. Besides practicing their steps, members are helping each other. Ellen and I have noticed several people reviewing/refining steps following the class. This is so rewarding to watch people interested in their dancing and trying to improve.

A special thank you goes out to our more experienced dancers who have been helping the new people during the classes. It is very difficult to teach and get around to everyone for individual assistance. We appreciate Anita's efforts with the new people during the practice session. It will be hard to find a replacement when she leaves us in August.

We have talked to several members about their dancing and were surprised how many were more interested in perfecting the few steps they know than trying to learn a bunch of steps. Remember, "it's not how many steps you know, it's how well you execute the ones you do know".

When we began the current year we instituted a new dance class format to help bring the new members up to date and allow them to do the basic steps during the parties. This format worked well during the first few months, but Ellen and I feel that we are probably doing our guests an injustice by continuing the two dance format. The June dance will complete another cycle when we finish the Foxtrot and Tango. Effective in July we will revert back to the one dance format consisting of a 40 minute class and 20 minute practice session. There will be a separate advance class during the last 20 minutes while the beginners practice. We feel that our members will learn more, retain more, reduce the frustration level, and be able to practice only one dance during the party.



## DECORATING

I want to extend a thank you to everyone that has volunteered to help with the decorations: Hsin Yi Armstrong and Elaine Liao in February; Trena and Charles Ducker in March; Janice and Ellen in April; Kay Roberson, and her friend Bonnie Belger from Lugoff in May. I cannot tell you how much I appreciate your efforts. They were all well done and very creative. The summer months are ahead of us. I have volunteers for the June and July dances. If someone would like to take August, please let me know. Remember, when a theme is announced try to dress accordingly (optional). Check the monthly notice for the theme. Let's have fun with these dance parties.



**Put a Little Spring  
in Your Step  
April 2006  
Review**



**Door Prize Winners**



How I Learned To...

# Lord of the Dance

## From fear of failing to steppin' out with my baby in ten not-so-easy lessons BY ANDY SIMMONS

**AFTER ABOUT** the 47th night in a row of sitting in front of the tube with my wife watching Home & Garden TV, I had a stunning revelation: "I gotta get out of this house!"

Ever since the birth of our daughter, Quinn, three years ago, Jennifer and I had become housebound. I missed our nights out together. Quinn was old enough now so that we should be able to venture out occasionally. The question was where? I didn't want to go to the theater to watch an Ang Lee film, and hanging around a bar pitching darts wasn't tops on Jen's list. Friends had taken dance classes and loved it. The last time I'd danced was years ago in college. And that was on top of a table gyrating to Blondie.

"Wanna take dance classes?" I asked.

After the initial guffaws, she actually considered it. We're not exactly the dancing type. Jennifer had sworn off anything physical after her days as a high school soccer player when she sat on the bench holding the other players' jewelry. But she, too, longed to get out. The problem was that she was busy with a big project at work, and she didn't want to be away from Quinn any more than she had to. We decided I'd stick my toe in the water, and if I liked it, she'd join later.

So, I tippety-tapped my way to Dance New York, Westchester, my local ballroom dance school. I signed up for the beginner's class, a set of five two-hour sessions, where I hoped to come away Phi Beta Kappa in the fox trot, merengue, swing and salsa.

As my classmates and I waited to begin, some took off work shoes in favor of dance shoes. There was a nod, a quick "hi," but little mingling. We almost seemed embarrassed, we grownups, about going back to school.

**MY CLASS** of 30 ranged from recent college grads to card-carrying AARP members. Some could probably trace their ancestry to the *Mayflower*; for others English was ~ second language. There were people in good shape, and people without a shape. My class consisted mostly of couples; with a few single women. I was the lone male.

"All royt, boys on one side, guhls on the utha!!" That was Clive Phillips. He and his wife, Suzanne, were the owners of the studio and our teachers. Clive, a two-

time national ballroom champ, is a lanky Aussie with an easy grin. Suzanne, a gorgeous redhead, was a featured dancer at Radio City Music Hall. At least I knew I was in capable hands.

I lined up with the boys on one side facing the "guws." It was just like high school but with one big difference here they had to dance with me.

"Let's fox trot!" yelled Clive. My life as a modern-day Fred Astaire was about to begin! All that was missing was Edward Everett Horton handing me my top hat and tails. Clive demonstrated the basic steps: "Slow, slow, quick-quick."

I was already lost.

He then added a promenade-make a V-shape with your partner, and then take a couple of forward steps, with an abrupt head-whipping turn to the left thrown in for good measure.

"Now you try," said Clive.

I followed suit, adding a few flourishes along the way: slow, slow, quick-quick-stumble, stumble-stumble, stop, look confused, step, watch, stop, quit.

With the possible exception of listening to an eight-year-old trying to tell a joke, there's nothing more excruciating than watching novices learn to dance. We're awkward, unsure of ourselves, and completely vulnerable.

"Grab a paht-nuh," yelled Clive. Husbands and wives paired off. My partner is Gail, a gum-chewing boomer. I take her hand in mine and place my right hand on her shoulder. She places her left hand on my right arm and blows a bubble. It's show time!

"Slow, slow, quick-quick," intoned Clive as we followed his moves.

"You're doing it wrong," said Gail. She corrected the way I held her hand, where my other hand should be on her back, and my footwork. I reminded her that as the male, I was the captain of our little ship and she should follow my lead, even if we were headed straight for an iceberg.

"Fix yer elbow," she said. We'd barely pulled up anchor and already my crew had mutinied and taken over.

"Changepaht-nuhs!" Clive and Suzanne have us changing partners frequently so that everyone experiences different styles of dancing (read that to mean "suffers equally").

My next victim was Beth. She greeted me by admitting he had no clue what she's doing. Good! I was free to lead as I saw fit.

"Sorry," I said as I led her into a chair.

"Sorry," I said after I kneed her.

"Sorry," I said as I threw her into another couple.

"Dance is supposed to be fun!" yelled Clive, possibly working off my partner's concerned expression.

"I'm failing dance class," I told Jennifer when I got home. She sympathized for a bit, until Quinn came out to perform. Coincidentally, Quinn had begun dance classes that day too. She had poise and grace, and knew her choreography. How is it possible that my three-year-old daughter is doing better than I am?

**STAR TURNED DANCE TEACHER** Pierre Dulaine got a crazy idea 11 years ago. Why not share his love of ballroom dance with New York City's inner-city students?

Today, Dulaine is the subject of an upcoming Antonio

# May Flowers Maypole Dance May 2006



## Door Prize Winners





Banderas movie, *Take the Lead*, and his Dancing Classrooms program is hugely popular with some 12,000 students. It's not just about the steps. He wants to impart life lessons: civility, manners, teamwork. The toughest part, says Dulaine, is getting young kids to hold their partners' hands. Once they get over that, they're hooked!

**"IT'S SALSA.** It's supposed to be sexy!" yells Clive the following week.

Clive was on an impossible mission to get the rod out of our collective butts. *Salsa* means "spicy sauce," and as a Latin dance, it's just that. It oozes sensuality. Or at least it's supposed to.

To that end, Clive made us bend our knees, swivel our hips and punch out the driving beat of the music with the balls of our feet. With our bodies heaving, our necks bobbing and our legs undulating, we looked like a room full of barfing dogs. To my mind, ours was a group that looked better stiff.

The fact is, at this stage in the dance game, sex is the last thing we beginners are worrying about. We've got a foot fetish going on-and-with our own feet. Because that's all we're doing—staring at our feet and wondering why they haven't learned the steps. And yet the sexy stuff will come, Suzanne assures us, especially if we take our eyes off our feet.

It's a simple concept, and when Clive and Suzanne dance, I get it. During one of their biweekly parties, they stepped out on center stage and waltzed. And believe me, it wasn't the waltz that Cinderella and the prince danced. No, no. This was graceful and beautiful and, oh, so sensual. They were more than dance partners; they were lovers.

In watching them, we novices saw the possibilities.

**I DON'T KNOW WHY** I thought I could master ballroom dancing in just a few classes. But it didn't take long to discover it's really hard. I needed a sympathetic ear, and knew just whom to call.

"I know your pain. I know your pain," says John O'Hurley, after listening to my horror stories. If it weren't for the likes of O'Hurley, the champ of *Dancing With the Stars*, ballroom dancing would not have become the social monster it is.

"I grew up as a little country club kid in Connecticut, so I had no cultural reference for it." He was talking about the challenge of learning the cha-cha. "My hips had never moved that way."

"But what can I do?" I pleaded. John gave me three tips.

"Ditch the Reebok Classics," was his first. I'd been wearing my favorite sneakers to class and he didn't approve. "Good dance shoes," he said. "are like a good pair of driving gloves." The shoes are highly flexible and the suede soles make it easier to glide across the floor.

"Move from the center of your body" was his second suggestion. John bemoaned the fact that most beginners are too busy concentrating on their legs. "Once you learn to relax your legs and move from the core your abdomen, everything else becomes much simpler."

"What's the third suggestion?"

"Keep a long neck," he said. "It'll give you height, and your body will follow your head." Then he added, "if nothing else, at least it'll make you look like a dancer."

**THE FOLLOWING CLASS**, I did as John had instructed. I bought new shoes—black-and-white jobs that looked like high-end bowling shoes. They did make moving across the floor more pleasant, as I was no longer sticking to it. By concentrating on working from the core of my body, I didn't have quite the herky-jerky movement one gets when relying solely on the legs. And finally, I kept my neck long. So at least, I hoped, I looked the part.

It all helped.

"But it wasn't enough," I told Jennifer after she put Mini-Martha Graham to bed. All the other couples were laughing and having fun. My partners have been great—friendly, forgiving, supportive. But still, "I'm not enjoying it as much as everyone else. Something's missing."

Jennifer spotted the problem. "Want me to take the class with you?"

"What about your boss, and Quinn?"

She knew something I didn't: I needed her more than they did.

**JENNIFER JUMPED** into dance class with gusto. And as expected, she was just as bad as me. She had trouble with her basics, her promenades were anything but, and her turns were merely big veers. Our arms got tangled and our knees knocked. And strangely enough, we were laughing as hard as I could remember. But every so often, we even got a step right. We performed a near perfect basic and promenade. And we beamed when Suzanne smiled and said, "You got it!"

We left class on a high, to Clive's declaration not to practice at home. "You'll just reinforce all your bad habits," he explained, bucking up my confidence.

At home, I put Quinn to bed, then came out to the living room.

"Let's practice," said Jennifer.

"Clive said we're not supposed to.

"Clive's not here," she said, assuming the dance position.

The fact is, I'll probably never get all the steps down or stop crashing my knees into those of my partner. But as I danced with Jennifer, I got to laugh with and hold the one person I most wanted to laugh with and hold.

Clive's mantra to "just have fun!" finally made sense. I was no longer a slave to my feet. They could do their own damn dance steps as far as I was concerned. If the right wanted to salsa while the left did the swing, so be it. I was now free to hold my wife in my arms—arguably for the first time since our daughter was born and our lives grew so hectic. It was sexy and exhilarating, silly and hilarious. Whether it's the fox trot, the tango or the funky chicken and whether you're in it to raise your energy level or to play Fred and Ginger for one night a week—ultimately, dancing is about having fun.

And I was finally having fun.

## Best Foot Forward Humor Corner!



HERMAN by Jim Unger



"We used to do quite a lot of ballroom dancing until my arms started getting shorter."

## PBDC Entertains Senior Center Members

By Tom Simmons

Members of the Palmetto Ballroom Dance Club provided an hour of dance exhibitions and two short dance classes in support of the Leatherman Senior Center Ice Cream Social, May 15<sup>th</sup>. Vanna and Perry Dumez, Jay and Maggie Reece, Tom and Ellen Simmons, and Vence and Pauline Jelovchan provided the dance exhibitions. Everyone seemed to enjoy the Foxtrot and Rumba class. Trena Ducker, and her daughter Suzanne, were there to provide support. We had some extra time, so we pressed them into action with both doing an impromptu Cha Cha with Tom. Gene Wells of the Leatherman Senior Center has been so accommodating when dealing with our club we wanted to reciprocate by helping them with an entertainment program.

## Video Library Collection Available

by Helene Ellis




Attention new and veteran members:

Don't forget that one of your club membership benefits, use of our video lending library of dance instruction, is still available.

We currently have 8 tapes in our collection. These tapes are loaned for 1 month and may be borrowed and returned at our dances. Please contact me or any board member for information. If you need instruction for practice at home between dances these are for your use.

- Basic Steps used in Fox trot, Waltz, Rumba, Mambo, Cha-Cha, Lindy swing and Tango.
- Latin Dances, Rumba, Cha-Cha, Salsa/Mambo and Tango.
- Beginner East coast swing and West coast swing.
- Beginner Cha-Cha and Rumba.
- Beginner Waltz, Cha-Cha, and Fox trot part 1.
- Beginner Fox trot part 2, Rumba, and East coast swing.
- Beginner Waltz, Cha-Cha, and Fox trot.
- Beginner Rumba and East coast swing.

For the latest club information check out our website at [www.Palmettodanceclub.org](http://www.Palmettodanceclub.org)



**Palmetto Ballroom Dance Club**  
The Pee Dee area's best kept Secret

**!!!Special Notices**

**2005/2006 PBDC Officers**  
*Tom Simmons - President*  
*Anita Stansbery - Vice President*  
*Janice Flowers - Treasurer*  
*Pauline Jelovchan - Secretary*

**Next Dance - Friday, June 9th, 2006**  
Time - Lesson 7:30 to 8:30pm; Open Dance from 8:30 to 11:00pm  
Instructional Dance - Foxtrot and Tango  
Instructors- Tom and Ellen Simmons  
Theme - Beach Party  
Dance Location - Leatherman Senior Center, 600 Senior Way (Freedom Florence)  
Attire - Relaxed Dress Code (June thru August); Appropriate Attire  
Refreshments - Soft drinks provided. Bring a specialty dish of your own to share (optional).  
Admission - \$7.00 for each Member, \$10.00 for each Non-Member. First time visit Free.  
Music by - Just Us Duo

View Spring Newsletter [here](#).  
(Requires Adobe Acrobat Reader - If you do not already have the Acrobat Reader, click on the Get Acrobat Reader

Photo Gallery  
Links  
Officers

## When You Dance, Health Benefits Abound

Like other moderate, low-impact, weight bearing activities, such as brisk walking, cycling or aerobics, dancing can help:

- strengthen bones and muscles without hurting your joints
- tone your entire body
- improve your posture and balance, which can prevent falls
- increase your stamina and flexibility
- reduce stress and tension
- build confidence
- provide opportunities to meet people, and
- ward off illnesses like diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, osteoporosis, and depression
- 

So if you're tired of the treadmill and looking for a fun way to stay fit and healthy, it might be time to start kicking up your heels!!!!

# Palmetto Ballroom Dance Club

## Membership Application Form

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Home \_\_\_\_\_ Work \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Annual membership dues are \$25/per person**

Mail To: Palmetto Ballroom Dance Club, 410 Eastburn Ct. Darlington, SC. 29532

12/1/03

### Dance Schedule

Dances are the second Friday of each Month

**2005/2006**

#### Summer Theme Dances

June 9, 2006

July 14, 2006

August 11, 2006

#### New Season Starts

September 8, 2006

October 13, 2006

November 10, 2006

December 8, 2006

Dance Lessons 7:30 to 8:30 pm

Open dancing from 8:30 to 11:00 pm.

Admission - \$7 for members & \$10 for guests

First time guests enjoy FREE admission.

### Dance location

The Palmetto Ballroom Dance Club will hold their regular dances on the second Friday of each month at **The Leatherman Senior Center**, Freedom Blvd. in Florence, South Carolina.

### Coming Events.....

- **June Beach Party**  
Foxtrot & Tango Lesson
- **July Patriotic Night**
- **August Luau** (Tentative)

### Club Membership

*from Janice Flowers*

The PBDC tries to make it as easy as possible to experience ballroom dance in the Pee Dee by providing free admission to all "first time" guests. Pass the word and let's boost attendance this season.

Please promptly renew your membership when due. Our club depends on your dues to help pay for the hall, band and special treats throughout the season.

If you have not renewed your membership, we urge you to fill-out and send the form above with your check to the address shown.



Don't forget the success of the PBDC depends on your participation in club activities. Our future is dependant on your energy, creativity and personal interactions & experience. Please step forward and help in the following areas:

- Decorations for this season
- Newsletter stories
- Publicity opportunities
- Door prizes
- Special projects

### Editor's Note

Your comments, suggestions and articles of interest are welcome and encouraged. Write to PBDC, 410 Eastburn Ct., Darlington, SC 29532, Tel. 667-9147 or email us at [jdevito@sc.rr.com](mailto:jdevito@sc.rr.com)

Please be sure to check out our website:

[www.Palmettodanceclub.org](http://www.Palmettodanceclub.org)

The Palmetto Ballroom Dance Club Newsletter is published four times a year. It is encouraged that ALL club members participate in contributing to this publication at least once during each year. Next publication date is September 1, 2006. Your information must be received by August 14<sup>th</sup>, 2006.

### Editorial Staff:

Joe & Patty DeVito  
Anita Stansberry  
Pauline Jelovchan  
Tom Simmons