



CARL BARROW (2018)

My love for shag dancing was preceded by my love for Rhythm and Blues music, which started in 50's when I began listening to WLAC in Nashville, Tenn. Every night my radio was tuned into John R. on Ernie's Record Parade followed by Hoss Allen on Randy's Record Shop, which played solely R&B.

Later in college I started playing bass guitar for a Richmond based band called "The Specks" We were the house band at the Ocean View Ballroom, which was located under the roller coaster, for the summer of 1962, playing seven nights a week. After college, I joined another R&B band called "Gene and the Teambeats". We opened the Peppermint Beach Club at Virginia Beach and was the house band there for the summer of 1963. We also played the Beach Club in Va. Beach and the Rendezvous Club in Norfolk.

With this background of R&B music, my introduction to Shagging and Shag Music, which began in 1981, was a pleasant discovery for me. It happened at Harold's at OD, when I was with a friend who could shag. I was a Bopper and when I started to bop with her, she realized that I needed help. She asked me if I would be willing to take lessons from a couple in Greensboro, N.C. and two weeks later I started making weekly trips to Greensboro to take lessons from "Cadillac" Jack and Connie Smith, who at the time were winning a lot of Shag contests and who I greatly admired. They taught me not to just go through the motions, but to try to do it with precision and flair, which' still try to do to this day. They were a great inspiration to me.

They introduced me to "The Bushes" in Greensboro, which turned out to be my second home. I would travel to "The Bushes" 4 nights a week to dance all I could. Some nights when I would go, there was nobody there but me, the bartender and the jukebox, with me just hoping some girl would come in so we could dance. On weekends, I would dance so much that I needed to change shirts 4 or 5 times a night. Needless to say, I was bitten by the Shag bug, and 1982 was my first year to attend SOS. Since 1982 I have only missed 4 SOS's including Mid-Winters, and still have most of the SOS Cards.

I can truly say that the Shag scene was a life changer for me, enabling me to meet a lot of great new friends, including my girlfriend and dance partner, Linda Saylor (VSHOF, 2023), and I hope we can continue dancing for years to come.