



TOM EDWARDS (2009)

Tom was born in Newport News in 1954, and began shagging in 1994. As member of the Boogie on the Bay Shag Club (BOTB), he served as Hospitality Co-Chairperson and has been a member of the By-Laws Committee.

After some years of only dancing Shag, he took Ballroom classes, to expand his knowledge of dance. He also dabbles in Shag dancing with two partners at the same time after being inspired by watching a DC Hand Dancer who was truly a master at it. But it all came down to the fact that he really loves to shag. Formerly most easily recognized as the “tall guy with the pony tail on the dance floor”, Tom eventually shed his long locks after 38 years as he tired of the maintenance.

Even though he lives in Smithfield, for years Tom would drive 45 minutes each way every Monday evening to teach shag with Marsha Ruth (VSHOF, 2001) first at the Holiday Inn in Portsmouth, then in several other places after the Holiday Inn was torn down. Doing this for over 20 years without any compensation is definitely called dedication to the dance!

In 2004, he became a member of the Virginia State Shag Dance team which competed in the National Shag Dance Championships and the USA Grand Nationals in 2004 and 2006. He also competed in the Competitive Shaggers Association (CSA) with partner Joan McKinney (VSHOF, 2005). In 2011, Tom (and Joan) won the Non-Pro Division at the USA Grand Nationals Dance Championships in Atlanta (GA), and in 2012 the Non-Pro Division at the National Shag Dance Championships in North Myrtle Beach SC, turning Pro later the same year. Their advancement in the competitive ranks was challenged by finding the time to travel (overcoming the distance between Springfield (VA, where partner Joan lived) and his Smithfield (VA) home, and to practice. So, Tom became adept at “phone shag”, describing to Joan over the phone a new step or pattern he had conceptualized, and preparing her for their limited practice time at Kevin & Joan Byrnes’ (VSHOF, 2010) house in Richmond (the mid-point between them) before an upcoming event.

Tom is always ready and very willing to share his knowledge of the dance, and he especially loves to teach young people the art of “The Shag”. Tom wants this dance to live on for years to come, and his devotion to helping Juniors is his contribution to this goal.