



Susie Griffin 2007

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I was lucky to have had parents that loved to dance and were open-minded to just how much dancing meant to me. They were always going to square dances and would take the whole family. I was first introduced to the bop and jitterbug by my cousin Polly when I was about 12 years old. On Saturday nights everyone would gather at the Grill and Dance Hall which was only half a block from Granddaddy's house. On Friday nights we would go to the ball games and would end up at some kind of dance afterwards. Some of the older girls and boys had cars and we would pile in and go to Lake Tut in Forest Hill, North Carolina. During the summers we went to Topsail Beach, White Lake, Ocean Plaza at Carolina Beach and Gold Park Lake in Goldsboro, North Carolina.

I graduated from high school in 1953 and went to work at DuPont in Kinston. I had the world by my feet. I was going to all the local places in Kinston and the Pavilion at Atlantic Beach, where we were having ball. Oops- that's when it all stopped! I was in a major car wreck in 1955 and had to go to Chapel Hill for treatment. They wanted to amputate my leg because it was broken in 33 places. My father would not let them. I was in traction for over four months and had to wear a full body cast for almost a year. I thought my dancing days were over but the good Lord was looking out for me and let me recover. By late 1957, I was dancing again. Dancing had changed and much of the dancing crowd had started going to new places. Even though the crowd would still go to the beaches, a lot of new places were popping up. The Hillview in Snow Hill, Melody Park and Silver Lake in Wilson and Williams Lake near Clinton. The best place during the winter months was the Produce Market in Faison. Every Saturday night people would come from all over eastern North Carolina just to dance.

I married in 1967 and my son Lee was born in 1968. After Lee was born, I didn't dance as much for awhile because I was interested in the things he enjoyed. When S.O.S. started in North Myrtle Beach in 1980, it was a spring and fall break for us older shaggers. It was great meeting new people and seeing friends that I hadn't seen in awhile, at places such as Fat Harold's, Ducks, The Pad and The Pavilion. Throughout the 80's, we danced at places such as Red's and Chaps in Kinston, Bogart's, Madelins's, Cagney's in Goldsboro, the Embers Club and Jolly Knave at Atlantic Beach, the Ramada Inn in Greenville, and Loafers and Red's in Raleigh. During this time, there was somewhere to go every weekend and almost every night of the week. There were also beach music festivals and bands playing summer long.

During the 90's we danced mostly at the Sheraton in Kinston, the Oar House in New Bern and the new beach clubs that had sprung up at Atlantic Beach. Ray's and Courtney's (Atlantic Beach) kept us hopping between the two all weekend long. Mary Lou's and Courtney's have provided us with a decade of shagging and beach music entertainment. In January 2004 I slipped on some ice and broke the same leg I broke in 1955. I was again told my dancing days were over. But because of my drive and my love for the dance (and with the good Lord still looking out for me), after nearly two years I was able to return to dancing and am still going strong. Today, Memories Beach Club is carrying on the shagging tradition at Atlantic Beach and we now dance at Sonny's and several other clubs at Topsail Beach on most weekends. The three annual S.O.S. events still provide us the chance to rekindle old friendships and make new ones.

I really appreciate the opportunities I had being raised in a small, centrally-located town such as Beulaville, N.C. (with easy access to all the dancing hotspots) and thus being able to dance as much as I have. I have truly been blessed.