

Cloggers get down in Brevard

Editor's note: Doug Lang is on vacation. This column, originally published on Sept. 12, 2006, has been updated with current information.

Dear Help!: Joan Speziale from Viera asked if there are any clogging groups nearby. Please let Joan know that the Indian River Cloggers meet twice each week on Merritt Island. We hope she'll come and check us out.

*Rosemary Stroda,
Cocoa Beach*

Bob Howard of Merritt Island, a member of the Florida Clogging Council Hall of Fame and a man who holds the distinction of having served 26 consecutive one-year terms as president of the Indian River Cloggers, was consulted for further details.

He said the dancers, some 25 to 30 strong, get together Monday and Thursday evenings in the annex adjoining the gym at Kiwanis Island.

Mondays, a one-hour instructional class starts at 6:30 p.m. and is followed by a regular 1½-hour clogging



Doug Lang

Help!

session.

Thursdays, club members work on their fancy footwork from 7 to 9 p.m.

Howard described clog dancing as a distinctive American adaptation of Irish folk dancing. "It started in the Appalachian mountains in the mid-1700s, utilizes all kinds of music, and combines Irish, Scottish, English, Dutch and German types of dancing into one," he said.

Under the artistic direction of Sandy Smallwood of Rockledge, another Hall of Fame member who got hooked on clogging in the early 1980s, the Indian River contingent focuses on what Howard called "structured dance."

It entails developing a routine where everyone knows the same steps to a song, he

said, be the music of rock, country, bluegrass or rap style.

"We're into it for fun, not for competition," Howard added.

Statewide, the council has 40 to 50 affiliates, some of which meet strictly to compete.

In addition to their weekly get-togethers, the Indian River club conducts an annual workshop called Pow Wow that attracts groups from throughout the southeast. Howard said the activity has been directed by Smallwood since 1988.

Here is contact information:

- Bob Howard, president, 452-6757.
- Sandy Smallwood, co-director, 631-5104.
- Anita McClure, co-director, 631-0900.

For more information visit indianrivercloggers.org. ■
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