

# Ballroom dancers celebrate 11 years on the floor

The night was filled with music as those fleet-of-foot Cape Fear Ballroom Dancers twirled around the Highland Country Club ballroom.



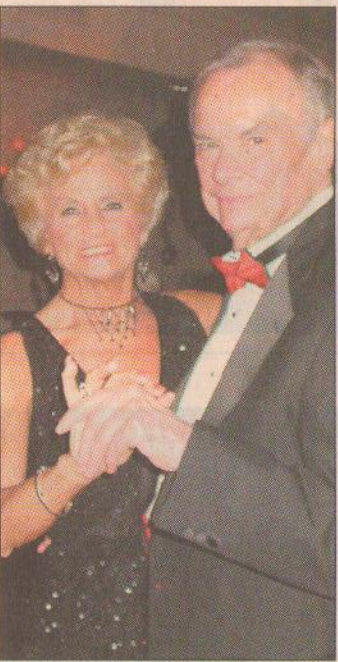
**THE SCENE**  
Melissa Clement

Gene Reynolds entertained with a demonstration cha-cha after which Barbara McCalister and Lou Neiper took to the floor for a combination foxtrot and swing.

Hazel Hinton, publicity chair and former president, had done her homework and surprised guests with a little trip down memory lane.

She read a newsletter written by the first president, Chuck Wedge, a year after the club was formed in 1993 with only 12 members. She jokingly called them "the dirty dozen."

Wedge had written that



Staff photos by Melissa Clement

**Betty Denning** and **Dwayne Gilliam** dance to swing music at the annual Christmas Dinner Dance.

"hard-headed" people said the organization would never get off the ground if it wasn't country and western because no one in Fayetteville was interested in ballroom dancing. The laugh was on them because a year later the

group had not only survived but grown in number. They kept growing to more than 100 members. The current membership is 85.

Hinton recognized four of the charter members, Junko Brisbane, who was the first treasurer, Ruth Wolfe, Mavie Montooth and Wedge. They each received certificates of appreciation and a bottle of wine capped with red and white Santa hats. Each took a whirl around the dance floor with their partners.

Member Sandra Peterson acted as DJ using the group's own sound system.

In former times they hired a band, but found they liked to dance to their own collection of the diverse music by professionals who play a variety of swing, cha-cha, foxtrot, waltz, rumba, big band and recent pop music.

Current officers gathered for a photograph. They are Will Gillis, president, Sandra Peterson, vice president, Jacque McCall, treasurer and Sue Skene, secretary. Former presidents Chuck Wedge, Chip Modlin and Hazel Hinton had their photos taken together.

Hinton said she had never been on a dance floor when she decided to join the

Ballroom Dancers at age 59. She had lost her husband and was looking for something fun to do. She started by taking dance lessons at a local studio.

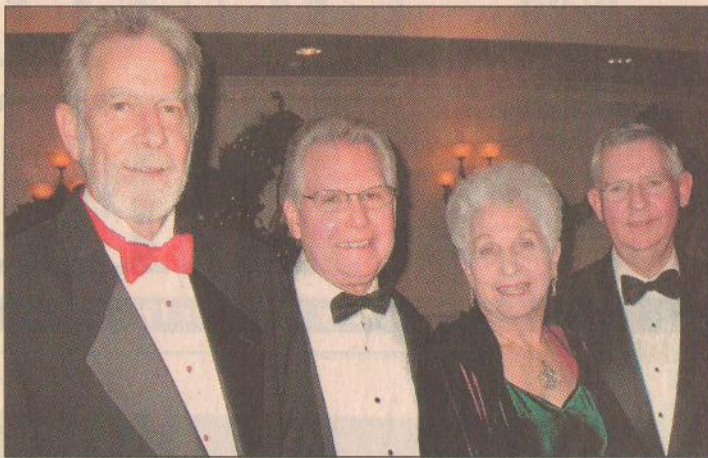
"I was a total beginner. I had never been on a dance floor before in my life. I tried dancing and fell in love with it," she said. "It's great fun, wonderful exercise and the greatest stress reliever in the world. You can leave your problems at the door and not pick them until it's over."

"I enjoyed developing a new circle of friends, and I think we all enjoy getting all dressed up, getting glitzy and glamorous."

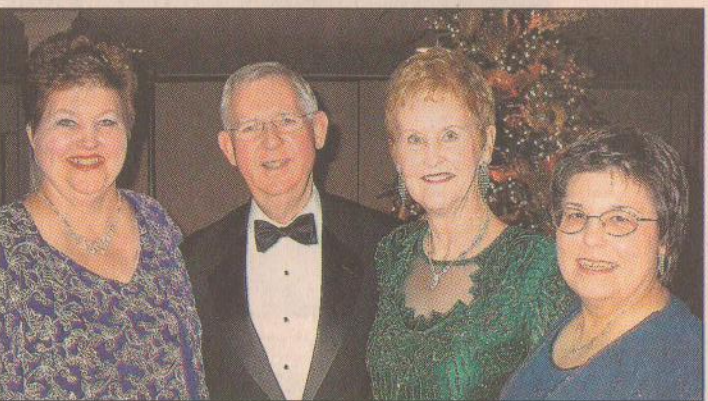
The organization includes beginner and professional dancers and couples as well as singles, both male and female. It covers all ages ranging from the 30s to the 80s. What they have in common is their love of dancing.

Cape Fear Ballroom Dancers is a nonprofit organization. Membership is open to anyone with an interest in ballroom dancing. Call 867-5569 for information.

Staff writer Melissa Clement can be reached at [clementm@fayettevillenc.com](mailto:clementm@fayettevillenc.com) or 486-3528.



**Former presidents** of the Cape Fear Ballroom Dancers are, from left, Chuck Wedge, Chip Modlin, Hazel Hinton with current president Will Gillis.



**The Cape Fear Ballroom Dancers** officers include Sandra Peterson, vice president, left, Will Gillis, president Jacque McCall, treasurer, Sue Skene, secretary.