

Happy Feet



Dance club meets weekly in W. Toledo senior center

Alicia Mells, left, a nursing student at Lourdes University, dances with Mike Michel during a Happy Feet Dancers event at the Eleanor Kahle Senior Center.

By JANET ROMAKER
BLADE STAFF WRITER

Toe tappin', boot scootin', disco, do-si-do.

No wonder, no wonder at all why these dancers swirl and twirl around the floor with happy feet.

"Everyone out there is having a good time," said Herman Loch of Temperance, who performs on Wednesday afternoons when the Happy Feet Dancers swarm the floor at the Eleanor Kahle Senior Center, 1315 Hillcrest Ave., in Toledo.

People who like to dance, young people or older people, are invited to get their feet going to the beat during the weekly action-packed activity.

It's a rebuilding year, said Happy Feet Dancers' president Barbi G. She is part of a musical group known as The Music Man & The Lady. Bill Liparoto of Toledo, known for his talents on guitar, piano, and tenor saxophone, is the Music Man in the duo. Ms. G, The Lady, plays piano and guitar. Both do vocals.

Happy Feet Dancers is trying to bump up participation from the 60 or so regulars, a number down from a one-time high of 120, Ms. G of Toledo said.

The dance group dates back 20 years, she said, noting only three original members still take part in the weekly dance.

Formerly the Bowman Senior Dance Club, the group recently changed its name to Happy Feet Dancers, dropping the "Senior" reference on purpose. The word itself kicks up stereotypes of cane-tapping old folks, leaning over arms on rocking chairs, cupping ears to try to catch snippets of song lyrics.

This isn't your great-great-grandparents' dance group.

A fave of the dancers: "Wipe Out."

Dances are open to the public, Ms. G emphasized. Cost is \$4 per person per session, held from 1 to 3:30 p.m. Wednesdays at the center.

Catching up with the holiday season (following the recent Snoledo storm), the Happy Feet Dancers celebrated New Year's Eve last Wednesday, complete with a potluck. The Music Man & The Lady shared the entertainer spotlight, taking turns performing with Mr. Loch, who began playing the accordion when he was 12.

Now at age 68, he has put some pizzazz in his accordion. Today's technology converts the accordion into various instruments, blending and layering sounds. "I'm a one-man band," he said.

Happy Feet Dancers as wallflowers? Nope. "All the people who come, they come to dance and that is what they do," he said.

Polka, Latin, salsa, waltz, fox trot, cha-cha, line dances, country, rock 'n' roll, square dances, and a lot of the "old standards" are popular.

Dancing has many benefits, Mr. Loch said. "It is real good exercise. It gives people a chance to get together with other people and keep up on things, and it is a fun time, too."

When the first musical notes float across the dance floor, everyone is up and off his or her chairs. "It makes me happy and it makes them happy," Mr. Loch said.

And it makes those feet happy, too.



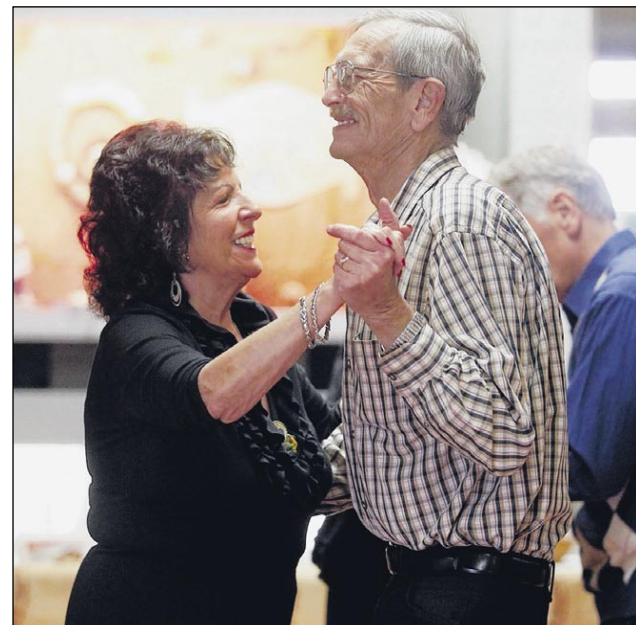
Fred Miller and his wife, Remona, take a spin on the dance floor. The Happy Feet events are open to the public.



Terry Chinnis and her husband, Billy.



Judy Diener and her husband, Ron.



Barbi G and her husband, Larry Grindle.



Doris and Glenn Levy.

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