

# Lovin' Life After 50

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## Dancing up a Tucson storm: Performers of Tap Sensation

By Faye Brown  
Lovin' Life After 50

"The physical and mental benefits of tap dancing are profound," said Lauri Latack, president of the Tap Sensation dancers. "It keeps you young mentally and physically."

Besides the aerobic benefits, dancing helps tremendously with balance, endurance, agility, energy and coordination. It challenges one's mental capabilities such as short- and long-term memory, perception and awareness of space and body placement, she said.

After the Hot Flashes dance group disbanded in November 2004, some of the dancers met and formed Tucson's Stars on Taps, a for-profit corporation. They adopted a new name, Tap Sensation, and are carrying on in the glamorous footsteps of fine entertainment.

The dancers range in age from 50 to 83; the majority are in their 60s. They practice a minimum of five hours a week, longer if they are preparing for a show.

Barbara Jones is the dance captain. There are several key committees such as costume, performance, and production. Frank Trent is the choreographer and Michael Allen instructor.

The group performs at conferences and conventions, military and class reunions, business and organizational events, birthday and holiday parties, charity and benefit events, festivals, fairs and parades, active adult communities, expos and schools, Lauri said.

Tap Sensation performs tap tunes, soft shoe and swing dances. Show length ranges from one number to a full hour of a variety of dances and costume changes. The dancers do production numbers and special tributes.

Tap Sensation will perform Friday, April 7, at 11:30 a.m. at the Home Show in the Tucson Convention Center. They will dance at The Fountains at LaCholla Sunday, May 21, at 2:30 p.m. and for the Aces senior club May 25 at 11 a.m. On July 4 they will perform at the Country Club of LaCholla.

Of the 48 dancers, most were with the Hot Flashes. Recently they took in 13 new members from another former dance group. New members are in classes for about six months,



then put into groups to start learning the new dances, Lauri said. There are four groups of 12 dancers. The women make a definite commitment both time-wise and financially. Members pay their own expenses. One group has 18 costumes per dancer. There is a firm policy for grooming. They have professional training in makeup. Hairstyle is up to the individual but hair has to be above the collar. There has to be a uniform presence so no one

person stands out, Lauri said.

"It's a great chunk of our time, but if you didn't enjoy it you wouldn't do it," Barbara said. "Everybody works together."

Most of the women are married, and most husbands are extremely supportive of their wives. They are very proud of their ladies, Lauri said. Dancers come from all walks of life; some danced as children, some had never danced before.

Members become good friends and provide a support group for those going through life changes such as injuries, illnesses, surgery, loss of a spouse or other catastrophic events.

"Once you make the friendships, they are friendships forever," Barbara said.

Tap dancing is stressful. There's a lot of pounding and the joints take a tremendous beating, but you learn to compensate. "We've had a lot of falls from slippery floors and we've had stages fall apart on us," Lauri said.

"We're not over the hill yet," she said. "We're climbing the upside to the top."

For more information and booking, call 520-975-2494.