



Dancers take part in a West Coast Swing rehearsal Monday in the SUB Down Under. Senior Kathryn Koenig said the rehearsals are usually attended by about 20 to 30 people to learn the modern swing dancing style.

Calli Lowry/Index

# Dance team offers new style of swing

BY JUSTIN GUNTERMAN  
Staff Reporter

Freshman Alexander Hoos said turning a standard Monday night swing dance rehearsal into a full-fledged dance team seemed like the natural thing to do.

West Coast Swing rehearsals occur 6:30 p.m. Monday evenings in the SUB Down Under. Hoos, who started learning swing this school year, said the West Coast Swing Dance Team came from a group decision to take a night of rehearsals to the next level.

Senior Kathryn Koenig said she is excited to offer a new type of swing to Truman State. Koenig said Truman only offered two swing dance teams, for East Coast Swing and the Lindy Hop.

"The start of last school year brought in a number of freshmen interested in learning West Coast Swing dance," Koenig said.

Koenig, who has four years of Lindy Hop and East Coast dance experience, said she is fairly new to the West Coast style of swing. She said she appreciates it because it is accessible to college students.

"It can be danced to mainstream music anywhere from formal dance settings to your Saturday night party," she said. "Creating a West Coast Swing community, where lessons are free, seemed a fantastic way to involve more students using the style and music they already enjoy."

Koenig said the rehearsals usually consist of 20 to 30 people excited to learn the modern swing dancing style. She said she expects the number of people attending rehearsals to continue growing. Koenig said of those people, eight of them made it into the performing team after an audition.



Sophomore Matthew Freebersyser, left, and freshman Amanda Roessler, right, dance Monday in the SUB Down Under. Freebersyser said the group is how he pursues his interest in West Coast Swing.

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Koenig said she is happy with the people who join her every Monday night and to see her group members bring friends interested in West Coast Swing dancing.

"The great thing about West Coast Swing is that once an individual knows a few steps, they can do it anywhere and at any time, and we've seen that from our group already," Koenig said.

When asked about the other swing dance group, University Swingers, Koenig said they are

not trying to diminish the group in the slightest. The West Coast group only exists because it offers a different, more contemporary style of swing, she said.

Sophomore Matthew Freebersyser said he was interested in learning West Coast Swing for a while, but due to the lack of options, he found it necessary to start the group with students with similar interests.

Hoos said he agrees the group is not made to rival University Swingers, but allows students

to learn a new style that had not previously been offered.

Koenig said the group broadens students' horizons by attracting them to other styles of swing dancing.

"As individuals come to love swing, they may then develop an appreciation for some of the older styles like Lindy Hop and East Coast that have been around campus for longer," Koenig said.

Koenig said she is excited to see the West Coast Swing community grow.

# Shop offers variety

Blossom Shop offers color and meaningful experiences

BY ANNA SELLE  
Staff Reporter

Even during the coldest months in Kirksville, an assortment of blooming flowers is always one call away at the Blossom Shop.

The Blossom Shop, which has been open on North Green Street for more than 30 years, is a family-run business that has provided a wide array of floral and gift-giving services to bring smiles to the faces of local residents, shop owner Melodie Sevits said.

"We're a family owned business and on major holidays, like Valentine's Day, the whole family's in the shop preparing orders," Sevits said.

The shop always keeps what Sevits calls a "rainbow of fresh flowers" in stock, including five to six different colors of roses and many kinds of plants, but they provide more than flower arrangements and gift baskets.

Employee Casey Jefferson said she has experienced firsthand the way working at the Blossom Shop has an immediate and lasting effect on recipients of Blossom Shop orders.

"I delivered to a gal one time and she just started crying when I gave her the flowers," Jefferson said. "She gave me the biggest hug and I'd never met her in my life. That meant a lot to me."

As an employee, Jefferson's responsibilities include waiting on customers and answering the phone as well as working on smaller arrangements of flowers. As a member of the Blossom Shop team, she helps handle the work on the most demanding days of the season.

Before Valentine's Day, Jefferson said the shop received a lot of orders.

"Last week was Valentine's Day, so it was really crazy around here," Jefferson said. "It was just really neat to see how we put everything together and make it work when we had over 300 arrangements and customers coming in and out and the phone ringing off the hook."

Sophomore Bailey Jones worked at the Blossom Shop last fall. She said she enjoyed the experience, which adds color to the lives of local residents through flower arrangements.

"I really like the vibe of working at a small business," Jones said. "It was very relaxed and everybody was friendly. It was a close-knit group of people."

Jones's responsibilities while working at the shop included the basic delivery position and lending a hand to the flower designer, collecting the flowers asked for and helping pick out ribbon colors for the arrangements.

Sevits said what is physically within the shop is no limitation. The shop aims to fulfill requests for personal gift baskets as ordered, possibly including specialized items.

Whatever someone might desire to send to a loved one in a gift basket, the Blossom Shop can provide, she said.

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