



# The Big Apple



1930s swing dancer Betty Wood has returned to the dance floor to teach swing in workshops across the nation

By Jesse Stephenson  
Entertainment Reporter

Around you people are talking and laughing, having a great time. On the stage is a group of dancers trying to teach the new dance craze. In the background a big band can be heard playing swing. Never mind there is a depression going on and the rest of the world is heading toward war. You're dancing the Big Apple, what could be better?

This was the mentality during the late 1930s as Betty Wood and her friends traveled the nation, teaching the popular dance to crowds of 6,000 people six times each day. As the swing dance that helped give New York City its nickname reaches its 60th anniversary, Wood, 75, is teaching the Big Apple to a new generation of dancers from around the world.

Wood is once again touring the country, and she has already taught several workshops in Minnesota as well as one in California. Now she will visit Eugene this weekend to give dance instructions at the University and at Kelly Middle School. This is the first time Wood has traveled to the Northwest.

The Big Apple is a circle dance accompanied by fast-paced music. Other dances Wood helped to popularize included the Shag dance and the Little Apple, which is similar to the Big Apple except that the

dancers pair off.

It was the work of dance historian and instructor Lance Benishek and of local dance instructor Denise Steele that brought Wood to the Northwest.

"In 1992, I got a phone call from Lance saying he wanted to talk to me about the Big Apple," Wood said. "That phone call was quite a treat. I couldn't believe that this young man was interested in something I did years ago."

Wood said Benishek first learned about the Big Apple through an old song book given to him by his grandmother. He then spent 12 years researching the dance, trying to find out as much about it as possible by interviewing the dancers.

"Lance first heard about me through another dancer, and he contacted me and arranged an interview. He came to my house with some historians and he interviewed me, and he asked me about the Shag," Wood said.

Wood then showed the steps that she had done in the thirties, including both Apple dances. After discovering Wood still knew most of the moves to the dances, Benishek invited her to Minnesota to teach a workshop to students in his dance studio.

"We did a three-day workshop in Minnesota, and it was fabulous. I've been there several other times, and I'm going back in May," Wood said. "I've also done a workshop in California, where I met Denise

Turn to **APPLE**, Page 6



## Auggie Smith

Comedian Auggie Smith will perform at Scandal's Night Club March 8 at 9 p.m.

Smith has been named the best new comedian by A&E's "Evening at the Improv."

There will be a \$6 cover charge.

## Cherry Poppin' Daddies

Rock/swing group Cherry Poppin' Daddies will perform at WOW Hall with Engine 54 tonight.

The show will begin at 9:30 p.m., and the doors will open at 9 p.m. Tickets are \$6 in advance and \$7 at the door.

## Red Cross Benefit Concert

The Wild Duck and Dog House Entertainment will have a benefit concert for the Lane County Red Cross March 13.

The concert will take place at the Wild Duck at 5 p.m. and will feature several local bands.

Tickets are \$10 in advance and \$12 at the door. All proceeds will go to the Red Cross. Additional donations will be accepted.

"Be There" is a weekly column highlighting the week's top local entertainment events.

## Fishbone to perform at WOW Hall

Music group Fishbone will perform at WOW Hall March 9 with The Skeletons.

The show will begin at 8:30 p.m., and the doors will open at 8 p.m.

Tickets can be bought at CD World, the EMU main desk, Green Noise, House of Records, La Tiendita & Taco Loco, Record Exchange and WOW Hall. All tickets are \$15.



## U2 release lacks energy, emotion

By Nicole Krueger  
Entertainment Editor

To last for twenty years in the ever-changing music market, a rock band needs to be able to adapt and to continue to produce a fresh, interesting sound. With eleven releases since 1980 that are each unique and that have earned the band world popularity, U2 has definitely mastered this ability.

Unfortunately, something has been lost in the process.

Many U2 fans fondly, and a little bit sadly, remember the

band's "better days," when their music was more dynamic and energetic. The fact is, although they haven't lost much popularity over the years — as their eagerly anticipated "Popmart" tour proves — U2 is headed downhill. Their recently released *Pop* album illustrates this.

As far as production goes, the band has only gotten better. *Pop* is immaculately produced, with incredible sound effects, tape manipulations and distortions.

Turn to **POP**, Page 9



### REVIEW

**Pop**  
U2

★★★  
(low-key distortions)