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Dance may relieve stress

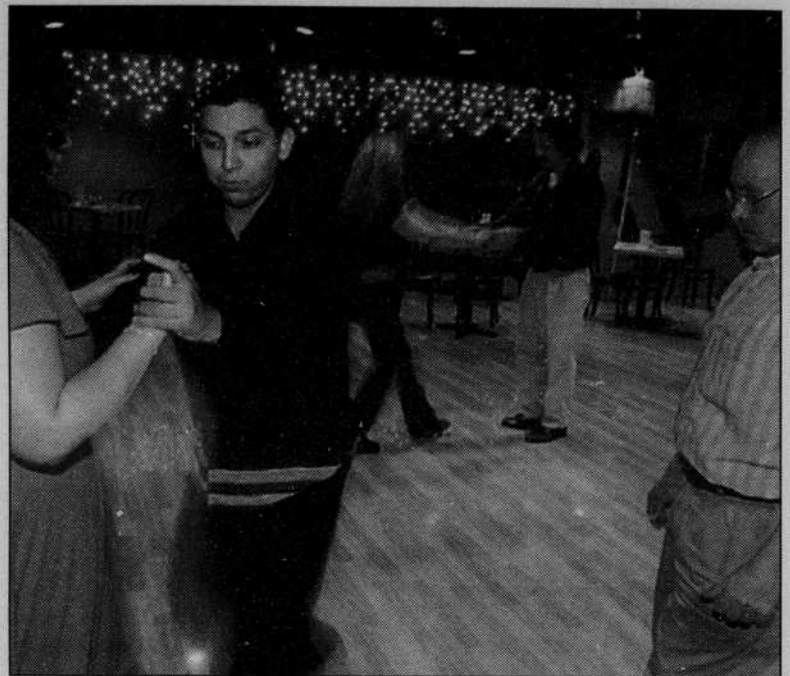
The age-old pastime of dancing relieves stress, provides exercise and offers a chance to socialize

Ryan Bornheimer
Senior Pulse Reporter

As holiday celebrations fade into memory and students readjust to the stress of a new academic term, the winter doldrums threaten to claim further victims. But don't lose heart. One way to shake off winter semester anxiety is to hit dance floors across Eugene. Whether it's an evening of salsa lessons at the Rumba Room or a free-for-all at Diablo's Downtown Lounge, there is no shortage of places to catch that Saturday night fever.

Dancing is an age-old pastime that crosses cultural boundaries and almost always delivers a remedy for the daily pressures of life. But the activity serves purposes far beyond simple stress relief.

According to Eugene Swing Club board member Greg Shaver, dance is perfect exercise for those who can't



Jeremy Forrest Emerald

Maileah Jones, left, learns how to salsa from Jose Crez, center, as Richard McPherson watches. Crez has been teaching salsa in various places throughout Eugene for about five years. McPherson and Jones are both new to salsa dancing.

muster the motivation to hit the gym.

"Sometimes it's difficult to make exercise a priority," Shaver said. "But if I can fool myself into exercising on a dance floor, it's wonderful."

The Swing Dance Club meets every Monday with concurrent lessons for dancers of all skill levels. The club specializes in West Coast Swing, a style that gained huge popularity in California over the past seven years. Shaver said this genre is a little slower than East Coast Swing and translates to a wide variety of music that includes everything from rhythm and blues classics to modern pop radio standards.

Shaver said he loves the challenge of West Coast Swing, and there's always room for improvement.

"I'm so much better now than I was a year ago, and a year ago, I was much better than I had been a year before that," Shaver said.

An open dance session follows the lesson.

Dancing has also become a classic ice-breaker for singles. Though plenty of couples take part in the Swing Club, Shaver said he knows at least three people who met their significant others while swing dancing. And the club rotates partners frequently, ensuring a social atmosphere where everyone gets to know one another.

Shaver also said he believes in the healing power of dance. He fell off a roof while painting almost a year and a half ago, and he has used the club

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Wondering what the economy will be like when you graduate?

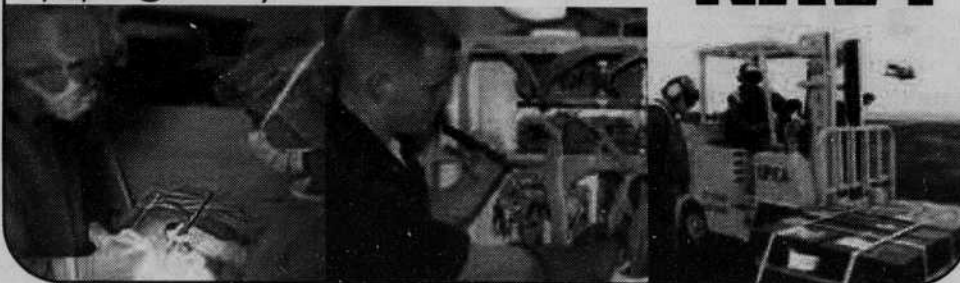
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