



Frank Brantley 2012

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I was born in the small town of Apex which is located just outside of Raleigh, North Carolina. My dad was a barber working in Raleigh and when I was in the fifth grade we moved to my parent's hometown of Aurora, a small town in eastern North Carolina, where my father opened his own business. My parents enrolled me in dance class at the age of 12. Needless to say I was not enthused. Although I could not envision it at the time, my parents had just given me a gift that was to bring me joy and friendship throughout the remainder of my life. We learned the waltz, the cha-cha, the two step and the tango. Don't remember too much about the tango but I did come to enjoy the other dances....still do on occasion. My sister and I watched dancing on "American Bandstand" and a local TV program called "Teen Canteen". We both were dying to learn how to "fastdance". So my mother taught us how to shag, or bop as we called it then, on the kitchen floor with Motown playing on the stereo. Mom was a great dancer and she got us in pretty good shape in no time. After that I spent hours dancing with door knobs and the refrigerator handle in preparation for entry to high school. In high school we frequented dance halls at Core Point and Crescent Beach on the Pamlico River and Minnesott Beach on the Neuse River. The best times were the special occasions when we went to dance to bands at the Shrine Club in New Bern or made it to the Pavilion at Atlantic Beach N.C. The Pavilion at Atlantic Beach was Mecca to me. That's where all the best dancers hung out and it was the "in" thing to be seen dancing at the beach. I continued dancing when I went off to college. I attended the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and really enjoyed dancing during football weekends and beach trips.

Once I left the University I encountered a ten year lull in shag dancing and beach music. I became occupied with a tour of duty in the Navy during the Viet Nam War and then marriage, the birth of a son and finally dental school. After dental school I joined the faculty at the University of North Carolina School of Dentistry. I wanted to meet new people and have some friends outside of workplace acquaintances and had the good fortune to have two dental students who enjoyed the shag. Those students were Harvey Hamm and Steve Baker. They suggested I visit Reds Beach Club in Raleigh, which I did. After that it was on. And as my interest in dancing expanded so did the borders of my "shag world". I began to travel to other shag hotspots in Burlington, Greensboro, Charlotte, Fayetteville, Atlantic Beach, and of course Myrtle Beach. One of my favorite hangouts was The Bushes in Greensboro. I worked on my dancing with Phil Jones, Wes May, Jerry Burrage and John Teel. I returned to Myrtle Beach to dance at Fat Jack's, The Pad, Duck's and Fat Harolds. I attended SOS and was hopelessly addicted again. Over the years I immensely enjoyed going to shag dance contests, developed an interest in competing and was fortunate to win through the divisions to attain "Professional" status. Dancing, and shag dancing in particular, has become a central part of my life and will remain so as long as I have the ability to go and do. It's great fun and is largely responsible for most of the significant relationships in my life. I love it dearly!