

THIS MONTH'S FEATURED HALL OF FAME MEMBERS



ERIC DIAMOND



JOHNNIE LEE WILLS

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SUNDAY, APRIL 6, 2025



Mae McCoy & Her Neon Stars

1:00pm-3:00pm

Followed by the House band

"The Hall of Famers"

3:00pm-5:00pm

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Letter from The Editor



OMG! What a fabulous dance. I have to thank Cousin Cricket for coming out and donating their time and talent to us at the Western Swing Society. Our folks sure made them welcomed and they assured me that they would be back. They opened for Asleep at the Wheel in grass Valley on

March 22 and I heard that a lot of our folks went to that show. Everyone that went said that the Wheel and Cricket were great.

Kenny Miele leads the group on guitar and vocals; Also leading the group is Doug Cohen on bass guitar. Paul Kraushaar on drums; Christi Colombo on vocals; Heidi Grass on guitar and vocals; Joe Ybarra on pedal steel. Please visit the group on Facebook or cousin-cricket.com to find out more about this great local group. They were also very generous to have me up on fiddle for a couple of tunes. Thanks you guys!



As usual the Jam Room was swingin'. We had a large group back there but we sure missed our fiddle player/leader, Dave Rietz. Dave had a car accident and we pray for a quick recovery. He is home and recuperating.

Our "Hall of Famers" took the main stage after the raffle and kept the dance floor full. Cousin Cricket is a hard act to follow but the band got it done with the help of our great singers. Jimmy Baughman on lead guitar and vocals; Ralph Chase on keyboard and vocals; Steve Clark on bass guitar and vocals; Bill Cornett on drums (cough kept him from singing); Arron Smith on drums and vocals; Ronnie Elkan on fiddle. We were so happy to hear Janice Allen, Linda Baughman, Nancy Long and Rhonda Rogers come up to sing.

Continued on page 4

The Western Swing Society

PO Box 2474

Carmichael, CA 95609

westernswingsociety.net

Facebook: SacramentoWesternSwingSociety

Founded in 1981 by Loyd and Perry Jones to enable performance, preservation and perpetuation of the unique American art form known as Western Swing Music.

Officers:

President, Ronnie Elkan (916) 765-4345

Vice Pres, Meghan McCoy

Treasurer, Linda Swanson

Secretary, Sandra Robinson

Social Media, Sandra Robinson

Social Media Specialist, Meghan McCoy

Other Directors:

Linda McCarley (916) 870-7463

Dave Rietz (916) 806-0520

Jimmy Boehnke

Arron Smith

Ralph Chase

Staff and Committee Chairpersons:

Admissions Coord, Linda McCarley

Bar Manager, Arron Smith Sr.

Bartender, Chuck

Decorating Chair, Open

Equipment and Staging, Arron Smith

Historian, (open)

Jam Room, Brad Barnett & Dave Rietz

Master of Ceremonies, Terry Crouson

Membership Director, Linda McCarley

Music Director, Ronnie Elkan

Newsletter Editor, Ronnie Elkan

Photographer, Don deMars

Public Relations Administrator Mae

McCoy

Facebook Administrator: Sandra Robinson

Volunteer Coordinator: Sandra Robinson

Raffle, Bob and Virginia Kuykendall

Slide Show, Janet Jimenez

Sound Engineer, Arron Smith

Website Manager, Dave Rietz

JAM ROOM JAMMERS



We'd like to have you write to us about your experience if you play in the jam room or go in to listen. We'll share

your comments here in this column. Just send your thoughts to ronnie.elkan@gmail.com or send us a letter via snail mail. In the meantime we'll list the players who joined us last month.

Come in and join in, you can listen or sign up to play and/or sing. Are "Hall of Fame" hosts, Brad Barnett and Dave Rietz will be there to welcome you!



Western Swing Society Music News

is published monthly by the Western Swing Society

Views and opinions expressed by contributing authors are not necessarily those of the editorial staff or the Society.

Submitted articles, publicity notices and letters not relating directly to the Society or its members may be published at the discretion of the Editor, as space permits. The staff reserves the right to edit any and all items submitted for publication.

Deadline for Submittals:

All items, photographs, articles, and ad's are due to the Editor no later than the 10th of the month.

ERIC DIAMOND

Inducted October 6, 2024



Eric Diamond landed his first professional singing job at the age of 15. Eric made it to the state finals of the Jimmy Dean Country Showdown twice at the age of 15 and 16 and he played in local country bands in the Santa Fe, New Mexico area and the Durango, Colorado area till he was 21. From age 21 to 26, he has played

with his first Road band called "Cowtown Swing".

He then moved to Nashville where he landed a songwriting job, which was short-lived because he had to return west for family matters. After that, he worked for three years as a front man for the mid-night Rose band and band leader, David

Blanchard. He also went to work as a floor manager and in-house entertainer at Horny's Dance Hall and saloon in Durango, Colorado while working there he had the chance to put his own band together. "Eric Diamond and the Rocky Mountains Playboys." For six years he worked in an 11 state region playing the A room circuit. 14 years ago, he began singing and dancing at the Bob Wills Festival in Turkey, Texas, and he has performed at three of the four venues in town. The last seven years he has been playing mostly in Missouri, Oklahoma, and Texas than last year. Eric has an album that finished in the top five for Western Swing album of the year by the Academy of Western Artists. Eric has also won the Western Swing male vocalist of the year. He was previously on the Clarksville Creative Sound record label with producer Curt Ryle. Eric's new album entitled "Eric Diamond All Of Me" has been released. The team did the World Premier radio release on KSSL Radio out of Lubbock, Texas, which aired eight times in six different countries and then on May 15. The team then released the album to all worldwide radio. Eric is touring with the record label as well as doing shows own the route 66 Kix tour.



JOHNNIE LEE WILLS

Born September 2, 1912 Died October 25, 1984

Inducted October 5, 1986



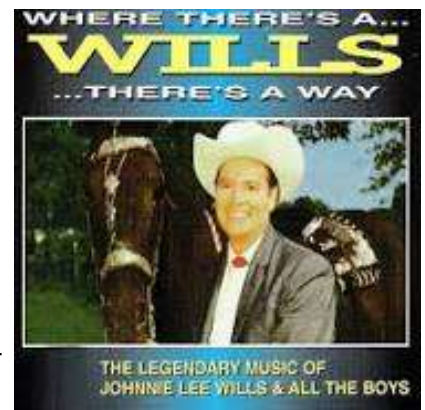
Wills was born in Jewett, Texas, and was the younger brother of Bob Wills. He played banjo with Bob as a member of the Texas Playboys starting in 1934, the year the ensemble began playing on KVOO-AM in Tulsa, Oklahoma. In 1939 he founded his own group, the Rhythmairs, but returned to the

Playboys in 1940 when Bob split the ensemble into two groups and named Johnnie Lee leader of one of them. Following Bob's move to California in 1940, Johnnie Lee renamed his group Johnnie Lee Wills & All The Boys, remaining in Oklahoma. Johnnie Lee switched from banjo to fiddle in this group.

In 1941 he signed with Decca Records, and recorded again with Bullet Records in 1949, where he saw his greatest success with songs such as "Rag Mop" and "Peter Cotton Tail". In 1952 he signed with RCA Victor, where he was less successful, though he was still a popular draw in Oklahoma and remained a fixture on KVOO until 1958.

He continued to record through the early 1960s, but his ensemble dissolved in 1964, after which he was only intermittently active in music. He opened a clothing store in Tulsa, and recorded for Flying Fish Records and Delta Records in the 1970s after Bear Family Records and Rounder Records reissued some of his old material.

Wills died from heart complications on October 25, 1984 in Tulsa.



On September 14, 1996, Tulsa honored Wills with a street named after him. Johnnie Lee Wills Lane is directly in front of the Expo Square Pavilion at the Tulsa State Fairgrounds. At the official dedication in 1996, his son John T. Wills said, "...although Dad was born a Texan, when you think about it, he lived and died a Tulsan."

Editor's Letter continued from page 1

I could never do this letter without recognizing all the hard work our volunteers do. Wow they really step up. I'm also reaching out to ask for more help.



Board Members Left is Linda McCarly (Front Desk) Right is Arron Smith (Sound Engineer and Drummer) & Ralph Chase (Mr. Everything)

If you have some time and want to help please let any board member know. We sure could use anyone who has website skills as we are getting ready to improve on our social media. Thank you.

I know we are coming on to our April Dance but it is time to get ready for our Three Day Hall of Fame event. Please check out page 9 in this issue for info. Last year was a great success and this year will be even better. I will be posting our HOF events in the newsletters coming up.

2025 UPCOMING BANDS

April 6	Mae McCoy & Her Neon Stars
May 4	Janice Allen & All the Queen's Men
June 1	Beau Jeffers
July 6	Lincoln Highway
August 3	Geoff Miller
September 7	Rhonda Lynn & Edgewood Station
October 3,4 & 5	Hall of Fame
November	Rob Shotwell & Let the Horses Run
December	Mae McCoy & Her Neon Stars

COMING THIS DECEMBER

A Nashville Christmas

Presented by Meghan "Mae" McCoy
A celebration of Western Swing, holiday cheer, and surprise guests.

Full band announcement coming soon...

American Legion, Mather and Rancho Cordova, are all volunteer veterans that prepare meals and cook for us at all our Sunday dances. Come early for lunch to support these volunteers and stay to dance.

A hot meal, reasonably priced, provided by our American Legion



PICTURES NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE TO DOWNLOAD AND PRINT

Pictures are now available on our website:

<http://westernswingsociety.net/>. OR on Google Photos

Tips:

- From PDF newsletter, click on link below these instructions to enter that photo album.
- Use the three dots at top right to download entire album or a selected photo
- To see all albums, click top left on Google Photos
- Once back at the home page, click on Albums in the left column
- To find all photos of a particular person, click then click *See all people* at the bottom of the dropdown list. Scroll and click on a person. You will see all photos of that person. Then you can download and print what you like.



PHOTO LINKS

Monthly Dance Photos March Dance

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/JNFjpySSjy3NpmuY9>

**Western Swing Society
Café Menu**

Serving 12-3:15

Hamburger with chips or potato salad \$8.00

Cheeseburger with chips or potato salad \$8.50

Pulled Pork with coleslaw \$9.00

Cobb Salad \$10.00

Hot Dog with chips or potato salad \$4.00

Beyond Burger \$10.00

Chips \$.50

Thank you for supporting



WSS BOARD MEETING MINUTES March 11, 2025

Meeting called to order at 6pm by President Ronnie Elkan via Zoom.

Members Present: President Ronnie Elkan, Vice President Mae McCoy, Secretary Sandy Robinson, Arron Smith, Chuck Webb and Ralph Chase. Guest Nick Dennis

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: We had a great March Dance. 161 paid guests. Chuck Webb announced that our Board Member Dave Rietz is on the mend after a car accident. Our thoughts and prayers are with Dave during his recovery. Bob and Virginia Kuykendall, who so graciously run our monthly Raffle, will not be available for the next 3 dances. Sandy Robinson will be asking for volunteers to help with Raffles.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Approved via email.

WEBSITE: Mae McCoy is working on a new much-needed Website. Arron Moved, Ralph Second, Approved 6-0 that we move forward on pricing and cost of Website. It was discussed that we empty out the remaining things that are left in storage and that savings could go towards the cost of our new Website. The new Website could include the ability to accept payments for virtual merchandise, pre-payment for scheduled events and accept Membership Dues and Renewals. Mae McCoy said the new Website would also be a good tool to promote sponsors

HALL OF FAME: After discussion, it was decided to once again have a 3-day Hall of Fame Dance/Festival – emphasizing that 3 days of events attracts more out-of-state guests. Mae McCoy stressed that we need to promote the Dance Experience, including Dance Lessons, possible Dance Contest and Festival atmosphere.

ADJOURNMENT: Moved Mae McCoy, Second Arron Smith, Approved 6-0.
Sandy Robinson (Secretary)



Free Dance Lessons with admission on Sunday April 6, 2025 Best kept secret in town.

RAFFLE WINNERS (Photo's By Alicia Fox)



AT THE DANCE!!! (Photo's By Alicia Fox) See all The Photos Page 4



AT THE DANCE!!! (Photo's By Alicia Fox) See all The Photos Page 4



THANK YOU MUSICIANS!!!!!! (PHOTOS BY ALICIA FOX)





HALL OF FAME NOMINATIONS

THE TIMING

January 1—May 31st: Submissions of nominees for consideration accepted from a member in good standing

June: Hall of Fame Selection Committee reviews and chooses 12 nominees to be inducted in the Hall of Fame. Nominations must adhere to the rules and be complete in order to be considered. Any submissions not chosen roll forward to the next year for consideration

July: Board signs off on the chosen inductees. Inductees are notified and told about our Hall of Fame Event details

August: List of inductees first appear in the newsletter

September: Photos of inductees appear in newsletter. List of HOF bands in newsletter

October: The three day celebration, culminating in the Induction Ceremony on Sunday

HOW TO AND THE RULES

Let's have another inspiring set of inductees for the Western Swing Society Hall of Fame event, the 1st Friday—Sunday in October. ***The closing date for submission of nominations is May 31st. Start NOW. Time FLIES!***

Any member in good standing may make 2 nominations, by either postal or email.

An 8 x 10 hard copy photo or a digital jpeg (at least res. 300 dpi) is required at the time of nomination.

The nomination should contain sufficient biographical information to enable the committee to evaluate the nominee's qualifications.

Nominations must include the name (as they wish it to appear in our Hall of Fame registry), address, phone numbers and email addresses (if available) for the nominee **and** the person submitting them. If the nominee is deceased, please include the name of a person who may be able to accept the award.

Mail to: Western Swing Nominations Committee, P. O. Box 2474, Carmichael, CA 95609

It's Easy!

Nominate a musician or exceptional volunteer for this year's Hall of Fame

Time is running out. May 31st is the last date to submit your nominations for our Hall of Fame celebration!

Being inducted into the Hall of Fame is a BIG HONOR, so submit a nomination and make someone's day!

1. The name, address, phone and email of member submitting the nomination
2. The name, address, phone and email of the nominee
3. The nominee's name as the nominee wants it shown in the bio and on the Hall of Fame registry
4. Biographical information about the nominee, with emphasis on involvement with Western Swing Music.
 - Birthplace and date.
 - Age at which participation in music began? How? Singing? Playing an instrument?
 - Early inspirations and influences?
 - Time and place of first professional performance.
 - Name of well-known bands and/or performers with which nominee has played.
 - Names of well-known locations where nominee has performed.
 - List of any awards or formal recognitions received by the nominee related to his or her music career.
 - Nominee's personal reasons for involvement in and support of Western Swing Music.

See the instructions in the previous column and email or mail your completed nomination information so that it is received by WSS no later than May 31st.

DON'T FORGET to include *your* phone, email and the *nominee's* phone, email and mailing address so that we can contact you.

The Night California Proved Western Swing Is Still Alive

Written by Meghan "Mae" McCoy Vice President - Western Swing Society, bandleader, mother, wife, in the Sacramento Valley. Focused on capturing stories of music and life.

A few Wednesdays ago, I had the chance to perform at Moe's Alley in Santa Cruz — yes, Santa Cruz, land of the beach boardwalk, surf culture, and most recently, a pier that literally fell into the ocean. But inside Moe's that night, nothing was falling apart. In fact, it felt like something was being built.

The venue was full — standing room only. The dance floor stayed active all night with young people in boots, vintage dresses, and wide smiles. They weren't there by accident. They came to dance. They came because they knew what was happening. On a Wednesday. In California.

I was headlining a bill with the Dogweeds, a five-piece outfit out of Oakland/Alameda with male and female lead vocals and a sound that captures exactly what happens when youth, talent, and deep musical roots collide. The Dogweeds brought red-hot musicianship and a genuine love for Western Swing — proof that the genre thrives in the hands of the next generation.

The energy was alive. They brought honky tonk grit, Western Swing bounce, and raw harmony. It was one of those sets where every note reminds you why live music matters.

At one point during the set, the Dogweeds' frontwoman turned to the crowd and asked, "Do y'all want a slow song or a fast one?" Without missing a beat, the room answered in unison — "Fast song!" That kind of response? You can't fake it. The energy was real. The dancers were ready. And it became clear: this isn't just nostalgia — it's a movement. This show was part of Moe's Alley's ongoing Western Wednesday series, a rotating spotlight for artists keeping roots music alive in California.

Moe's Alley has become a destination for serious roots musicians. Their stage has welcomed legendary artists such as Ramblin' Jack Elliott and Los Straitjackets, serving as a proving ground for performers who carry tradition with edge. The vibe at Moe's doesn't happen by accident. It's clear that Lisa Norelli and Brian Ziel have poured vision, heart, and serious organization into creating a space where roots music can thrive. Their passion shows — not just in the bookings, but in the energy of the room. They're not just running a venue. They're curating a movement.

Several of us from the Western Swing Society were there — Ronnie, Arron, Reid, Mark "Zinger", and myself — and we were all struck by what we saw: a dance floor full of the next generation. Not just watching, but moving. Engaged. Hungry for it.

Reid leaned over to me at one point and said, "You're bridging the gap." That stayed with me. Because whether I'm performing at Moe's or playing upright bass at Western Swing Society, I've come to believe that the gap doesn't have to stay a gap. We can fill it — with the right music, the right space, and the right spirit.

Western Swing Society has a long and rich legacy. We carry the torch of a genre that shaped American music. But the future isn't just about preservation — it's about translation. It's about making sure that someone dancing at Moe's Alley on a Wednesday night knows there's a place for them to belong in this tradition, too.

As a multi-instrumentalist, artist, and lifelong music nerd, I've spent years steeped in this genre — its legends, its language, its legacy. And as Vice President of the Western Swing Society, I'm always looking for signs of life — places where the music isn't just preserved, but pulsing. What I witnessed that night in Santa Cruz was exactly that. It wasn't just a good show — it was a shot in the arm. A reminder that this music still has power, relevance, and a future when it's given space to move.

I'll return to Moe's Alley in July to open for Texas legend Dale Watson and the stunning Celine Lee — a moment that feels both like an honor and a continuation of something we're all building. That Wednesday night reminded me: Western Swing isn't fading. It's evolving. And if we stay open to it, we'll evolve right along with it.



OTHER WESTERN SWING MUSIC ORGANIZATIONS/MUSIC HAPPENINGS

Buck Ford & Pure Country Band: Check Website for schedule, <https://buckford.com/events/>

Carolyn Sills Combo: <https://www.carolynsills.com/>

Cowtown Society of Western Music, Contact: Joe Baker, Membership Director, 940-452-6300, 4361 F.M. 1195, Mineral Springs, TX 76067

Grace Clark and Swingitude: www.graceAclarkmusic.com. 925-443-5217

Greater Arizona Country/Western Swing Association and Hall of Fame, Inc. PO Box 953, Dewey, AZ 86326. Contact Jim Gamble at 928-458-0714.

Hot Club of Cowtown: <https://hotclubofcowtown.com/>

The Lincoln Highway Trio: Every Tuesday, 1:15-3:45pm. Mission Oaks Community Center, 4701 Gibbons Dr, Carmichael. \$8 cover at the door. <https://www.facebook.com/lincolnhighwaybandca/>

Mae McCoy and Her Neon Stars
Contact: www.maemccoymusic.com
<https://youtube.com/@maemccoyandherneonstars>
Sactown Playboys @ <https://www.facebook.com/sactownpbs/>

Slade Rivers Band: <https://sladeriversband.com/events/>

Western Swing Music Society of the Southwest, PO Box 644, Shattuck, OK 73858. Meets quarterly. Go to website at: www.wsmss.com.

Cliff Huey 27 Outlaws Band @
<https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=cliff%20huey%202027%20outlaws>

Rhonda Lynn & Edgewood Station Contact: Rhonda Rogers 916-240-8736 email: info@rhondalynn.com website: www.rhondalynn.com facebook.com/rhondalynn66

IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR WHAT IS GOING ON IN THE WORLD OF WESTERN SWING MUSIC, HERE IS WHERE TO GO!

<https://www.westernswing.com/Events.html>

Board Meeting Invitation

You can attend the Society's monthly Board meetings; Please contact any board member if you would like to attend on Google Meet or if you have a suggestion.

FREE DANCE LESSONS
With Admission @ 12:00 pm



MEMBERSHIP

Any Changes? Keep us up to date on any changes in your membership information, especially email addresses. We can't get your newsletter to you unless we have your current information.

You can mail changes in your information to the Society at P.O. Box 2474, Carmichael, CA 95609; or email it to membership@westernswingsociety.net
Thanks! Keep on Western Swingin'

MONTHLY MUSIC SESSIONS

The Western Swing Society holds a music and dance session on the first Sunday of each month, featuring guest bands and artists and jam sets.

1:00 pm to 5:00 pm at The Machinists Hall
2749 Sunrise Blvd., Rancho Cordova, CA*

Donation: \$7 for Members; \$10 for Non-Members
For information, browse to www.westernswingsociety.net
*The address is Sunrise, but the driveway is on Citrus.



Driving Instructions to MACHINISTS HALL: From Hwy 50, take the Sunrise Blvd. South exit and cross two lights (Folsom Blvd. and Trade Center Drive). After crossing Trade Center, be in the left lane and take the next left turn which is Citrus Road. You will see an Enterprise Car Rental lot in front of you. Turn right into the driveway just past Enterprise. You'll see our sign, and you are there. Park, come in and join the fun.