

C.L.O.G.  Today™

*Official Newsletter of the National Clogging Leaders Organization*

# Remembering JoAnn Gibbs





**C.L.O.G.**  
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**Remembering JoAnn Gibbs**

*The Double Toe Times Joins Forces with C.L.O.G. Today to Remember Clogging Pioneer and National Convention Founder JoAnn Gibbs*

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# JoAnn Gibbs: A Mentor, A Friend

**CLOG, Inc. Executive Directors David and Susan Phillips Pay Tribute to the Organization's Founder**

by Pam Smiley  
Editor of CLOG Today,  
the publication of CLOG, Inc.

Rewind fifteen years to a day when John Douglas, CLOG's chairman of the board at the time, called Georgia cloggers David and Susan Phillips on the phone. JoAnn Gibbs had decided that she was ready to retire her position as executive director of the world's largest clogging organization.

Douglas asked the Phillips if they would be interested in taking it over as the executive directors.

"Having volunteered for CLOG for many years, it seemed a no brainer decision," Susan Phillips said. "That is how we got here today."

Susan recalls learning much about running events from JoAnn. "We spent hours riding and looking at screen printers for t-shirts, negotiating contracts, choosing instructors, getting flooring and all the many other duties it takes to produce an event," she said.

According to Susan, JoAnn was very strong willed as she had forged the way where few had been before. "She sat and thought of ideas and used ideas others gave to her," Susan said. "With a passion, she could make it happen." "There was few clogging workshops and competitions, no national convention, no clogging newsletters, no internet, and no cell phones when JoAnn came along," said Phillips. "She wrote letters and

spent countless hours on the phone promoting clogging. She helped start other workshops, created national instructors, turned CLOG into a national organization and established the National Clogging Convention. She was at the helm of CLOG's Certified Clogging Instructor program.

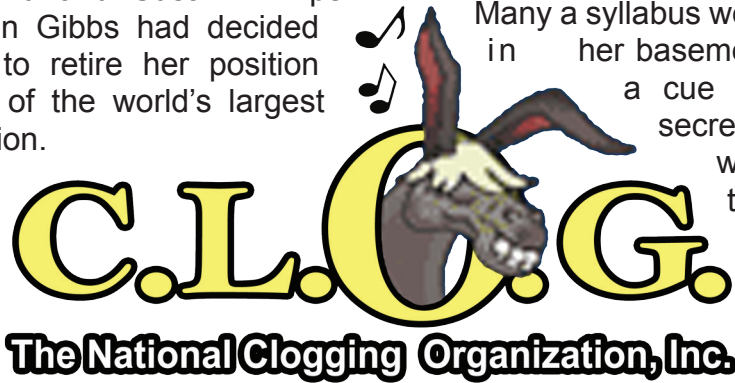
Many a syllabus were cut and pasted together in her basement by Dieter Brown. Many a cue sheet was typed by her secretary Marianne Doan. She

was always eager to listen to new ideas by others but you had to keep nagging at her until she thought it was her idea. JoAnn had a huge following of ducklings just as passionate as she. Everyone wanted on the clogging band wagon. It grew so fast that the National Convention had over 6,000 attendees at Opryland one year."

CLOG has become a family affair for the Phillips. Husband David and children Cal, Chip and Brian have been fixtures at the conventions and many events that the organization puts on throughout the year.

"JoAnn engaged me after the second national

convention to come and help with registration," David Phillips said. "Little did I know that I would be doing the registration from that time to now, almost 30 years." JoAnn also asked for David's help with scorekeeping at her clogging competitions and he assisted at most of her events. "She was a strong willed person as many would agree," David remembers, "so getting her to change things to update her processes was sometimes challenging, however, she took your ideas and found them to



be valid for the betterment of us all. A lot of the ideas with conventions, competitions, and workshops that everyone enjoys today has a bit of JoAnn's DNA in them."

David and Susan also are quick to remind everyone that JoAnn was a clogger too. "Yes, she did dance," David proclaimed. "That is how it all started. They were the Possum Trot Cloggers. What legs she had! That grew into the Possum Trot workshop team that travelled all over to teach workshops."

The Phillips remember JoAnn Gibbs as a friend who always had an ear and who worked to fix problems. "She was there when all three of our children were born," they said. "She and Marianne gave us our first oak kitchen table which after 25 years we still have; only now it is in the CLOG office."

"Susan and I miss JoAnn," David said. "Her friendship was unwavering, her laugh infectious, and she could take a joke with the best of them. Although JoAnn was not involved in clogging for many of her later years due to health, she is one of the pioneers that will be remembered for helping to bring clogging to where it is today."

For David and Susan, their message to JoAnn is simple and profound. "To our friend, our mentor, we remember and thank you for helping us become what we are today."

**Photos: Left:** CLOG Executive Directors David and Susan Phillips are honored by then Executive Director JoAnn Gibbs during a CLOG National Convention.

**Above:** JoAnn Gibbs and husband Russell enjoyed clogging and square dancing. Russell was also a mainstay at CLOG's events and was remembered as a laid back and jovial man.

**Right and Below:** The syllabus from the first CLOG National Convention in Mobile, Alabama. Dancers fill the stage at the CLOG Convention in Atlanta, Georgia.



# JOANN GIBBS REMEMBERED

## The Double Toe Times Editor Remembers JoAnn Gibbs Leadership and Legacy

By Jeff Driggs  
Editor, Double Toe Times

As C.L.O.G., the National Clogging Leader's Organization makes preparations for its 32<sup>nd</sup> annual National Clogging Convention in Baltimore, Maryland over Thanksgiving weekend, we reflect on the legacy of the convention's founder and first executive director, JoAnn Gibbs, who passed away earlier this year at the age of 81.

One of the most influential promoters and instructors of the modern form of clog dancing, Gibbs co-wrote the clogging line dance to "Rocky Top" which is often called the "national anthem of clogging." She created the "Possum Trot" workshop team that traveled coast to coast and fostered many instructors and events that continue to this day. American president John Quincy Adams said, "If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader."

There is little doubt to those that knew her that she was a leader. Her passion for clogging and for cloggers, her eye for talent, and her drive to create events, and to lead and to move the activity forward is undeniable. Many cloggers followed their dreams, learned, excelled and became more in clogging because of her mentorship, inspiration and influence.

I remember meeting JoAnn Gibbs for the first time in the early 1980's. I had just begun teaching and was a guest instructor at a workshop in Mobile, Alabama with a very young Scotty Bilz. Organizer Kevin Sellew, a well-known instructor and cuer who choreographed the popular clog-cue to "Black Mountain Blues," told me that Gibbs would be there, and encouraged me to meet her, saying that "she is someone good to know in clogging."

I approached her at the fun dance, where she was surrounded by quite an entourage of clogging leaders. I introduced myself and she shook my hand and went back to the discussion she was having. Later in the program, Kevin offered me the chance to call a hoedown. In those early days of workshop clogging, it was not uncommon to do hoedowns, mixers, circle dances and freestyle tips in addition to line dances. I had been a square dancer before becoming a clogging and knew how to call both Western style and old time squares. As the floor full of dancers began to twirl and swing to the commands I was calling, I noticed the circle of people surrounding Gibbs parted as she stood up and made her way to the front of the group, arms outstretched as if holding the group back and listening intently. After the hoedown was over, she made her way to the stage entrance and took me by the hand. "Who are you, young man?" she asked.

Thus began a long relationship in my journey of clogging.

JoAnn Gibbs gave me many opportunities, and



I am grateful for her personal and professional interest through the years.

Clogging is called the melting pot of step dances, and clogging saw its most transformational period during the 1980s and 1990s. JoAnn Gibbs led the world's largest clogging organization during this most explosive period of growth.

Her teammate, workshop team partner and collaborator, Tandy Barrett, has written a tribute to JoAnn that details much of her earliest years in clogging. The article helps us to understand Gibb's tremendous personal drive and her rise in the art.

As with anyone in a position of leadership, Gibbs experienced a great deal of love and support, but was also met with both resistance and sometimes resentment for some of the strong positions and decisions she made along the way. Knowing that the National Clogging Convention, the teaching programs she fostered, and many of the teachers she mentored and promoted through the years are still going strong is a legacy to her spirit.

### Remembering JoAnn

Jeanette Roch learned how to clog from Georgia instructor Joyce England and met JoAnn Gibbs in one of Joyce's clogging classes. In 1981, Roch

was invited to join the Possum Trot Cloggers, where Gibbs was a member.

"JoAnn handled booking performance engagements for Possum Trot," Roch said. "We danced at craft festivals, state fairs, Atlanta area county music club *Mama's Country Showcase*, the Dillard House in Dillard, Georgia, a condo development near Jacksonville, Florida, the Ocktoberfest in Helen, Georgia, the opening of a local Waffle House and many other places. Tandy Barrett joked that JoAnn would have booked us to dance on garbage can lids somewhere." Roch has fond memories of the group's travels together, staying together, learning new routines and performing together.

In the early 1980's Joyce and JoAnn organized the annual Possum Trot Clogging Workshop held each fall at the Mountain City Playhouse in Mountain City, Georgia. "Although it may not have been the very first clogging workshop it was among the first clogging workshops to take place and spread the love of clogging," according to Ruch.

Roch detailed a couple of very memorable occurrences at the Possum Trot Clogging Workshop. "One year a thunderstorm knocked out the power and the whole playhouse went dark and the music stopped," she recalled. "One of the



attendees happened to have a generator in his van and it was used to power the record player and a big spotlight that JoAnn actually held up to provide light to the cloggers until a suitable stand could be located.” Eventually the power came back on and the workshop proceeded as usual. “This event was a perfect of example of how JoAnn could take a seemingly adverse circumstance and turn it into a party that became a legend in the annals of clogging workshop history,” Roch said.

Roch remembers that the next year at the Possum Trot Clogging Workshop, JoAnn called everyone to attention and said that she was going to do something to commemorate the workshop from the previous year. According to Roch, all of the sudden all of the lights were turned out. Everyone erupted into gales of laughter and applause remembering how even a power outage could not stop a bunch of cloggers from dancing and having fun.

“On another occasion at the Possum Trot Clogging Workshop,” Roch reminisced, “JoAnn went to the stage, grabbed the microphone and said “Stop.

Don’t anybody move.” The whole room got so still you could hear a pin drop. Someone had parked a car over some smoldering wood outside in the parking lot surrounding the Mountain City Playhouse and it was getting very hot. While JoAnn had everyone stay perfectly still and calm Joyce England and a couple of other people rushed out of the building and physically pushed the car back from atop the smoldering wood. Thank goodness the car was moved to safety and no one got hurt. This was a great example of JoAnn’s commanding presence and attention to the welfare of others.”

Roch and Barrett had the opportunity to spend a lot of time with JoAnn as they went to performances, traveled to clogging workshops and competitions and socializing with the other “Possums”. Roch describes those days as fun and remembers Gibb’s infectious sense of adventure. She also recalls Gibb’s organizational and leadership skills and her use of those skills to advance the art of clogging to new heights.

“Her many contributions to clogging have helped preserve the history of this art, provided



a means to recognize those who have excelled in the world of clogging, provided opportunities for countless individuals to learn clogging, participate in workshops, performances and competitions and meet others who share a love of clogging,” Roch said.

Georgia clogger John Douglas also looks back on his long affiliation and 35-year friendship with JoAnn Gibbs with great pride. Douglas worked with Gibbs for more than twenty years as a past chairman and president emeritus of C.L.O.G.

“JoAnn was the third president of C.L.O.G. and its first executive director,” according to Douglas. “Through her leadership, drive and creativity the organization became the Clogging Organization that set the bar high for conventions, workshop, competitions and International involvement.”

Douglas said that beginning with the first National Convention (held in Mobile, Alabama in November 1984), he saw Gibbs as determined to be successful and bring the art of clogging to the forefront of American folk art. According to Douglas, Gibbs used her own funds to finance the first convention and was ecstatic to have over twelve hundred people attend. “She and I stood at the door at the end of the Saturday night show and personally shook every hand and thanked everyone for attending and asked them to attend the convention the next year,” Douglas said.

Attendance at the organization’s national convention has varied over the years, reaching highs of six thousand attendees in the 1990s. A highlight of the events has been the Saturday Night Spectacular, a show produced for cloggers by cloggers that has tapped the talents of many of the greatest clogging teams and performers. Propelled by the story-telling and guidance of Tandy Barrett, Chip Woodall and many others, including Joel Harrison, Dustin Stephan, Blake



Dunn, Chip Summey, Naomi Pyle and others, the show provides a chance for cloggers to end the convention with a great showcase of the talents that thrive within our community. “JoAnn produced the 1984 convention show with local talent from the Atlanta area, rehearsing in the parking lot of a local elementary school,” Douglas recalled.

“I have missed the chance to interact with her in recent years as dementia slowly took her away from us all,” Douglas said. “She was a talented

organizer and promoter with vision of what clogging could become and one who acted on that vision. It is hard to put into words that adequately describe the debt all cloggers owe to this talented lady. She will be missed," he said.

As news of Gibbs passing was announced on social media, comments from cloggers around the world came pouring in.



Canadian clogger and step dancer Judy Waymouth has had a tremendous impact on the style of modern clogging, and owes much to JoAnn Gibbs, whose Canadian clogging workshop introduced her to the clogging world in the United States. Waymouth's connection to the art

form from that first meeting began a collaboration between the forms that has changed clogging tremendously and also influenced step dance styles. "I owe so much to JoAnn," Waymouth said. "If it wasn't for her I would never have known the US clogging world and had the privilege of teaching and performing in the States."

Utah clogger Julie Bon Bouck remarked that she will always remember JoAnn Gibbs as full of energy, and smiling.

"She will be missed by many," wrote Cheryl Bilz of Florida. "She had a great impact on my son Scotty, who eventually became an instructor and ran his own dance teams. I have fond memories of Fontana, the conventions she ran, and I think of all of the great cloggers still remaining friends today because of JoAnn's love of clogging."

"I cherish the time spent and the memories created on her team, Mountain Echoes, as a child and credit JoAnn for creating the love for competitive clogging that still remains in me today. She will be greatly missed. Much love to her family." Marci Taulli Rickard

"JoAnn Gibbs was so special to me! She was my first clogging teacher and instilled in me a love

of clogging. She encouraged me to dance on a clogging team and I'm still dancing. Every time I hear «Rocky Top» I have to dance her famous routine, and of course I think of her. I even have my Possom Trot School of Clogging certificate." Jenny Brooks Walker

"It is so sad to say goodbye to an era, a legacy and such a huge part of our clogging community. God bless you JoAnn." Colleen Greer Pearson

The clogging world will miss her. RIP JoAnn. Your friends, the Renegades-Quicksteppers, Germany. Dennis Gagne

"I am so sad to hear this news, but so very grateful that I met and worked with this wonderful lady of clogging! I have such beautiful memories of our time together!" Gina Zaragoza and Jean Beatson, Kangaroo Kloggers Klub of Perth, Western Australia

"We have performed Rocky Top many times. It's one of our favorites!" Diane Johnson, North Dakota Cloggers

Hundreds of cloggers from around the world joined these to post condolences, stories and remembrances of JoAnn on Facebook, Twitter and other social media.

As the convention kicks off in Baltimore this Thanksgiving weekend, there is little doubt that JoAnn Gibbs will be on clogger's minds, and when the strains of "Rocky Top" begin to stream through the hall and the floor fills with the sounds of tapping feet and smiling faces, I think JoAnn would revel in knowing that her legacy will live on for many generations to come.





# Back to Basics

## More about JoAnn Gibbs from one who knew her from the beginning

by Tandy Barrett

Many cloggers know JoAnn Gibbs from the CLOG National Clog Convention. She successfully presided over that event as Executive Director for many years, only departing when age and health issues suggested retirement.

JoAnn was a formidable force in the clogging community and a gifted organizer. But before we were introduced to her outstanding and innovative leadership, there was a beginning – when she laced her first pair of clogging shoes and she fell in love with the joy of dancing a true American folk dance.

### The Beginning

Joyce England was active in western square dance circles and had traveled to Houston for a convention. While there, she saw a team perform “Clogging”, using only double basics with western style figures. When she returned to Atlanta, she formed a team of her own to do basically the same thing. But during another square dance weekend in Fontana, she met Bill Nichols who taught her the basic, a triple and a new-fangled step called the “Fontana”. When she came back home she immediately started a class of her own. Joyce knew only four steps that opening night, but her class was filled rapidly.

JoAnn Gibbs and I walked into Joyce’s clogging class at the same time. The dance was new to JoAnn, but I had learned the basics at Big John Walters’ class, plus some variations, but I wanted one more night of clogging a week for exercise.

Joyce’s class was well attended and full of energetic dancers. In those days, steps were taught in a



revolving roller-rink type affair. Moving around in a large circle we practiced each step. The first few classes were uneventful rotating drills, but with my meager step catalogue, I made a stab at writing a line dance of my own. I asked Joyce if I could teach it in her class. I came early one night so she could preview it, and JoAnn wandered in. We all learned my brand new dance, “Boogie Grass Band”. That night Joyce, JoAnn and I became fast friends. It was the beginning...

JoAnn was an enthusiastic clogger with a natural sense

of rhythm – she took great joy in her new found hobby. The class got better acquainted with her one night when a delivery semi got stuck in the parking lot wedged between our cars. Upon hearing the driver’s frantic attempts to dislodge his



**Photos: Top:** JoAnn Gibbs (left) with Joyce England and Tandy Barrett at one of the first Possum Trot Workshops.

**Center:** JoAnn Gibbs and the “Grandfather” of modern clogging, Bill Nichols, at a Possum Holler clogging event at Fontana Village Resort in Western North Carolina.

truck, JoAnn wandered out, surveyed the situation and hopped on the side step of the truck.

“Shove over”, she said to the startled driver - “I’ll get ‘er out of here.”

With much gnashing of gears and the hiss of brakes, she managed to maneuver the huge semi out of its maze of cars and deposit the rig neatly in the street.

We all regarded JoAnn with somewhat reverent awe after that. We all knew this lady would be someone to reckon with.

Not too long after that night - Joyce, JoAnn and I went on our first field trip, a workshop in Columbus, Georgia. The bug hit us hard - we wondered if we could start teaching workshops of our own. It was 1979.

We made several more field trips to various small workshops, enjoying meeting new dancers whose warmth made us feel like family.

One of my favorite trips with JoAnn was to Fontana NC where we were introduced to the “magic” wood floor. I remember it was a beautiful autumn weekend – the trees were a riot of color after experiencing their first frost. That night at the Rec Hall dance, JoAnn and I retreated to the vast front porch. The evening had that smoky chill only the mountains could promise. The sound of rhythmic dancing feet thumped behind steamed windows, and the music resounded through the crisp air to the valley below. We settled into rocking chairs to rest our feet. After a bit, JoAnn began to tell me a bit about her early life.



JoAnn was raised by relatives as most of her family tree was lost to her. She was part Cherokee Indian, and she could trace her history back to the “Trail of Tears”, when many of her ancestors perished.

In her youth, she lived in rural Missouri. She remembered being a keen roller-skater and she loved going to

dances. She had a lovely contralto voice and sang whenever she could.

As a very young bride, JoAnn soon had three small boys to tend. Living in a tiny farm house with no plumbing or modern conveniences, she experienced a hard life. She was up early tending livestock and then took care of the boys. Later, she managed to get a nursing license and went to work to help support her family.

The Gibbs’ got a break. Her husband Russell was offered a job assessing farms for taxation. Soon he was transferred to Atlanta, and financially things looked up.

JoAnn and her family landed in Atlanta and embraced big city life. Atlanta had met this strong-willed survivor, and ready or not, “Missouri stubborn” had met the “Big A”!

After that chilly night on the Fontana porch, things changed rapidly. JoAnn and I talked seriously about teaching clogging and workshopping. Joyce, JoAnn and I continued to choreograph dance routines and before we knew it we were booked in Minneapolis for a workshop. We got great reviews and soon we added Alabama, Florida, and North Carolina to our date books.

We got involved with NCHC and CLOG (Clogging Leaders of Georgia) and became members of several other state organizations.

One week we flew to Utah to introduce Appalachian figures to cloggers who had never seen them before. It was an exciting time for us and the



dancers were eager to learn new steps and traditional formations.

After the Utah workshop, a clogger approached us and invited JoAnn and me to her brother's ranch in Star Valley, Wyoming. She said that there was a small cabin, but not much else to do there, would we like a few days of rest? After a week of workshops, it took us exactly two seconds to accept.

Star Valley was beautiful. It was nestled between grand mountains. We stopped for groceries and bedded down for some good relaxation.

Of course, I was antsy by the second day. I wandered over to the barn to check out the horses for a ride. JoAnn stated flatly, she was going to read all day.

I was in the midst of an enjoyable romp astride a nimble mare, when I heard a commotion near the barn.

I trotted over.

In the middle of a cloud of dust full of squawking and flapping chickens, three beefy ranch hands were attempting to hoist JoAnn saddle-ward on an 18 hand, well-fed Morgan named Bucky.

"Whoa Bucky, Whoa" said one guy to the shifting horse.

After leaving JoAnn in her nightgown, book-in-hand, and back at the cabin... I was a bit perplexed.

"What the heck, JoAnn..." I gulped, "What on earth are you doing?"

"What does it LOOK like I am doing... I am going for a horse ride!" She answered.

Meanwhile, the struggle went on below.

"See here..." one guy panted, "... put your foot in my hand!"

Another shouted, "Grab the horn, lady, and pull on up!"



It was no use. As all short legged people can attest, mounting a saddle by stirrup is nearly impossible without assistance unless you are a boneless 10 year old. Unfortunately, the farm did not possess any mounting steps. Defying several attempts to lift JoAnn astride, and after much puffing and salty language, the guys decided to move onto plan B.

As one man, they grabbed JoAnn's legs and with a giant communal heave, they tossed her skyward. For one horrible moment, I thought she would be catapulted topsy-turvy over the horse and land in the Wyoming dust.

Instead, she plopped in the saddle cross-ways with a resounding belly flop, backside up, legs kicking.

Bucky, who had been patiently shifting his weight from one hoof to the other noticed the weight change and started moving.

"WHOA!" JoAnn shouted.

Bucky ignored her.

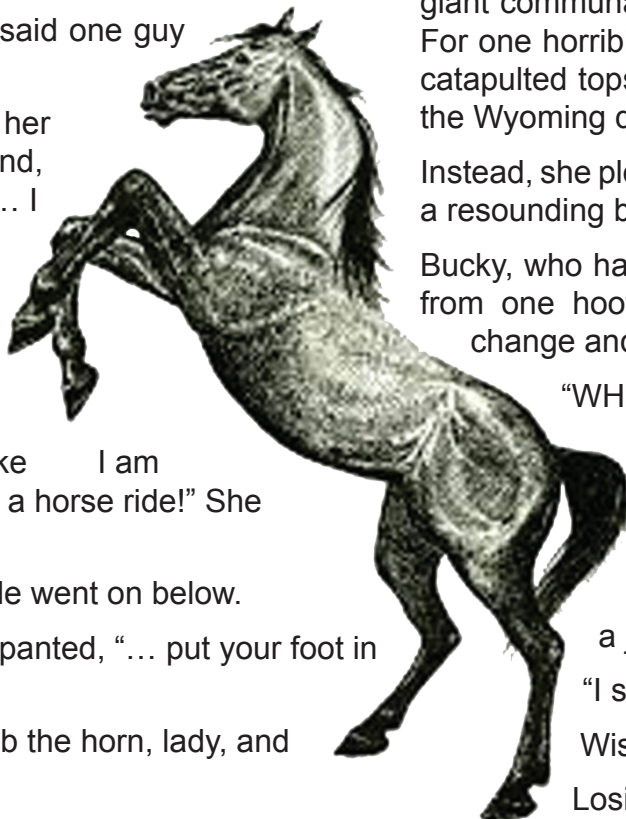
The three men attempted to get the animal under control.

Now, to JoAnn, this was no longer a joy ride but a battle of wills.

"I said KNOCK IT OFF!!" she hollered.

Wisely, Bucky halted in his tracks.

Losing her patience, JoAnn took



charge. She ordered five bales of hay... set in stair formation. Once set in place, JoAnn held out one hand to a sweating ranch hand and deftly ascended the makeshift staircase. She threw one leg over the saddle, grabbed the reins and with one sharp kick to Bucky's flank, she declared, "Now get out of my way!"

Once launched, JoAnn was an amiable jockey that day.

After a leisurely ride, several of us wanted a good gallop. While we enjoyed the run, JoAnn prudently reined up on the edge of the field to watch us.

As it was late in the day, the light was fading. I stole a glimpse of JoAnn silhouetted against a golden sunset. She cut a regal figure sitting atop her steed while scanning the beauty about her.

For a brief moment, I imagined her festooned with a trident, shield and cape. Majestic in her pose, she would have done justice to any medieval crusader surveying her realm.

It was an image of JoAnn that came to mind many times over the years.

After a few more workshops, the team decided we needed a name.

One night on the town, we met and danced with a blue grass band named, "Possum Trot". We shamelessly pinched their name, and the "Possum Trot Workshop Team" was created. We even got satin jackets. We were ready to roll.

The workshop team was getting more bookings. On Fridays, we piled into Joyce's old station wagon and packed it hip to hip with sound equipment, Q-sheets, records and luggage. We lumbered down the

road as JoAnn commanded the steering wheel and we took charge of the map. After a weekend of workshopping we routinely returned home Sunday nights with sore feet and sweaty t-shirts. We had a ball.

Our trips were not entirely uneventful.

JoAnn soon bought a station wagon of her own. We were still crammed to the gills with gear, but we traveled in a somewhat better style.

One day, we were on our way to Tennessee. Joyce was engrossed in the latest romance novel in the back seat, and I was mentally chair dancing my new routine, when JoAnn spied "Joe Davis' One-Stop" and decided to pull over for gas. She found a sign that said, "WE PUMP GAS". Delighted at this unexpected royal treatment, she eased the wagon to the pump and was greeted by a skinny lad with a broad grin who set the nozzle.

Replenished with snacks and drinks, JoAnn started the car. We got as far as the curb when it sputtered and died.

"What the \_\_\_\_\_," JoAnn muttered. She tried starting it again and again. New car or not, it just wouldn't catch.

"Quit mashing the gas, JoAnn!" I said, "Look, you've gone and flooded it!"

A sweet smell of fuel surrounded us.

Well, it seemed you couldn't fool a Missouri farm girl.



**Photos: Top Left:**

JoAnn Gibbs (center) with one of her award winning competition and performance teams.

**Left:** A young Scotty Bilz and Tandy Barrett compare notes on a new choreography while JoAnn Gibbs packs her well-travelled station wagon for another workshop trip.

“That smells like diesel...” She said.

In a flash, she was out of the wagon and charging toward the One-Stop screen door. Seconds later, our once grinning young Adonis flew from the building with a look of sheer terror on his face and JoAnn was charging right behind him.

They were gone for a while, so we vacated the car and retreated with our snacks to the store porch to watch what this drama was going to offer next. Soon, the owner, Joe Davis, came around the corner... then a fuming JoAnn stomped into view... and finally our young gas pumper, shaken, but less ashen.

Mr. Davis strolled over to the car and slowly began circumventing the disabled wagon. He went around again, eyeing it carefully. JoAnn walked directly behind him, hands on hips while demanding answers.

Exasperated, she finally yelled, “WELL? ... What are you going to do about this! My car doesn’t take diesel! This is a NEW car!”

Mr. Davis looked at her for a minute.

“Well...” he said, pushing back his cap. He spit a generous amount of tobacco towards an empty oil can and scored a hit with remarkable aim.

He took a deep breath and said... “Well... I’ve been thinking about this and there is only one thing to do... C’mon, Junior, let’s unload this buggy and flip ‘er on ‘er side.”

“WHAAAT!!!” JoAnn bellowed.

Viewing from the porch, this was a rare show indeed. We began to lay bets on whether she would smack poor Mr. Davis flat on his back. JoAnn was nose to nose with the man and her red face would’ve rivaled a prized ripe tomato.

Suddenly, Mr. Davis reared back and broke into a huge belly laugh. Recovering, he looked at her straight in the eye.

“Now you lookee here...” he said. “You ‘jest go and set on that there porch over yonder, ‘ya hear? ... And you stay put till I get done

here... you’ns get that?”

Amazingly, JoAnn sat.

Things worked out in the end. Several men from around the area came to inspect the problem and after much discussions, examinations and the clanking of tools and equipment, Mr. Davis wiped his hands.

Two hours delayed, and sensibly siphoned and refueled, we were workshop-bound. JoAnn, again, presided over the steering wheel. It was then we noticed a large bag on the dashboard. It was crammed with Joe Davis One-Stop best licorice whips, which happed to be JoAnn’s favorite vice. It was gladly presented to her on-the-house.

JoAnn’s station wagon became notorious in clogging circles. It was always crammed with an impossible tangle of wires, cords and connectors. It withstood an Oreo-sticking onslaught, getting stuck on a sandbar and once was a home to a family of raccoons. When it finally rode its last mile, it was parked in JoAnn’s driveway. It was a fitting monument to a life well-traveled.

The Possum Trot Workshop Team was active for years. We added Scotty Bilz to the team and he came on board with a youthful enthusiasm and a world of talent. We organized the “Mountain City Workshop” in Georgia and “Possum Holler” in Fontana, NC. Both events continued successfully for many years.

All in all, in its history, Possum Trot taught over 250 workshops and seminars in the USA, Canada and Europe.



Joyce soon retired from the workshop team and moved to Florida to thaw out and rest her feet.

JoAnn moved on to the more organizational side of clogging. She created two champion competition clogging teams and founded the Universal Championships. She continued her work with NCHC and was active in revamping competition rules, score sheets and judges training. Her vision to create a true National Clogging Convention was always her dream and was realized.

Scotty and I continued to teach workshops together for several years. Later, I decided to retire from workshops and clog when inspired, but Scotty is still going strong, teaching and bringing a new generation of cloggers his outstanding dance routines.

The Possum Trot Workshop Team has now gone to the dusty clogging memory book. It was formed before steps had names, Q-sheets were a rarity and line dance routines were almost unheard of.

The members of the Possum Trot Workshop Team varied in age, ability and ideas, but the team's aspirations were united to create innovative venues for the contemporary clogger as well as keeping the Appalachian heritage intact.

It is true... clogging is a journey... which has seen many changes over the years. But to me, clogging is a barn dance, trading steps in a garage and teaching workshops by traveling in a battle-worn station wagon.

Clogging is family. Clog on JoAnn.

Tandy Barrett



# Grandma

## Scotty Bilz Honors his Mentor and Grandmother Figure

by Scotty Bilz

### I called her Grandma.

We met when I was 12, she had me teaching before age 14. She tricked me into it actually. JoAnn was going to teach a Buck dancing workshop to 1000 dancers in Tallahassee, and she asked me to help show footwork. I got up on the stage with her, she handed me the microphone and left. That was my introduction to teaching. You could never say 'no' to grandma, she always got her way. She truly was everyone's grandma. She asked more than you ever thought you could do, but she knew you could.

She fell in love with clogging and craved so much more than what was available. Her vision was a national clogging event – and CLOG National Convention was born. JoAnn was determined to have this happen. She risked her personal finances to see it happen. The first convention in Mobile Alabama had its battles, but JoAnn never gave up. And she always got her way. She signed the contract for that first convention in her basement in Lilburn Georgia. She refused to go to Alabama, she made them come to her. And they did! You can't say no to grandma.



With the event now booked, she put a lot of stock in me to help pull it off, in a lot of us that were teaching or starting our teaching adventures then. None of us wanted to let her down. No one wanted to disappoint grandma.

And JoAnn did all of this while directing and dancing on teams and teaching classes in Atlanta.

JoAnn changed the clogging world by sheer will power. She was one of a kind, and no one has been able to match what she brought to clogging. What she did we all took for granted and it really created a way for us to flourish. She had competition dancers from all over coming to teach at National Convention. It brought us together in a non-competitive environment where we could really get to know each other and build some really lasting friendships. 'National Instructors' came about because of her, because of this event. You became a 'national instructor' by teaching at the National Convention.

In the 80's the 'national circuit' really was born with Possum Trot Workshops. JoAnn took this idea and ran with it - literally, around the country. There were Possum Trot workshops held in several areas. The one she took to

California still exists today.

JoAnn touched clogging in many ways, including competitions. Without JoAnn we probably would not have Open Precision or even Line Dance categories. She wanted to compete with NCHC but had only 2 boys. According to the rule; that was not allowed, you could not have odd numbers of boys and girls. She worked to change that. She helped to get the line dance category added. Most of the clogging then was couples driven, like precision, but Tandy Barrett opened up more of the idea of line dances and more teams were starting to do those because they didn't always have even numbers of dancers and they were fun. JoAnn sat down with NCHC to open up competition to more teams by pushing for these changes. If we didn't have the Line categories, we would not have all the young people we have today in clogging. She also had input on score sheets. That is where the 'dangling badges' and 'chewing gum' rules came from. No one wants to see that!

She loved me, but 'it was just business' and I worked for her. Anything she asked, I did, so many of us did. I enjoyed her as a person and we all reaped the benefits of what she created. Seeing her working in her basement to sign the contract for Mobile, she may not have been the best business person, but she was diligent. She did it, she was amazing.

JoAnn was grandma, to me, to all of us. She was everyone's clogging Grandma.

**Photos: Top:** JoAnn, Scotty and Tandy join cloggers in celebrating another successful CLOG National Convention.

**Center:** Chip Summey (left) joins Scotty and JoAnn for a sing-along at convention.

**Center:** Chip Woodall (left) joins Scotty and JoAnn at the Opryland Hotel as thousands of cloggers perform JoAnn's routine to "Rocky Top" for a place in the Guinness Book of World Records





ROCKY TOP

Record: Rocky Top, by Terry Gibbs

Choreo: Jo Ann Gibbs, Possum Trot Cloggers

NO.  
TIMES-STEP

Intro: Wait 16 beats, starts on left foot.

PART A

- 2 SLAPBACKS DT(b)--SL/DRAG--STEP(ib)--DT(b)--SL/DRAG--STEP(ib)--DT(b)--SL/DRAG--  
L R R L R L L R L R R
- STEP--DS--R/S [footwork same on repeat]  
L R L R
- 1 VINE SLURS DS--SLUR/STEP--DS--BR(up)/SL [turn 1/4 R on 1st DS, 1/2 R on BR/SL]  
L R R L R L
- DS--SLUR/STEP--DS--BR(up)/SL [turn 1/2 right on BR/SL]  
R L L R L R
- DS--SLUR/STEP--DS--BR(up)/SL [turn 1/2 left on BR/SL]  
L R R L R L
- DS--SLUR/STEP--DS--BR(up)/SL [turn 1/4 right on BR/SL]  
R L L R L R
- 4 ROCKY TOP DS--R/S--DS--R/S--DS--DT(b)[pivot 1/4 R]/SL--STEP--DR(kick)/SL  
L R L R L R L R L R R L R  
&1 &2 &3 &4 &5 & 6 &7 & 8

PART B

- 2 SWIVELS DS--R/S--R/S--R/S [moving 1st to the left, then to the right]  
L R L R L R L
- 4 STOMP & KICK STOMP--DR(kick)/SL [clap hands on the kicks]  
L L R L
- REPEAT THE STEPS ABOVE, SAME FOOTWORK
- 4 BASIC DS--R/S [circling to left 360°]  
L R L

BRIDGE

- 1 TRIPLE STOMP DS--DS--DS--STOMP/STOMP [moving forward]  
L R L R L
- 1 TRIPLE BASIC DS--DS--DS--R/S [moving backward]  
R L R L R
- 2 VINE SLUR DS--SLUR/STEP--DS--BR/SL [moving left, then right]  
L R R L R L
- REPEAT THE ABOVE

SEQUENCE: A/ B/ BRIDGE/ A/ B/ B/ BRIDGE

UNCLE PEN

Record: Uncle Pen by Ricky Skaggs, Don't Cheat in our Hometown Album, EPIC-38954

Choreo: JoAnn Gibbs, Doraville, GA and Bill Nichols, Wallhalla, S.C.

Intro: Wait 2 Quick Beats Begin Left Foot

-----  
BEGIN DANCE FACING PARTNER, MEN FACING REVERSE L.O.D., LADIES FACING L.O.D.

PART A

- |   |             |                         |
|---|-------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | DS-RS-RS-RS | Push off left           |
| 2 | DSRS        | Forward pass one person |
| 1 | DS-RS-RS-RS | Push off right          |
| 2 | DSRS        | Forward pass one person |
| 1 | DS-RS-RS-RS | Push off left           |
| 2 | DSRS        | Forward pass one person |
| 1 | DS-RS-RS-RS | Push off right          |
| 2 | DSRS        | Forward pass one person |

-----  
PART B

- |   |                           |  |
|---|---------------------------|--|
| 1 | DS-DSRS                   | Turn to face partner, men on inside facing out, ladies on outside facing |
| 2 | DB-Br-S1-TA-TA-TF-TA-DSRS | Facing partner, hands joined w/ partn                                    |
| 1 | DS-DSRS                   | Face line of dance as couples.   |

-----  
PART C

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 2 | DS-Dt(xif)-S1-Dt(x)-S1-TB-Br(around)-Heel-&-Heel-Br(around)-Heel-&-Heel | "Two Scoops"  |
| 2 | DS  | Men turn right to face partner, to en in starting position. |

-----  
INTERLUDE

- |   |      |  |
|---|------|--|
| 1 | Kick |  |
|---|------|--|

-----  
ENDING

- |   |                                 |                      |
|---|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 | DS-DS-DSRS-Step<br>&1 &2 &3&4 & | Turn to face partner |
|---|---------------------------------|----------------------|

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SEQUENCE:A-B-C-A-B-C-A-B-C(ON THE 2 DS STAY WITH PARTNER FACING L.O.D.)-A-Interlude-C-A-Ending

## CLOG Today

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**CLOG Today** (formerly known as the *Flop-Eared Mule*) is the official newsletter for the National Clogging Leaders Organization, Inc., published by cloggers, for cloggers, in an effort to share clogging news and to promote and preserve the Clogging dance form.

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CLOG encourages all cloggers and clogging enthusiasts to contribute to the content of the newsletter. Please send news items, advertising, comments, and/or suggestions to the editor.

High-quality images and documents in Microsoft Word (attached to e-mail) are preferred. Original photos and documents sent via postal mail are also accepted (please send SASE for materials you wish to be returned).

Issue:	Deadline:
January-February	December 15
March-April	February 15
May-June	April 15
July-August	June 15
September-October	August 15
November-December	October 15

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## Road to Baltimore...National CLOG 2015



From family-friendly museums and restaurants to satisfy every palate, to exciting nightlife, cultural experiences and spectacular people-watching, Baltimore's Inner Harbor offers more to see and do than you can imagine.

### Things to Around Baltimore Harbor

Inner Harbor visitors could come back day after day and still have plenty to see and explore. Looking for ideas for things to do around the bustling center of Baltimore? Here are some of our Inner Harbor favorites:

- ◆ **Take a Cruise on the Bay with Watermark**  
Cruise the Inner Harbor and beyond on the 65-foot BIG RED BOAT. Choose from daily, 45-minute narrated cruises; a Friday night, 90-minute "Key Bridge Cruise"; or a Saturday night, 60-minute "City Lights Cruise."
  - ◆ **Visit the Maryland Science Center**  
Let your senses and mind wander as you explore the numerous hands-on activities at the **Maryland Science Center**. Featuring an IMAX theater and planetarium, it's sure to please all visitors.
  - ◆ **Get Hands-on at the Port Discovery Children's Museum**  
Port Discovery Children's Museum provides experiences that ignite imagination, inspire learning and nurture growth through play. The museum boasts three floors of educational, interactive and hands-on/minds-on experiences designed for children ages two to 10 years of age. - See more at: <http://baltimore.org/article/baltimore-inner-harbor#sthash.Ox9tZTOw.dpuf>
  - ◆ **Get Close to Nature at the National Aquarium**  
**The National Aquarium** in Baltimore houses sharks, dolphins, rays and tropical fish among the more than 17,000 creatures in naturalistic exhibits, including a walk-through rain forest; an exciting live-action dolphin show; a 4-D Immersion Theater and an Australian exhibit featuring a 35-foot waterfall. This spectacular aquarium is sure to be a hit with the kids (including the "big" ones!).
  - ◆ **Visit Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine**  
At Fort McHenry, you can learn about the Battle of Baltimore and experience events like living history weekends, where the Fort McHenry Guard performs demonstrations — all just a water taxi ride away from the Inner Harbor.
  - ◆ **Shop 'til You Drop at Harborplace and The Gallery**  
Located in the heart of the Inner Harbor on Pratt Street, **Harborplace and The Gallery** offer unique shopping, diverse dining and a variety of entertainment right on the picturesque waterfront.
  - ◆ **Dine in Style at Baltimore Inner Harbor Restaurants**  
Elegant gourmet cuisine, ethnic foods from around the world and plenty of fresh seafood from Maryland's Chesapeake Bay can be found at the many **Inner Harbor restaurants**.
- A block away from Baltimore's Inner Harbor is **Power Plant Live!**, a premier dining and entertainment district that features a variety of restaurants and nightclubs surrounding a common plaza. There is also outdoor seating, which often features live performances.

*Come Visit Baltimore!*  
**National CLOG Convention 2015**  
*November 26-28, 2015*



David and Susan Phillips, Executive Directors  
2986 Mill Park Court  
Dacula, GA USA 30019

## 32nd Annual CLOG National Convention ~ Baltimore, MD ~

November 26-28, 2015  
**Make Your Plans Now!**

### Auxiliary Events:

Certified Clogging Instructor Training Session  
~ Monday ~ Wednesday  
Judges Training ~ Thursday  
CCI Testing ~ Thursday

### Pre-Convention Events:

Evening Dance ~ Wednesday  
Open Teach Halls ~ Wednesday & Thursday  
Dance Expose' ~ Thursday

### Convention Events:

Parade of Colors ~ Thursday Evening  
Evening Dancing ~ Thursday - Saturday  
Workshops ~ Friday & Saturday  
Seminars ~ Friday & Saturday  
Exhibitions ~ Friday Evening  
Showcase ~ Saturday Evening

### Featuring:

Premier Clogging Instructors  
Earlier Registration & Member Discounts

**Schedule tentative and subject to Change**



### **Hotel Info:**

Hilton Baltimore  
401 W. Pratt Str., Baltimore, MD

### **Reservation Number:**

443-573-8700 -  
Register online - <http://tinyurl.com/clog2015>

### **GROUP ROOM RATES**

**\$99 1-4 people per room**

**Parking \$15 per day**

**1st night deposit required with reservation**

**Guaranteed Rate until 10/28/2015**

**Rooms will Sell Out—Reserve Yours Today!!**

**Register Online** at [www.clog.org/convention](http://www.clog.org/convention)

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