

FEATURED

JOHNSTOWN

## Line dancers at Johnstown Moose Lodge like family, say instructors

By Greg Hitchcock  
Oct 11, 2024

1 of 8



PETER R. BARBER Country Liner Kelly Handy of Johnstown moves to the music at the Johnstown Moose Lodge #1185 on South Comrie Avenue Wednesday, October 9, 2024.

Peter R. Barber

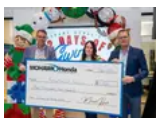
JOHNSTOWN — A group of dancers seemingly glided across the dance floor as an instructor gave out directions to the tunes of country and western music.

“Close,” the instructor announced.

The dancers followed suit, stepping next to the other foot.

“Pivot,” she advised.

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Dancers pivoted, a two-count move.

Line dancing is offered at the Loyal Order of the Moose's Johnstown Moose Lodge every Tuesday night to adults eager to learn the next step.

Tara Howland and Josh Sims started line dancing at the Moose lodge in 2021 as part of their line dancing group, County Liners.

They met online during the COVID-19 pandemic and began teaching in local venues like the Cowboy Up and the Moose. Despite slow initial interest, their first event was well-attended. Today, it has grown to over 20 dancers from ages six to 80.

A line dance is a choreographed dance in which a group of people dance along to a repeating sequence of steps while arranged in one or more lines or rows. These lines usually face all in the same direction or, less commonly, face each other. Unlike circle dancing, line dancers are not in physical contact with each other.

Each dance is usually associated with, and named for, a specific song, such as the Macarena or the Electric Slide, which are among the line dances that have remained in the popular zeitgeist for decades.

"My sister brought me out, and then we just fell in love with line dancing," dancer Sherri Wade of Broadalbin said. "It's great exercise, and it gets you out in the community. It's just having fun with a great group of people."

#### **Gloversville High Key Club to hold fourth annual sponsor-a-child gift drive**

Wade said their instructors teach line dancing in Broadalbin and Ballston Spa when they are not at the Johnstown Moose.

"There's a few people that go there and support them there, too," she said.

Johnstown resident Kelly Handy, a member of the Moose, was sitting home alone with nothing to do until an advertisement for line dancing caught her attention.

"I decided to show up by myself," she said, "and that was the best decision I've ever made.

"I learned how to have confidence in myself. There's no judgment here. Everybody motivates each other and we're a huge family. I could come here every night and spend time with all these people."

Handy was a novice with limited dancing skills when she started two-and-a-half years ago.

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"I went out and I was very intimidated — it was a little overwhelming — but everybody made me feel confident," she said. "Now, I'm welcoming all these new people coming in, and we all help each other. I'm proud and honored to be part of it."

Howland said line dancing has many benefits, including exercise, social connections, and mental health improvements. Line dancing is also about having fun with its low-impact dance moves, Howland said, making it accessible and enjoyable for everyone.

"We just brought that passion here to the local area," she said.

"This is really low impact, and it's just enjoyable from a musical standpoint, too, even if you're not a country fan. We play a good variety of different genres, too," Howland said.

"People just enjoy music, and with music, they have the ability to express themselves," Sims said. "The cares of the day end at the door."

Howland and Sims also organize fun events for students, including participating in parades and performing at Amsterdam Mohawks games. These activities aim to provide enjoyable experiences and opportunities for students to engage in dance and community outreach, said Howland.

"We've got students up in their 80s, and they love to do this. It helps keep their brain young. There is no judgment," she said.

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By Ameara Ditsche



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By Tyler A. McNeil



**Couple opens new Groversville axe-throwing business**  
By Greg Hitchcock

## Photos: Line dancing at Johnstown Moose



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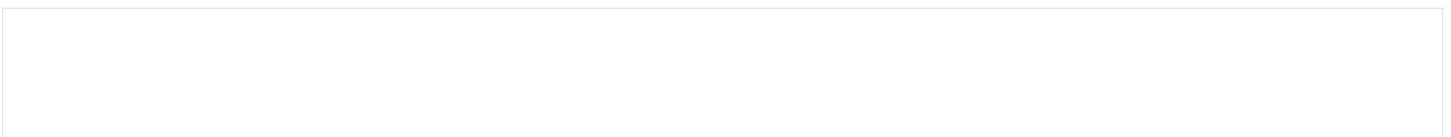


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**Greg Hitchcock**

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