

Chapter 12

This chapter is not really finished covering 2009 since the scrapbook was prepared in Q3 of 2009..

More great music and dance at Café Cocomo but classes down, especially on Thursdays. Saturday “date night” crowd pretty consistent, but the severe drop in working people in SF really has an effect on the week nights. It is amazing to think that back in the dot-com days my Thursday class size peaked at a number higher than even Saturdays. The AVERAGE size was 117 people before that crash. Then dropped to 75 or so and now somewhere between 50-70.

There was a benefit for Chata Gutierrez, long time radio DJ and salsa DJ in Feb that was sad but fun. She is fighting cancer. Musicians turn out in droves for such benefits. And then Julio Bravo had a 20 year anniversary celebration at Roccapulco in March 2009.

In April there was a shocking development when Alex da Silva, my first serious teacher in SF was arrested in L.A. on sexual assault charges. It was not as much of a shock as for some other people in that I had heard about such things from one of his previous partners who was tired of being investigated by police. Many Bay Area people can't get their head around it, since he always seemed to get any woman he wanted, and they seem to disassociate the violence from the sex. Other Bay Area people celebrate since Alex has a lot of enemies too here where he grew up. Alex was released in only 3 days from jail and we all thought he'd sue for false arrest or something. But he was also taken off the “So You Think You Can Dance” show for the summer and there was not ONE single salsa performed. It hurt us all. Then in August he was arrested again on more counts (something like 8 complainants now) and held for \$6.2M bail. He remains in jail with his life seemingly over.. After the first arrest, he lost many of his jobs and decided to come back home to teach again at Roccapulco on Wed. See the flyers. As far as I know he taught one time and then was arrested on the day before his 2nd scheduled appearance.

The ego of the salsa dancer can be a corrosive thing. Another teacher Joseph here was arrested in 2008 for similar charges and rots in jail now. And another famous L.A. dancer Johnny Vasquez, whom I first met when we were doing the 7th Note Showclub in the early part of the decade now lives in Italy after he flew the coup to escape similar charges!

I started playing more and had a lucky break when Andy Gutierrez of “Andy y su Orq Callao” asked me to play some gigs for him during the summer. I was in a band again! And this time it was a lot better. So, we continue to play and work on our repertoire and have had a good run of gigs all over the Bay Area clubs.

Louise Garrison and I did a fantastic photo shoot with Max Koo and I re-designed my web site completely to clean it up, enhance it and finally purge all the old stuff from my married days. I made great new business cards as well.

The recession continues deep and life goes on..

This chapter ends around October 2009.

