

HEATHER BARTON

www.hbootleggers.com



I AM A COUNTRY
GIRL AT HEART



She wore a white T- shirt the day we met for a chat, and I felt that I needed to visit a salon for a makeover. Her hair was enviable. She looked glamorous.

I narrow the definition of glamour by defining Heather thus. I try to be a proxy to fit the reader here, and understand how it will read for those who know her, and for those who do not know Heather very well. She has worked since she was fifteen. She has been a nanny, a bar manager, a manager in a hotel, ran a cleaning agency, was a teacher, owns a hair salon, is a dancer, instructor, a radio anchor and choreographer.

She believes that if one percent of what you do is good, the ninety nine percent will follow. makeover I need from time to time.

'Salon is my main job' says Heather. Her salon opened on the fifteenth of July this year after five months. Her twenty six year old salon is her pride and she loves her job.

I confessed to Heather that the most creative I have ever got with my hair was when I told the hairdresser that she could take off two inches from my hair length because the last time she cut only one. I might have to import memes of Heather's creativity to Delhi because my stylist here has given up on me.

Dalliance with dance, dear Heather? Her dedication to dance tells you that she breathes it. Her luminosity speaks of her having been a teacher all her life. Six months in the past year, she spent in hotel rooms, because she was traveling to teach dance. 'It's a shame, my income was from dancing and traveling too'. Clearly, she misses meeting friends and other instructors. She has had an absolutely delightful time teaching online for the Streamline group. People outside Scotland know her now. She adores the boys, JP, Daniel and Jose. 'They are very encouraging and great to work with'. Her heart stopped when she was asked to teach on DDW 3 by Rachael. What an honour it was, says she. 'I was blown away'. I can imagine.

SALON IS MY
MAIN JOB

Once
upon
a:
Time

GLAMOUR IN A T-SHIRT

by MONICA BHASIN

LDF

LINE DANCE FOUNDATION
WWW.LINEDANCEFOUNDATION.COM

Merry feet
Line Dance

WWW.MERRYFEET.CLUB

DESIGN BY TANAVI B SREEN

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Heather has skillfully blended fun, talent and a 'maturer' head. She has worked with people all the time. 'I love fun and so does Steve, my husband'. She feels restricted by the lockdown because she is very much 'a peoples' person'. 'I love fun and I love people'. She and Steve make a perfect fun loving couple. 'This is my second marriage'.

'Fun totally' is her mantra and yet she seems to get the job done. She feels her professionalism lies in her dedication to the task at hand. Her mother was an aromatherapist. Her sons, thirty two and thirty eight, are lucky to have her tell them, 'Listen go ahead and follow your dream'. She pauses and reflects, 'Life is too short not to be fun'.

Her sojourn with Cancer makes her eager to take life as it is today. 'Grab it' she tells her boys, 'Take today as it is and don't wait for tomorrow. You are not here for a trial, you have one shot of your life'. She is in her fifth year of recovery and may you continue to be in good health always.

THE SHOW MUST GO ON

She happily turned up in class with a shirt worn back to front. You can be sure that it would have drawn attention only because people thought it was great style. She must have carried it off, and well. If this lady could make a hundred students sing and dance while they waited for the power to be restored, she can walk the ramp with the shirt inside out. She also acted as if nothing was amiss when she forgot to carry accessories to play her music system. A spirited and fun loving Heather is capable of handling any awkward situation and turning it into a celebration. 'The show must go on', she says with a wink.



Her mother and aunt used to dance at the D&G and attend classes together. She accompanied them and thought, 'Oh my God, this is awesome'. Three years of training at the School of Western Dance, equipped her with skills. As she reminisces about her career she speaks of her mentor Lizzie, a D&G instructor, who she misses dearly. Lizzie pushed her to travel and teach. She would send music and encourage Heather to take up more classes. She knew Heather was both inclined and talented. She speaks of her family support and her mentor in the same breath and calls them 'amazing' for the encouragement she had from them. And so her dance club, Bootleggers' was born.

'I admire everyone in this profession' and her inspiration is Jo Thomson, a fine collaboration of talent and a good heart. 'I am an everyday instructor'. She humbly compares herself to them, 'they have an edge' in the way they use technique. Rachael is a legend and makes things happen. She would jump to invitations by Niels, Fred, Rob and these movers and shakers if they were to ask her to write dances with them. She proudly talks about writing dances with Simon Ward and Rob Fowler. Recently Jose and she choreographed a country dance, *Life Without You*, which is yet to be published. Her first with Willie Brown, Cecilia, went viral. Missing was another choreography that was danced globally.



DANCE
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I committed her voice and her lovely warm accent to memory, because all the recording and research does not capture what you see in her when you speak with her. 'I must've started teaching when I was twenty three'. She started choreographing eleven years ago, and though it was exciting, she does not always feel confident. The Line dance community has always motivated her. She wishes that she had concluded some choreographies because leaving them midway just meant the good music was used by 'bigger names'. There is plenty of music out there, however, she adds.

'If I never do it again, it does not matter', she says effusively as she recounts her experience of being paired off with Niels Poulson at the Crystal Boot Awards. She taught there too, and that is an experience she will treasure always. Betty had called her to ask if she would like to teach. I can imagine that you, Heather, could not have been totally insulated from the pressure of the request, in spite of the excitement of teaching on that stage. 'I was so honoured to be on that stage, so proud'. Very happy for you, of course Heather, it must have been a dream realised.

She found that her relationship with the dance community was established by the invisible hand of destiny as her channel at the Linedancer Radio won the listeners' choice award. Her dance with Simon, Rolling with Love, won the CBA and she won the instructor of the year, at the CCN. It was an incredibly eventful year, a marathon, Heather, what an achievement.

If you commission her for classes, you must know a few facts. She is a 'no nonsense' person. 'I'm not having that' she says if she sees people take advantage of people. "I'm straight to the point", she tells me. The social aspect of dance is important for her, the students have to enjoy themselves, but they have to be willing to learn if they are doing classes with her. 'I do not like to torque my body', and she smiles here, but she does like to tell them how to look good as they dance. Even a 'vine' will be a step behind step touch to keep it simple.

IF YOU HAVE
A GOOD HEART
IT RUBS OFF ON
PEOPLE

'I am a country girl at heart'. Steve and she are living their dream in a log cabin cozy home in the countryside. It was a big decision to sell everything and move here, but the most satisfying one. She is truly living her favorite expression 'Dance is not what we do, it's who we are'. Being an instructor, one teaches and enjoys other mixes and dances but she loves country dances the most.

She, as the LDF Ambassador of Scotland, tells us that it is important to stay connected, 'Just pick up the phone and ask' she says. The LDF is helping thousands across the globe. She feels proud that this message can be shared through her. This young grandmother lives it up with a twinkle in her eye. She sings, she dances and in her heart she is always there as a representative of the Line dance community, to spread cheer and share good stories. And who says one is always ok, of course it is ok not to be ok. We agree Heather.

It is said that we look at the world once, in childhood, and the rest is memory. I wonder. Heather wants to build memories of emotions, acquire some, appropriate some, we all at some time feel we have appropriated. Collective memories of new and old associates, and new and old places reflect her personality and they have been enriched from her travel to places like South Korea, Germany, Denmark Belgium and Holland. She hopes she can travel to Malaysia, India, New Zealand and Australia to teach. South Korea is the place she dreams of going back to.

Scotland has a lot of line dance clubs and events. She herself does many things throughout the year, and the country is busy with festivals and events almost every week. She is happy doing three classes a week and feels there is no scope for more in her busy schedule.

'Listen everyone has a mask, no one knows what's behind. Happiness has a big key, and this key is our smile'. 'I like to walk, I like to read, biographies and crime... it settles me down'. Adjust to the times and try and stay in touch, she advises. One phone call to a person might be what he needs. One 'hi' to a stranger might work magic. 'If you have a good heart it rubs off on people. I like to be there for everyone. Just pick up the phone and call me'.

Glamour and charisma come from the person, I am convinced.

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