



Tap instructor Susan McCollom leads students in warm-up routine

## Local Dance Studio Provides Variety of Opportunity for All

By Anna Eames

From ballet to breakdancing, the upbeat and popular Rhythm Room Dance and Movement Center of Lafayette entails the grouping of several different types of dance, as well as aerobic and toning classes that are adaptable to experience level. This relatively young but steadily growing dance studio provides an encouraging atmosphere as well as a wide variety of classes for everyone from beginner to pre-professional.

Retired professional dancer and current owner of the Rhythm Room Dance and Movement Center of Lafayette, Dianna Rowley opened the studio in its first location, Walnut Creek, in 2000, and has since nearly outgrown her current location in

Lafayette. The studio plans on expanding in its current location very soon, as many teen and children classes are overflowing.

With as diverse an array of experience and intensity levels of students as that of the class options, the studio provides a low-stress environment. They provide training for aspiring professionals, confidence for weekend club-goers, and exercise for those who are ready to leave their StairMaster and treadmill days behind.

The demise of the best fitness efforts often comes due to early disincentives and obstacles. No immediate result, no point. This excuse is officially gone.

With a workout like the Rhythm Room supplies, one wants to go back week after week. It provides an ideal exercise which allows the burning calories, the building of a talent, as well as the relieving of stress in a single hour.

"It's more than just a physical exercise; it's a mental exercise," said Rowley. "It's also a good outlet [and]...a stress reliever. That's one of the main benefits of dance. We have a lot of people who are referred to our studio from psychologists because people need an outlet to exert their energy."

Rowley also strongly encourages people with diabetes, like herself, to get involved in dance. "I am an insulin-dependent diabetic, and my office manager is also a professional dancer and an insulin-dependent diabetic. We want parents to feel safe, if they have a child that is diabetic...in putting them in an active situation," said Rowley. "We know how to handle those situations, and it's really important for young kids who have that

## TURKEYS IN OUR BACKYARD: KEEP THEM WILD!

By Sophie Bracinni

Long ago when all the animals talked like people, Turkey overheard a boy begging his sister for food. When Turkey heard this, he shook himself all over. Many kinds of fruits and wild food dropped out of his body, and the brother and sister ate these up. Like in this Apache legend, turkeys have always been associated with our nourishment and there is no question that Thanksgiving would be very meager without them. Yes, we love our turkeys, but not that much when

flocks take over our decks and gardens.

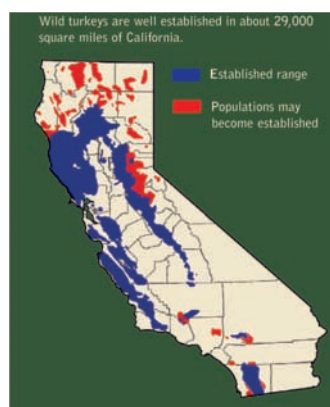
Turkey are not indigenous to our coast of the Americas. Their natural habitat spread from the Canadian border to Mexico, but only in the East. They were imported here for top hunting game. Since then, they proliferated. According to wildlife biologist Gary Beeman, the population is growing extremely fast. There are natural predators to turkeys: bobcats, coyotes, mountain lions and golden eagles. Unfortunately, since turkeys are not native to California, these predators have not registered them on their prey chart. Beeman believes that they will learn.

Why is their presence a problem? Turkeys are omnivorous, just like raccoons. To some residents, they have become a nuisance; so much that a turkey was injured in Moraga recently. Sure, turkey hunting season is opened – for archery the spring hunting season started the last Saturday of March for 51 consecutive days – but it is authorized only with a hunting license and outside of city limits. So if you find yourself with a flock soiling or destroying your property, call the Department of Fish and Game – DFG – and ask for a depredation permit. The department

will send someone to assess the situation and decide if the property damage is significant. In that case Beeman will be contacted.

Beeman holds a pest control license from the Department of Agriculture. If a depredation permit is issued, he will come and catch the turkeys. He has constructed a huge trap that can lure up to 10 turkeys at a time. After their capture, the birds are killed. The turkeys taken under those conditions cannot be eaten. Beeman returns them to nature by disposing of them in remote EBMUD canyons where coyotes and vultures have learnt to recognize his truck and are waiting for the feed. Beeman covers all of Contra Costa County and gets called once or twice a week with a depredation permit.

Hunters will tell you that turkeys are great game. In the wild, they are very smart and allusive birds. They can fly, as high as 100 feet up and for 1/8 of a mile. But those are not the birds we see in our suburbs. The huge bird, member of the quail, grouse and pheasant family, is not afraid of humans anymore in areas where it is not hunted, like in Lamorinda. Some people have taken a liking to them and sometimes even feed them. Kyle Orr, Information Officer at the DFG warns us: "If wild animals have



You Can Help Wildlife Please visit [www.keepmewild.org](http://www.keepmewild.org) access to human food and garbage, they want more and more. They lose their natural fear of humans and can become aggressive." Orr's advice? "Keep them wild!"

## Moraga Mourns Another Loss



Ryan Holt grew up in Brentwood and graduated from Miramonte High School in 2006. He was attending Diablo Valley College and working as the assistant manager of the Rheem Theater. According to the Holt family, funeral services were held on Friday May 25 in Brentwood. - S. Angelides

disease to be encouraged and to feel creative, and to build a talent without fear."

The benefits of this type of exercise are complemented by an overall positive and constructive atmosphere. "The Rhythm Room is very encouraging, very positive, so when people come they feel really good," said Rowley.

The studio offers classes in hip-hop, ballet (for students as young as five), belly dancing, salsa, jazz, tap, showgirl, ballroom, and much more.

They also have a unique boys' program which incorporates hip-hop and breakdancing for teens and children.

"[The Rhythm Room] provides a physical workout, it's a spiritual, mental, emotional workout, and it creates a positive energy in people," said Rowley.

Find registration forms, class schedules and a calendar of weeklong summer dance camps for kids online at [www.rhythmroomdance.com](http://www.rhythmroomdance.com) or at the Rhythm Room Dance and Movement Center, located at 3330 Mt. Diablo Blvd. Mail registration forms to this address or come by and watch classes in session.



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## Flexible and feeling fabulous! Healthy advice for those 55+

According to the U.S. National Institute on Aging there are four components to good physical health: aerobic capacity, strength, balance and flexibility. It's no surprise that they have included flexibility. As we age, our muscles and connective tissues begin to tighten which begins to limit movement. This can be from any combination of factors including past or current injuries, repetitive motions from work or other activities, health issues such as arthritis or bursitis, genetics, diet and other lifestyle factors.

Without flexibility, even everyday activities like bending over to tie shoes, zipping up a dress or climbing stairs can be difficult. And activities like golf, tennis or bicycling may become so challenging and painful that they are out of the question entirely. The less flexibility you have, the fewer choices there are for enjoying life.

The good news is that flexibility is relatively easy to improve and the benefits of flexibility training are many: improves range of motion, enhances physical performance and coordination, decreases muscle soreness, prevents injuries, improves circulation, relieves and prevents many causes of back pain, and helps build the mind/body connection – reducing stress. Stretching also helps you feel better in your body and enhances your sense of well being. All of this adds up to more options for movement and activity which means greater satisfaction from life.

A few simple exercises that take only 10-15 minutes a few days a week can make all the difference in the way you experience life! They can be done almost anytime and anywhere and require no special equipment. What could be simpler?

Here are 4 flexibility exercises to help you get started. They are easy to do and at

the same time offer tremendous benefit. As you do these exercises remember to breathe consciously when you practice them. Most importantly don't do anything hurts and don't force yourself to do anything that doesn't feel right. While these are gentle exercises that are suitable for most people, if you have been away from activity for many years or have any limiting injuries you may want to consult with your physician before trying them.

### Side stretch on back



Lie on your back with your legs extended. Walk both of your legs a little to the left until you feel a stretch in the right side of your torso. Take your right arm up overhead behind you and stretch through your right arm and out through your finger tips. Take 5-10 deep breaths and then do the other side. Benefits: Stretches the arms, shoulders, sides of torso, lower back and muscles and connective tissues along the outside of the legs.

### Cat tuck and dog tilt



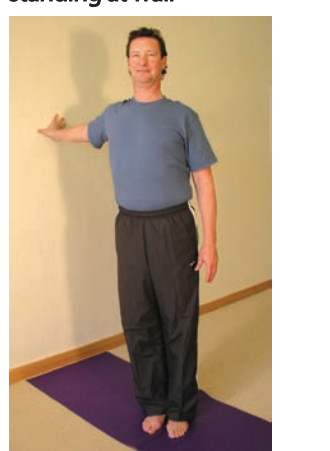
Come onto all fours with your arms directly under your shoulder and your knees under your hips. As you exhale, bring your head and hips towards each other arching like a cat. Lift your belly button up towards your spine, holding for a few seconds. This is cat tuck. Release, inhale and turn your tail bone up towards the sky, rotating your hips over the tops of your thighs. Lift your chest and your head. This is dog tilt. Go back and forth from cat tuck to dog tilt several times. Go slowly and use your breath. Benefits: Improves flexibility in the shoulders, hips, spine and back.

### Dog on chair



Place a chair against a wall or on a yoga mat as shown in photo. Standing in front of the chair, place your palms on the chair seat and walk your feet back until they are a little behind your hips. Make sure your arms are in line with your shoulders and your feet are hips width apart. Press your palms into the chair seat and lengthen through your arms and the sides of your torso. Take you hips back a little more. Take 5-10 breaths. Walk your feet towards the chair to come up. Benefits: Stretches arms, shoulders, chest, spine, hips, hamstrings, and calves. Great for lower back.

### Chest & arm stretch – standing at wall



Stand with the right side of your body parallel to a wall. Be arms length from the wall. Bring your finger tips onto the wall at shoulder height and turn your hand clockwise approximately 5 minutes on a clock face. Slowly turn your feet to the left until you feel a good stretch in your chest, front of shoulders or arm. If you want more stretch continue to walk your feet to the left. If you want less stretch turn your feet back towards the wall. Take a 5-10 breaths and then do the other side. Benefits: Stretches front of chest, front of shoulders, biceps, forearms and wrists.

Howard VanEs, M.A. is a local wellness writer, yoga teacher and author of Tight Shoulder Relief which can be found on Amazon.com or at [www.letsdo yoga.com](http://www.letsdo yoga.com). Howard offers a free monthly health and wellness newsletter. Reach him directly at [info@letsdo yoga.com](mailto:info@letsdo yoga.com).

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