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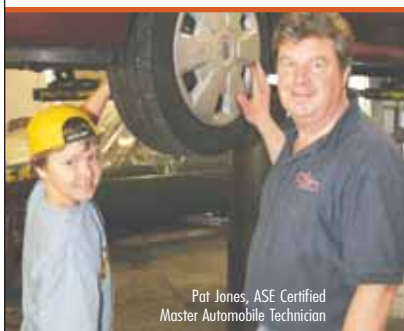
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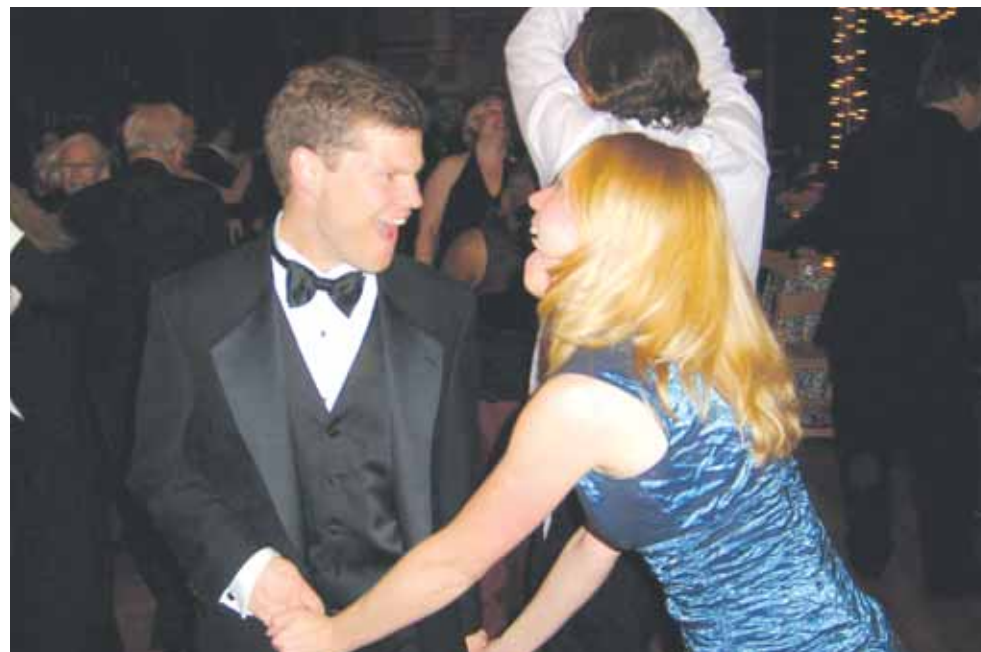
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Dancing the night away at the CHAW Arts Ball. Photo: Courtesy of CHAW.

The CHAW Arts Ball Indian Nights on Seventh Street

BY MEGAN CHEEK

People young and old know there is something captivating about the Capitol Hill Arts Workshop. In a city known for its transient population, CHAW's mission of "Building Community through the Arts" has been a Capitol Hill mainstay for over 37 years.

Inspiring all ages through its innovative offerings including classes, exhibitions and performances, CHAW has helped thousands discover their individual potential and talent. The building itself sparks creativity and constantly teems with community. It's no wonder that this year CHAW has chosen its own historic building at Seventh and G streets SE as the site for its annual Arts Ball fundraising gala.

On Oct. 3, from 7 until 10 p.m., the Capitol Hill Arts Workshop will transform its art gallery, black box theater and dance and art studios into the sights and sounds of India. "We wanted to bring a new look to the Arts Ball," says Jill Strachan, CHAW's executive director. "Moving the event to our own building is a great way to emphasize CHAW's programs and our connections to the community."

This year's Arts Ball theme, "Indian Nights," is based on one of CHAW's popular Summer Arts Adventure camps and will convert CHAW's building into an Indian odyssey. Arts Ball guests will experience a Taj Mahal gallery of to-be-auctioned-art, entertainment in the Bollywood Theater, dancing in the Bombay Palace and shopping in the Delhi Bazaar. This year's silent auction will

feature a dinner party at the Indian Embassy, works from local artists and members of the Capitol Hill Art League, unique experiences and a wide array of prizes, from retail items to gift certificates. A newly expanded raffle offers the chance to win a trip to Italy, designer jewelry and the always-popular Wall of Wine.

CHAW's Arts Ball has been held at various community sites but never at its own building. "We decided to move the event to CHAW because we are always looking for opportunities to bring people into the building so they can see what a treasure it is," says Phil Guire, area realtor and Arts Ball Chair.

In addition to inviting the community into CHAW's own space for the Arts Ball, changing the venue has another benefit. "The move to our own space allowed us to reduce the cost of the event to make it more accessible to more people," says Strachan. This year's Arts Ball tickets are \$50 per person in advance and \$75 at the door.

CHAW was founded in 1972 as a non-profit arts organization to provide visual art, dance and music instruction to residents of Capitol Hill. For several years, local artists taught students in various spaces on Capitol Hill including area churches. In the late 1970s, CHAW obtained use of the former B.B. French School from the District of Columbia government. It moved into the long-vacant building in 1980 after extensive renovations.

Since then, CHAW has grown significantly and continues to offer students from Capitol Hill and beyond a place to explore

creativity in a supportive and nurturing environment. CHAW also has an extensive outreach program, working with several area schools and nonprofit groups to promote the arts as an essential component that can be easily integrated into any educational curriculum. "CHAW fills a major need in the community," Guire says. "Arts education is being pushed out by standardized testing, making it harder for parents to ensure their children are well rounded and know Van Gogh as well as their multiplication tables."

Arts Ball is CHAW's major annual fundraiser, supporting the organization's work with youth and outreach, while providing substantial financial grounding for its tuition assistance program. So far in 2009, CHAW has given over \$50,000 dollars in tuition assistance to its students and no one has ever been turned away. The amount of financial aid is expected to increase in the coming years. "CHAW's ability to provide tuition assistance for every child who needs it is a point of extraordinary organizational pride and is only possible with the continuing support of our community," says Colleen Jolly, president of CHAW's board of directors. "The Arts Ball is a special, fun event that helps CHAW continue its important work of building community through the arts."

CHAW invites the community to experience Arts Ball on Oct. 3 and explore a historic building and innovative neighborhood fixture. "Arts Ball is unique in a number of ways," says Guire. "We have a wide base of support because we encourage children and adults alike in their creative education and enrichment. We hope to see you in October."

Arts Ball event tickets and raffle tickets are on sale now and can be purchased online at www.chaw.org or by calling the Capitol Hill Arts Workshop at 202-547-6839. For more information about CHAW or any of its programs, stop in at 545 Seventh St. SE, or please visit www.chaw.org. ★

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