



PHOTOS BY ERIK CASTRO / FOR THE PRESS DEMOCRAT

Husband and wife dancers Andy and Alicia Kamin will hold the next Santa Rosa Teen Dance on Saturday in the Lodge Room at the Veterans Memorial Building in Santa Rosa.

SANTA ROSA » Couple share love of West Coast swing with youths

Dancing the night away

By **DIANNE REBER HART**
TOWNS CORRESPONDENT

As the Bruno Mars hit song “24K Magic” plays in the background, Andy and Alicia Kamin call out dance steps they hope will keep local teens on their toes — literally and otherwise.

The Santa Rosa couple run Santa Rosa Teen Dance, a monthly gathering for young dancers, including those who don’t know the first thing about dancing and can’t tell the twist from twerking.

“That’s key. They don’t have to know how to dance to come to these dances,” said Alicia Kamin.

The gatherings are informal, with kids in jeans, T-shirts and tennis shoes as welcome as those who prefer dancing in a dress or suit and tie. The emphasis is an affordable night out for teens, unplugged and away from video

games, computer screens and social media.

The Kamins reserve the spacious Lodge Room at the Santa Rosa Veterans Memorial Building, charging dancers a \$5 admission fee to help with expenses. They’ve been breaking even since introducing the dances six months ago.

The pair are seasoned dancers with a special love of West Coast swing, a contemporary partner dance that’s fun in a variety of tempos. They offer a 45-minute lesson at the start of each dance.

“It can be fast, it can be slow and it can be done to lots of different music,” said Alicia Kamin, 49. “It’s mostly contemporary (music) so it appeals to teens.”

She and her husband patiently demonstrate steps, counting out the beat, “one, two, three and



The Kamins have been hosting Santa Rosa Teen Dance for the past six months, offering youths an inexpensive night out with friends and a chance to learn some dance moves.

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WINDSOR » Happy ending for immigrant from impoverished village

One man’s dream flourishes in Sonoma County



MORALES FAMILY PHOTO

Rafael Morales among the vines he tended for Windsor Vineyards.

You don’t have to read farther than the headlines to know that immigration is a hot topic. In fact, it always has been, it has just been pushed to center stage by current events.

If you are among those who find rhetoric about law-breaking, gang-banging, terrorist immigrants unsettling, you might feel the need for a happy immigrant story. If so, this is your lucky day.

I had a nice visit with Candido Morales last week. He is retired and living in Windsor again after more than a decade as director of the Mexican government’s Institute for Mexicans Abroad, an assignment which took him to live and work

GAYE LEBARON



ONLINE

Watch a 1989 video interview with Rafael Morales and PD columnist Gaye LeBaron at <http://pd2go>

in Mexico City but also to travel this country, paying regular visits to the many Mexican consulates, tending to the welfare of Mexican citizens in the United States on behalf of the Mexican president.

This kid from Oaxaca, transplanted to Windsor,

educated at Healdsburg High, Santa Rosa Junior College and Sonoma State University, is, as you might imagine, a source of considerable pride among the Latino community.

I might well write a whole column about Candido and his Mexico City sojourn (it’s on my “futures” list), but this time we are talking about his father, Rafael.

RAFAEL MORALES came from the tiny, impoverished Mexican village of Tequixtepec. There, he started a grocery business, mastered reading and writing, and became mayor of his small town, an unpaid job that filled him with “dream-

ing.” When his grocery store burned, leaving him in debt for the stock, he was determined to find a way to make a better living, telling his wife Concepcion, “the better I go to the north.”

It was 1951 when he made the six-day train trip from Oaxaca to Mexicali, joining the crowd of hopefuls looking for a way to cross the border and find work.

The Bracero program, the 1942 agreement between the U.S. and Mexico predicated on a farm labor crisis created by World War II, was still in effect. It allowed Mexican men to come to this country at harvest time, in groups provided by

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