

Published December 8th, 2010

Yoga for Seniors, by a Senior

Cathy Dausman



Charlie Bonney's Santa-esque beard is seasonal; he vows to shave it off come January. Photo Cathy Dausman and leotards.

Classes start January 5 and run eight consecutive Wednesdays, from 10 a.m. to noon. Registration is by phone (925) 888-7045, online www.moraga.ca.us; or walk-in. The Hacienda de las Flores is at 2100 Donald Drive; on-site parking is available.

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA

"Seniors? And yoga? Well, why not?!" Charlie Bonney designed a special half-dance, half-yoga class for the over 50 crowd beginning in January at Moraga's Hacienda de las Flores. Bonney, whose students sometimes call him "Swami Charlie," sees the importance of body movement as a way to keep joints open and arthritis and rheumatism at bay.

"At 32 I couldn't touch my toes," he said when he took up Ashtanga, a fast-paced yoga in Hawaii. To maintain flexibility in knees, elbows, back and other joints, Bonney maintains a "move it or lose it" philosophy. He credits yoga for doing the trick. A senior now himself (he's 67) he wants to teach a discipline that is kind to other seniors.

So Bonney starts slowly, with gentle dance movements in the first hour, playing a mix of '50's and '60's rock and roll ("imagine you are a teen again,") and classical music to build body heat. The second hour is yoga composed of slow posture movements. The aim is to slow down, get a good stretch but stop before it becomes painful, he says.

Leather soles glued to lace-up walking shoes or sneakers offer best support and proper glide; a shoe repair shop should be able to do the work. Students will also need a 5/8 or 3/4 inch thick yoga mat