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Prom brings back memories for seniors *Boogie down*

By **Joanne C. Twaddell**
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Matt Hinshaw/The Daily Courier
Jim Burhans dances with Louise Williams, the executive director for Hospice of the Pines, Saturday night during the Tender Hearts Senior Care Senior Prom at the Willow Wind Residence in Prescott.

Remember your senior prom? This magic moment? Corsages, boutonnieres and slow dancing?

Willow Wind Residence played host to a senior prom with an age-old twist on Saturday evening.

Courtesy of area older adult care services, about 75 seniors enjoyed a few hours of classic songs, cake, punch and sharing memories of a time gone by.

Walter Johns, 86, a resident of Prescott Gardens RV Park and a former dousing and prospecting treasure hunter, stopped by to check out the dancing. "I haven't done this in a long time," he shared. "I sold my motor home three years ago because I'm not traveling. My wife passed away eight years ago."

That didn't stop Johns from kicking up a storm and dancing with the ladies.

"The evening went very well," said Erica Baker, activities director for Willow Wind Residence. "We had a lot of people comment on how much they enjoyed the music, refreshments and door prizes. It took a lot of volunteer time and money, and Debra Judy of Tender Hearts worked hard to organize the event."

Baker added that some attendees enjoyed watching couples dance, even though they could not dance themselves. "By 9 p.m., the dance floor was pretty full," she said.

Hank Alcott is a descendant of Louisa May Alcott of "Little Women" fame. He reminisced about working as a reporter in Yuma and broadcasting on radio stations from LA to Chicago. "I did the news and weather reports for several stations including Flagstaff," he said.

In between dances, the conversation flowed, ranging from stints in the Korean War to the loss of loved ones.

Esther Jones talked longingly of trips to exotic destinations.

"I've been on six cruises and it is the most wonderful vacation," said Jones, 92.

"There's no housework."

Jones grew up in Iowa, spent 37 years in California and moved to Arizona 25 years ago. "In California, I worked 18

years as a private cook in Napa Valley."

Now she dresses dolls and has a collection of Barbies. "I've had a long life," Jones said. "I have trouble with my ankles and feet, but I'm in pretty good health. No pity parties for me. I keep busy. I'm still a clothes horse. I used to be a model - tall and slim."

"For the past 20 years, I have painted china," said Mary McElhane, who would not share her age. "I enjoy that a lot and I also like to sit and visit. It makes me happy to talk to new people."

Harry Miller Jr., Ph.D. is quite the socialite. He has lived at Willow Wind with his wife, Peggy, for about three years. "It was a very enjoyable event, especially for old folks," he laughed. The community knows Miller as an advocate for Choice Arizona and Habitat for Humanity.

"We voted and picked Jim and Diane as senior prom king and queen," commented Rick Judy, president of Tender Hearts Senior Care, who helped organize the event. "They were the most animated and the most active on the dance floor."

Judy and his wife, Deborah, were happy with the turnout. "Everyone seemed to really enjoy themselves and have fun. It made my heart very happy. We are already planning another senior prom for next year."

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