

Go to the Hop



(left to right) The Hot Flashes are Mary Dobbs on bass and vocals, Sherre Birenbaum on guitar and vocals, Julie Moore on drums and vocals, Carol Jennings on Sax, and Margaret Christenson on keyboards.

Photo courtesy The Hot Flashes

Hot Flashes will play sock hop at St. Barnabas — By Shawn Clubb

St. Barnabas Episcopal Church will be a place of hand jiving, Hula Hooping and plenty of dancing when it will host its first-ever sock hop fundraiser on Saturday, Sept. 27.

The all-female band, The Hot Flashes, will play music from the '50s, '60s and '70s during the event from 7 to 10 pm at the church at 2900 St. Catherine St. in Florissant.

"I think it's going to be a lot of fun," said Jim Hollenberg, senior warden at St. Barnabas. "I've encouraged my friends that you don't have to be a dancer to come and have fun. Listening to the music you grew up with, that's very enjoyable even if you're not a dancer."

The sock hop fundraiser came about when parishioner Mary Dobbs was asked if her band would play. Dobbs formed The Hot Flashes 10 years ago and the group focuses on music from the '50s through '70s. She also is well-versed in the sock hop culture in the St. Louis area. Bob Kuban was her first drum teacher.

"We love doing sock hops. I love that time for music," Dobbs said. "I find that people so enjoy listening to '50s, '60s music. It's the jitterbug, the twist, Beatles music, Bobby Darin to "Mustang Sally" — all the great dances we did in the '50s and '60s."

One of her band mates, Sherre Birenbaum, said they grew up listening to The Beatles and other British Invasion bands and later the psychedelic music out of San Francisco. Dobbs said the sounds of Motown also were prominent in their lives and they do a lot of Motown music. But, Birenbaum said, not everyone wants to hear Elvis and Jerry Lee Lewis, so the band branched out and learned to play some Big Band music and jazz.

The Hot Flashes play a lot of different music, if someone requests it, but about

the newest music they play is from the 1980s, Birenbaum said.

Dobbs plays bass and sings in the band. Her band mates are Sherre Birenbaum, who sings and plays guitar; Carol Jennings, who plays saxophone and trumpet; Margaret Christenson, who plays keyboards; and Julie Moore, who plays drums and sings.

"What we love to do is any kind of much that kind of speaks to us," Birenbaum said. "When we first got together 10 years ago, we tried to do things that we loved when we were growing up. There's something about the music that you grow up with. A lot of our audience is Baby Boomers, people who grew up the same time as we did."

Birenbaum said all of the band members have been playing music since they were young. She began playing guitar at age 12. During high school, Dobbs and Jennings were members of the all-girl rock group The Teen Queens.

"We've got keyboard. We've got horns. We can play practically anything," Birenbaum said.

Admission to the event is \$20 per person and includes three drink tickets that can be cashed in for soda, wine or beer. No outside beverages are allowed. Light snacks will be served. There will be decorations from the sock hop era and attendance prizes will be given out.

"We are going to have fun little games and contests like a hand jive contest and a Hula Hoop contest," Hollenberg said. "Just silly little things, but it makes it fun."

Dobbs said the event is a fundraiser to help provide for basic repairs and other needs of the church, but it's also a community outreach effort.

"If it brings in people from the community around us, it's wonderful," she said. "It's a fundraiser, but it's a community experience to get together. All ages

love '50s and '60s music."

Hollenberg said the church has other fundraisers planned. It had a flea market in the spring and will have an indoor flea market on Oct. 25. He said the church is hoping to get more outside shoppers at this second flea market. The cost for vendors to display their wares is \$20.

Anyone wanting more information about either the sock hop or the flea market can call 314.837.7113.

Birenbaum said she thinks sock hops have great appeal for people wanting to come out and have a good time.

"It was a simpler time. It was an easier time. The economy was great. It was the Baby Boom period. It is nostalgia," she said. "Everybody loved that time. It was a great time in American history. I think it was a happier time. The music was complex, but it was simpler and I think people could understand it instantly. It made them feel good. It made them want to dance." *CV*



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