

Mesa's Groove Heads DVDs make you a dancing star

By Chris Hansen Orf
Tribune, July 10, 2008

I'll be the first to admit that I can't dance, that every time I've tried to cut the rug I've almost literally cut the rug. At a seventh-grade dance I gave new meaning to the word "spaz." At my own wedding I left bruises on the tops of my new wife's feet and, later, threw my back out trying to bust the obligatory moves to the Village People's "YMCA."

But now, thanks to Mesa-based Groove Heads Entertainment, I — and anybody else — can be transformed into a hip-shaking dancer who can trip the light fantastic.

All I have to do is pick one of the songs in the company's catalog, drape a green apron over my body, put on a hat and some wild sunglasses and sit in front of a green curtain. Groove Heads Entertainment then cues up the video — a headless dancing body (or up to three bodies, so I can get my friends in on the action) grooving to tunes such as "Brick House," "Welcome to the Jungle" and "La Bamba," and puts my head on the body.

And just like that, I'm a dancer. Groove Heads Entertainment is the brainchild of longtime Valley sound man Curt Bennington and photographer Dee Ann Deaton, who started the company in September.

"We were kind of looking for something that would be different, where we could have fun," says Deaton. "We saw some of this technology and thought, 'Why don't we use it to just have a good time?'"

"It's something where people can just let loose and be whoever they want to be," says Bennington. "Dress up in different costumes and just have fun. They can do whatever they want — there are no rules, none."

"I think the funniest part is that you don't have to really actually look like yourself," Deaton adds. "You can be totally incognito. Normally what happens is (people) will do one (video), and then they'll go get some more friends and come back."

In their brief existence, Groove Heads Entertainment has had gigs running the gamut from corporate parties, birthday parties ("The youngest we've ever had was a 1-year-old," Deaton says, "and the oldest was a 90-year-old"), shows at senior centers, parties affiliated with the Super Bowl (Groove Heads Entertainment has a video of the Arizona Cardinals mascot getting down), and a



gig at the Jay-Z concert, where the videos were shown on a giant screen. The company will be at the Jonas Brothers concert tonight, where fans can get a free DVD of themselves grooving.

The company has two "rigs," and one is presently at Cedar Lanes and Rainwater Park in Sandusky, Ohio, where Deaton and Bennington trained the park's employees how to run the equipment.

"We'll go anywhere," says Deaton. "We get a lot of calls from out of state, too. Right now that rig (is at the amusement park) for the summer season and what's nice is when that one comes back we can set up two stations at the events."

One question the company gets is, "When can I get my DVD?"

"People always ask, 'Do you mail us the DVDs?'" Deaton says. "No, it's instant."

"It's all hardware," says Bennington. "We burn (the DVD) for them right there."

After I watch myself on the screen getting down to James Brown's "I Feel Good," admiring the fact that I (or at least my head on a professional dancer's body) am not doing my usual "spaz" routine, Bennington hands me a DVD that will undoubtedly give my wife — whose feet probably still hurt — and kids a good laugh.

"I'm bringing groovy back, baby," Deaton says. "I'm on a mission to make events fun again."

"Everybody digs getting their groove on."

Groove Heads Entertainment

When: 5:30 p.m. Friday

Where: Jonas Brothers concert at Cricket Wireless Pavilion, 2121 N. 83rd Ave., Phoenix **How much:** DVDs are free

Information: (602) 402-6306 or www.grooveheads.com