

State of SOS

The attendance of Spring Sarari and Fall Migration certainly appeared very large when I was out in the street or inside the clubs. If I had been on the beach, I'm sure there was a very large crowd there also. It seemed that **SOS** was once again, well and thriving, that many of our members were in attendance. However, the appearance of **SOS** membership support was not justified. **SOS** membership sales for 2023 Spring Safari and Fall Migration were off by 40%. This is an alarming fact, and places **SOS** in a dangerous position. The **SOS** events do not happen without cost. The cost of each event is very expensive undertaking. Ticket sales (**SOS** memberships) are what keeps these events alive.

Since Covid, our sales and support has fallen. Our numbers of **SOS** memberships sold have fallen from a level of approximately 13,000 plus members in 2019 to a level of 8,000 sales in 2023. The 2020,2021and 2022years sales were dismal. The reasons for lost membership sales are varied. In the suppositions that are rendered here, the causes represent several known facts.

First, attrition of the older **SOS** membership base. Older **SOS** participants have been placed on the couch. They have not been to an event in the past three years because of their fear of Covid or health issues. They may not return because of rumors that Covid persists during our **SOS** events, or they find other interest that keep them isolated from crowds. Secondly, in past years, the relaxed door coverage at Ducks, that has allowed too many participants entry without an **SOS** membership card. Scott, the new owner of Ducks has been very pleased with **SOS** support and will improve his door situation. The third reason is **SOS** members sharing their card with other friends so that they can enter the **SOS** club events without paying. Last, persons that consider themselves as "entitled" to being admitted into any of the clubs during **SOS** events. None of these facts or reasons seem like much harm to **SOS** by themselves. Added together, this can amount to the 40 % of lost membership support.

My point here is you don't go to any function, venue, sports event or movie theater without a purchased ticket. If you come to the event and have no ticket, you don't get into the event. **SOS** events are private. Entrance is by **SOS** membership card only events. Please support **SOS** by being a member and proudly present your card at all participating clubs during the **SOS** dated events. Use it while shopping or dining for possible discounts. Your membership gives you an immediate connection to a group website, Facebook presence, an online Carefree Times news publication, and postings that keep you up to date with current happenings in the shagdance community.

SOS is the only party on the East coast that gives you a ten day event. Included are five great **SOS** clubs, many great DJ's playing great music, a plethora of planned events, dance lessons, parades, street concerts with your favorite bands, and thousands of friends to enjoy this magnificent event. All of this for a mere \$35 annual membership. That is \$1.40 per day for the 25 days of **SOS**.

Please support this great party event by purchasing your **SOS** membership. Without your support, we will become a memory of days gone bye. **SOS** memberships begin January 1st through December 31, 2024. Make the 2024 **SOS** membership your first purchase of the year.

Thank you!

Ron