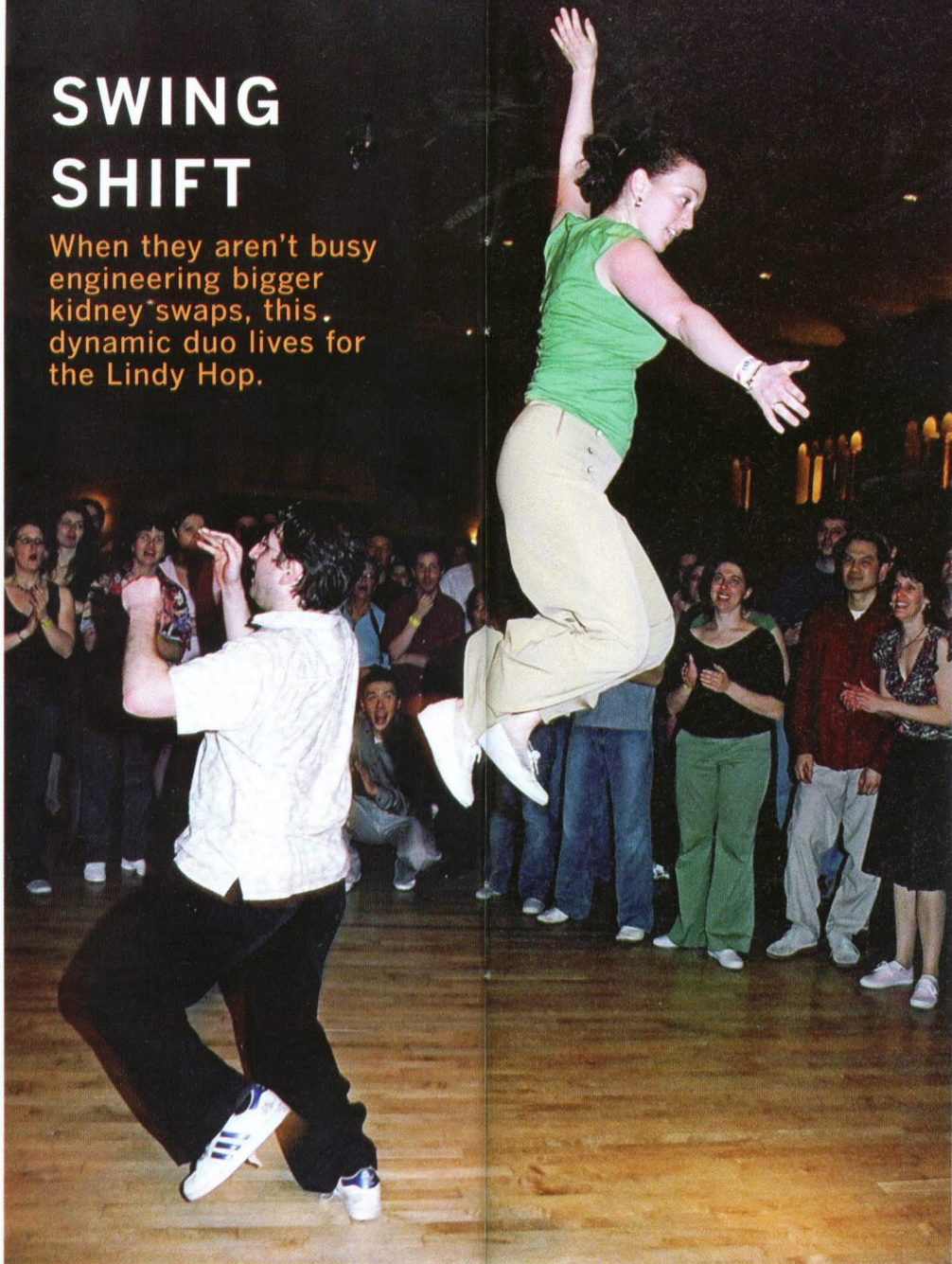


# SWING SHIFT

When they aren't busy engineering bigger kidney swaps, this dynamic duo lives for the Lindy Hop.



HE'S A HOPKINS transplant surgeon. She's a Naval Academy math professor. Together, they wrote a notable paper using graph theory to propose a new national kidney donor program. Married for three years, they frequently collaborate on research combining math and medicine. And after hours, in the privacy of their own home, he often tosses her into the air.

It's not a toss, really, that assistant professor of surgery Dorry Segev '96 and his wife, Hopkins research associate Sommer Gentry, perform. Call it a move—like the Shorty George, Tacky Annie, Texas Tommy and other dance steps the couple has mastered.

They met in 1999 at the American Lindy Hop Championships, when she was a grad student at MIT and he a Hopkins resident. The next year they were back dancing together in competition—and have been a team ever since.

Segev, who celebrates his 10th reunion at the next Biennial Meeting in June '07, is serving as social chair of the event and working to bring a good turnout of his classmates back to Baltimore for professional and personal enrichment. And after seven years touring the swing dance scene, Segev and Gentry have learned a thing or two about throwing a good party. They have also picked up a shelf full of swing dance

honors, including the U.K. championship title.

"We dance just about every other night," says Segev, adding that they have a full-fledged dance studio in their house. "This is our exercise." Meanwhile, on Tuesday nights they teach dance together in Baltimore's waterfront Canton neighborhood, and on many Mondays and Wednesdays they host dances that feature a sort of spontaneous "jam" performance of their latest moves in the middle of the program. Other days they attend city festivals promoting outdoor dancing through the nonprofit organization they founded, Charm City Swing ([www.charmcityswing.com](http://www.charmcityswing.com)). Says Gentry, "It's our attempt to keep swing alive and kicking in Baltimore."

Not bad for a couple of youngsters (Gentry is not yet 30) who weren't around to stomp at the Savoy when swing dancing was in its heyday in the 1940s. "Right after college I was living in San Francisco and I started dancing every night," Gentry says of her apprenticeship. "This was the height of the swing dance revival craze and there was this whole social scene at clubs like Hi-Ball Lounge, Cafe du Nord and at 'Lindy in the Park' on Sundays in Golden Gate. These people were energetic and not afraid to work on something—they were putting something of themselves into it."

Segev, on the other hand, sort of stumbled into swing dancing when he came upon a group of kids dancing in a Boston park when he was a research fellow at Massachusetts General Hospital. "I was new to the city, I didn't know anyone, and here was a group of people who weren't talking about medicine all day—I got hooked on it!" A lifelong musician and avid jazz pianist, Segev was intrigued by how the best dancers were actually sophisticated musical interpreters. "Just like jazz is improvisational music, this is improvisational dance," he says. "It's a street dance, done freestyle most of the time. Things like figure skating or ballroom are mostly choreographed—in swing, we spend our time dancing with our friends. The best dancers do very simple moves that hit the subtleties in the music."

A year ago, *Time* magazine cited the pair as innovators to watch in a story titled "Numbers Made Real" about their proposal, published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, suggesting how the nation could save money

and lives with an improved system of "kidney paired donation." (Details of the plan can be found at [www.OptimizedMatch.com](http://www.OptimizedMatch.com)). Using an optimization algorithm similar to the kind used for airline scheduling and online driving directions, Segev and Gentry showed how hospitals could employ a kidney paired donation system to match a greater number of recipients to potential donors and significantly reduce the amount of waiting time for all.

Johns Hopkins and other leading medical centers have adopted the system, but it will take a nationwide program to see the full benefits of the approach, which the *Time* article reported could save upwards of \$750 million a year in medical treatment costs. In November, Hopkins provided a dramatic display of the new idea in action, successfully swapping the kidneys of five living donors into five recipients.

In the midst of busy schedules of teaching, research and (for Segev) pa-



tient care, the couple promotes their kidney-paired donation scheme whenever they can, but swing dancing is the way they relax. "This element of our lives is one of the things that keeps us together," Segev says.

There's something special about the dance, Sommer agrees. "The best moment is that perfect swing out, when you are not balanced on your feet, and your partner is not balanced on his feet, yet you are balanced together by leaning into each other's arms."

—MIKE FIELD