

SHEER DANCE

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1 JUL 2015

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Elementary-school students show off what they've learned through the Dancing Classrooms initiative. Read about this great opportunity and how you can help on page 32!

Twin Cities Dance Events

July 1 • Wednesday

WCS Dance Party - Dancers Studio; 415 Pascal St N, St. Paul; 8 p.m.; \$5

Practice Party - Cinema; 1560 St. Clair Ave, St. Paul; 8 - 9 p.m.; \$6

Swing Night - Lee's Liquor Lounge; 101 Glenwood Ave, Mpls; 8:00 lesson, live music 9 - 11:30 p.m.

Milonga - Krungthep Thai Cuisine; 2523 Nicollet Ave S, Mpls; \$5, students free

July 2 • Thursday

Late Night Swing - 301 Main St NE, Mpls; 10:00 - 1:30 a.m.; \$6, \$4 students

Practice Party - Costa Rica Ballroom; 816 Mainstreet, Hopkins; 9 - 9:45 p.m.

Variety Dance - Dancers Studio; 415 Pascal St N, St. Paul; 7:30 p.m.; \$5

Weekly Bachata Social - DanceLife; 6015 Lyndale Ave S, Mpls; 9 - 10 p.m.; \$5

July 3 • Friday

Variety Dance - Cinema; 1560 St. Clair Ave, St. Paul; 7:00 lesson, dance 8 - 11 p.m.; \$10

Variety Dance - DanceLife; 6015 Lyndale Ave S, Mpls; 8 - 9:30 p.m.; \$10

July 4 • Saturday

Variety Dance - DanceLife; 6015 Lyndale Ave S, Mpls; 7:00 lesson, dance 8 - 10 p.m.; \$10

TC Swing - 301 Main St NE, Mpls; 7:30 p.m. - 12:30 a.m.

Milonga en el Alma - Four Seasons; 1637 Hennepin Ave S, Mpls; 9 p.m. - 1 a.m.; \$10, \$5 students

July 5 • Sunday

UTango Open Practica - 1219 University Ave SE, Mpls; 6 - 7 p.m.; \$3

Rogue Tango - Loring Pasta Bar; 327 14th Ave SE, Mpls; 6 - 10 p.m.

Patty & The Buttons Live Jazz - 125 Main St SE, Mpls; 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.; free

Practice Party - Costa Rica Ballroom; 816 Mainstreet, Hopkins; 6 - 7 p.m.

Ballroom Music Party - Tapestry, 3748 Minnehaha Ave, Mpls; 6:00 lesson, dance 7 - 9:30 p.m.; \$10 lesson, \$7 students

TC Rebels West Coast Social - DanceLife; 6015 Lyndale Ave S, Mpls; 7 - 10:30 p.m.; \$11, \$7 students

July 6 • Monday

Tango Desperados Practica - 2507 E 25th St, Mpls; 7:30 - 9:30 p.m.; \$5

Rhythm Junction Lindy Hop - Four Seasons; 1637 Hennepin Ave S, Mpls; 8 - 11 p.m.

Salsa Social - DanceLife; 6015 Lyndale Ave S, Mpls; 9:30 - 11 p.m.; \$5

July 7 • Tuesday

WCS Social - DanceLife; 6015 Lyndale Ave S, Mpls; 9 - 11 p.m.; \$5

Practice Party - Costa Rica Ballroom; 816 Mainstreet, Hopkins; 9 - 9:45 p.m.

Tango Party - 3142 1st Ave S, Mpls; 9 - 11:30 p.m.; \$5; 21+

July 8 • Wednesday

Practice Party - Cinema; 1560 St. Clair Ave, St. Paul; 8 - 9 p.m.; \$6

Swing Night - Lee's Liquor Lounge; 101 Glenwood Ave, Mpls; 8:00 lesson, live music 9 - 11:30 p.m.

WCS Dance Party - Dancers Studio; 415 Pascal St N, St. Paul; 8 p.m.; \$5

July 9 • Thursday

Practice Party - Costa Rica Ballroom; 816 Mainstreet, Hopkins; 9 - 9:45 p.m.

Late Night Swing - 301 Main St NE, Mpls; 10 p.m. - 1:30 a.m.; \$6, \$4 students

Variety Dance - Dancers Studio; 415 Pascal St N, St. Paul; 7:30 p.m.; \$5

Bachata Social - DanceLife; 6015 Lyndale Ave S, Mpls; 9 - 10 p.m.; \$5

July 10 • Friday

WCS Dance Club - 2100 Dale St N, Roseville; 7:30 lesson, dance 8:30 p.m. - 12 a.m.

Milonga Flor de Luna - Four Seasons; 1637 Hennepin Ave S, Mpls; 9:30 p.m.; \$7, \$4 students

Variety Dance - DanceLife; 6015 Lyndale Ave S, Mpls; 8 - 9:30 p.m.; \$10

July 11 • Saturday

Milonga - Costa Rica Ballroom; 816 Mainstreet, Hopkins; 8:30 lesson dance 9:30 p.m. - 1 a.m.; \$14, \$7 students

July 12 • Sunday

UTango Open Practica - 1219 University Ave SE, Mpls; 6 - 7 p.m.; \$3

Rogue Tango - Loring Pasta Bar; 327 14th Ave SE, Mpls; 6 - 10 p.m.

Patty & The Buttons Live Jazz - 125 Main St SE, Mpls; 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.; free

Practice Party - Costa Rica Ballroom; 816 Mainstreet, Hopkins; 6 - 7 p.m.

July 13 • Monday

Tango Desperados Practica - 2507 E 25th St, Mpls; 7:30 - 9:30 p.m.; \$5

Rhythm Junction Lindy Hop - Four Seasons; 1637 Hennepin Ave S, Mpls; 8 - 11 p.m.

July 14 • Tuesday

WCS Social - DanceLife; 6015 Lyndale Ave S, Mpls; 9 - 11 p.m.; \$5

Practice Party - Costa Rica Ballroom; 816 Mainstreet, Hopkins; 9 - 9:45 p.m.

Tango Party - 3142 1st Ave S, Mpls; 9 - 11:30 p.m.; \$5; 21+

July 15 • Wednesday

Swing Night - Lee's Liquor Lounge; 101 Glenwood Ave, Mpls; 8:00 lesson, live music 9 - 11:30 p.m.

Practice Party - Cinema; 1560 St. Clair Ave, St. Paul; 8 - 9 p.m.; \$6

WCS Dance Party - Dancers Studio; 415 Pascal St N, St. Paul; 8 p.m.; \$5

July 16 • Thursday

Practice Party - Costa Rica Ballroom; 816 Mainstreet, Hopkins; 9 - 9:45 p.m.

Variety Dance - Dancers Studio; 415 Pascal St N, St. Paul; 7:30 p.m.; \$5

Late Night Swing - 301 Main St NE, Mpls; 10 p.m. - 1:30 a.m.; \$6, \$4 students

Bachata Social - DanceLife; 6015 Lyndale Ave S, Mpls; 9 - 10 p.m.; \$5

July 17 • Friday

WCS & Variety Dance - Stark's Saloon; 3125 Dodd Rd, Eagan; 7:30 lesson, dance 8 p.m.; 21+

Variety Dance - Cinema; 1560 St. Clair Ave, St. Paul; 7:00 lesson, dance 8 - 11 p.m.; \$10

Variety Dance - DanceLife; 6015 Lyndale Ave S, Mpls; 8 - 9:30 p.m.; \$10

July 18 • Saturday

Variety Dance - Phipps Art Center; 109 Locust St, Hudson, WI; 7:00 lesson, dance 8 - 10 p.m.; \$12

July 19 • Sunday

UTango Open Practica - 1219 University Ave SE, Mpls; 6 - 7 p.m.; \$3

Rogue Tango - Loring Pasta Bar; 327 14th Ave SE, Mpls; 6 - 10 p.m.

Ballroom Music Party - Tapestry, 3748 Minnehaha Ave, Mpls; 6:00 lesson, dance 7 - 9:30 p.m.; \$10 lesson, \$7 students

Patty & The Buttons Live Jazz - 125 Main St SE, Mpls; 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.; free

Practice Party - Costa Rica Ballroom; 816 Mainstreet, Hopkins; 6 - 7 p.m.

TC Rebels West Coast Social - DanceLife; 6015 Lyndale Ave S, Mpls; 7 - 10:30 p.m.; \$11, \$7 students

July 20 • Monday

Tango Desperados Practica - 2507 E 25th Street, Mpls; 7:30 - 9:30 p.m.; \$5

July 21 • Tuesday

WCS Social - DanceLife; 6015 Lyndale Ave S, Mpls; 9 - 11 p.m.; \$5

Practice Party - Costa Rica Ballroom; 816 Mainstreet, Hopkins; 9 - 9:45 p.m.

Tango Party - 3142 1st Ave S, Mpls; 9 - 11:30 p.m.; \$5; 21+

July 22 • Wednesday

Practice Party - Cinema; 1560 St. Clair Ave, St. Paul; 8 - 9 p.m.; \$6

Swing Night - Lee's Liquor Lounge; 101 Glenwood Ave, Mpls; 8:00 lesson, live music 9 - 11:30 p.m.

WCS Dance Party - Dancers Studio; 415 Pascal St N, St. Paul; 8 p.m.; \$5

July 23 • Thursday

Practice Party - Costa Rica Ballroom; 816 Mainstreet, Hopkins; 9 - 9:45 p.m.

Variety Dance - Dancers Studio; 415 Pascal St N, St. Paul; 7:30 p.m.; \$5

Late Night Swing - 301 Main St NE, Mpls; 10 p.m. - 1:30 a.m.; \$6, \$4 students

Weekly Bachata Social - DanceLife; 6015 Lyndale Ave S, Mpls; 9 - 10 p.m.; \$5

July 24 • Friday

WCS Dance Club - 2100 Dale St N, Roseville; 7:30 lesson, dance 8:30 p.m. - 12 a.m.

Salsa Fusion - Cinema; 1560 St. Clair Ave, St. Paul; 7:00 lesson, dance 8 - 11 p.m.

Twin Cities Dance Contacts

Mala Yunta Milonga - Four Seasons; 1637 Hennepin Ave S, Mpls; 9:30 p.m. - 1 a.m.; \$10, \$5 students

Variety Dance - DanceLife; 6015 Lyndale Ave S, Mpls; 8 - 9:30 p.m.; \$10

July 25 • Saturday

Café Bailar - 816 Mainstreet, Hopkins; 7:30 lesson, dance 8:30 - 11:30 p.m.; \$10

Shannon & Bill's Sock Hop - 101 Glenwood Ave, Mpls; 8:30 lesson, live music 9:30 p.m. - 1 a.m.; \$7; 21+

Milonga: Tango Fusion - DanceLife; 6015 Lyndale Ave S, Mpls; 9 p.m. - 1 a.m.; \$10, \$5 students

July 26 • Sunday

Patty & The Buttons Live Jazz - 125 Main St SE, Mpls; 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.; free

Practice Party - Costa Rica Ballroom; 816 Mainstreet, Hopkins; 6 - 7 p.m.

UTango Open Practica - 1219 University Ave SE, Mpls; 6 - 7 p.m.; \$3

Rogue Tango - Loring Pasta Bar; 327 14th Ave SE, Mpls; 6 - 10 p.m.

July 27 • Monday

Tango Desperados Practica - 2507 E 25th St, Mpls; 7:30 - 9:30 p.m.; \$5

July 28 • Tuesday

WCS Social - DanceLife; 6015 Lyndale Ave S, Mpls; 9 - 11 p.m.; \$5

Practice Party - Costa Rica Ballroom; 816 Mainstreet, Hopkins; 9 - 9:45 p.m.

Tuesday Tango Party - 3142 1st Ave S, Mpls; 9 - 11:30 p.m.; \$5; 21+

July 29 • Wednesday

Practice Party - Cinema; 1560 St. Clair Ave, St. Paul; 8 - 9 p.m.; \$6

July 30 • Thursday

Practice Party - Costa Rica Ballroom; 816 Mainstreet, Hopkins; 9 - 9:45 p.m.

Variety Dance - Dancers Studio; 415 Pascal St N, St. Paul; 7:30 p.m.; \$5

Late Night Swing - 301 Main St NE, Mpls; 10 p.m. - 1:30 a.m.; \$6, \$4 students

Bachata Social - DanceLife; 6015 Lyndale Ave S, Mpls; 9 - 10 p.m.; \$5

July 31 • Friday

WCS Dance Club - 2100 Dale St N, Roseville; 7:30 lesson, dance 8:30 p.m. - 12 a.m.

Variety Dance - DanceLife; 6015 Lyndale Ave S, Mpls; 8 - 9:30 p.m.; \$10

Studios

American Classic Ballroom .. 952.934.0900
550 Market Street, Chanhassen
www.acballroom.com

Balance Pointe Studios 952.922.8612
5808R W 36th Street, St. Louis Park
www.balancepointestudios.com

Ballroom & Latin Dance Club 952.292.0524
1103 W Burnsville Pkwy, Burnsville
www.ballroom-club.com

Ballroom & Wedding Dance Studio 612.371.0300
2717 42nd Street E, Minneapolis
www.myballroomdancestudio.com

Blue Moon Ballroom 507.288.0556
2030 Highway 14 E, Rochester
www.BlueMoonBallroom.com

Cinema Ballroom 651.699.5910
1560 St. Clair Ave, St. Paul
www.cinemaballroom.com

Costa Rica Ballroom Dance Studios 952.303.3339
816 Mainstreet, Hopkins
www.costaricaballroom.com

Dahl Dance Center 507.252.1848
4204 North Highway 52, Rochester
www.dahldance.com

Dance and Entertainment 651.605.5784
www.danceandentertainment.com

Dance with Us America 612.564.5483
10 Southdale Center, Edina
www.dancewithusamerica.com

DanceLife Ballroom 612.345.4219
6015 Lyndale Ave S, Minneapolis
www.dancelifeballroom.com

Dancers Studio 651.641.0777
415 Pascal Street N, St. Paul
www.dancersstudio.com

Four Seasons Dance Studio .. 612.342.0902
1637 Hennepin Ave S, Minneapolis
www.fourseasonsdance.com

Latin Mambo 612.558.7190
2948 Chicago Ave S #308, Mpls
www.latinmambodancestudio.com

Mill City Ballroom 612.562.2733
www.millcityballroom.com

Rendezvous Dance Studio .. 612.872.1562
711 W Lake Street, Suite B, Minneapolis
www.theplacetodance.com

StudioJeff 320.266.4137
701 St. Germain Street W, Suite 201,
St. Cloud
www.studiojeff.com

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Karin Rice 612.242.2188

Lisa Vogel 651.208.0818
lmvogel27@gmail.com

Clubs

Aqua Gliders Dance Club 612.869.3062

Café Bailar
www.cafebailar.com

Cotillion Dance Club of Stillwater 651.388.1231
paynter@charter.net

LaDanza Dance Club 651.439.3152
facebook.com/LaDanzaDanceClub

Lakeside Dance Club 320.763.6432
danceclub@lakesideballroom.org
www.lakesideballroom.org

Linden Hills Dancing Club 651.636.9747
www.lindenhillsdancingclub.org

MN West Coast Swing Dance Club 763.442.1618
mnwestcoastswingdanceclub.com

REBELS Swing Dance Club .. 952.941.0906
www.tcrebels.com

Stardust Dance Club
stardustdanceclub@gmail.com

Suburban-Winterset Dance Club 952.894.1412
www.suburbanwinterset.com

Tango Society of Minnesota 612.224.2905
www.mntango.org

Tapestry Folkdance Center .. 612.722.2914
www.tapestryfolkdance.org

TC Swing 651.558.0562
info@tcswing.com
www.tcswing.com

University of Minnesota Ballroom Dance Club
bdc@umn.edu
umnbdc.com

Uptown Swing 612.217.1087
uptownswinglessons@gmail.com
www.uptownswing.net

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Photo from the NJ DanceSport Classic

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Advertisers

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Erik Anderson, Alexzandra Enger

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Hannah Alyea, Melissa Baddin, Mary Beth Beckman, Elizabeth Dickinson, Alexzandra Enger, Jackson Fossen, Meredith McKinney, Andrea Mirenda, Ember Reichgott Junge, Alex Sick, Jordan Sick, Joel Torgeson, Chelsea Visser, Seth Westlake

Sections

Discussion

This is a forum where people are invited to express their true feelings about issues in the dance community (while still adhering to our submission guidelines) and propose solutions to the problems we often face. Statements made in the Discussion section do not necessarily reflect the views of *Sheer Dance*, even when written by one of our volunteer staff.

From the Community

Unlike the other sections, there is no cohesive theme to From the Community; it is a catch-all for the unique gems that are submitted by people like you. Here you'll find contributions like event recaps, interviews, tales from a far-off competition, and photos from a local dance event.

Recurring Columns

We have a handful of generous writers who contribute regularly. Each explores a unique, overarching theme of their choice. Each month, in a volunteer report, one of our volunteers fills you in on what they've been doing to make the dance community a better place.

Special Features

Some issues focus on a particular event or theme, and all content relevant to that theme belongs to the Special Features section. **E**

2015 Competitions

Events labeled NQE are qualifying events for the USA Dance National DanceSport Championships.

Twin Cities Open Ballroom Championships July 9 - 11
Minneapolis, MN; twincitiesopen.com

New England DanceSport Championships - NQE September 25 - 27
Waltham, MA; nedancesport.org

Carolina Fall Classic - NQE October 2 - 4
Charlotte, NC; carolinafallclassic.com

Chicago DanceSport Challenge - NQE October 30 - November 1
Chicago, IL; usadancechicago.org

California State DanceSport Championships NQE November 7
San Jose, CA; usadance-norcal.org

National Collegiate DanceSport Championships November 21 - 22
Columbus, OH; usadancenc.org

2016 Competitions

Snow Ball January 8 - 10
Minneapolis, MN; thesnowballcomp.com

Manhattan Amateur Classic - NQE January 15 - 17
New York, NY; macnyusadance.org

PDX Ballroom Classic - NQE January 30
Portland, OR; nwbballroomcompetition.org

Mid-Atlantic Championship - NQE February 20 - 21
Bethesda, MD; usadancedc.org

Dance Fest March 5 - 6
St. Paul, MN; udancefest.com

2016 National DanceSport Championships April 1 - 3
Baltimore, MD; usadancenationals.org

Derby City DanceSport Championships - NQE August 5 - 7
Louisville, KY; derbycitydancesport.org

Chicago DanceSport Challenge - NQE October 28 - 30
Chicago, IL; usadancechicago.org

Volunteer Openings

Assignment Photographer

If you love taking photos and exploring the partner-dancing world, throw in your hat to become an official *Sheer Dance* photographer! This volunteer will be provided topics and events to cover with action-packed shots.

Assignment Writer

Love writing but never sure what to write about? We supply the topics every month; you supply the articles. Excited, passionate writers with a thirst for exploration are encouraged to consider volunteering for this position.

Columnist

We're always looking for more people to commit to writing an article every month that addresses a particular idea or theme relevant to partner dancing. You choose the topic!

Copy Editor

We're looking for a highly skilled linguist with an intimate understanding of American English spelling, punctuation, and grammar to do the first pass of line editing on all articles. This is a very involved role that provides excellent experience for anyone considering a career in publishing.

Your Contribution Here

Have an idea of how you could add value to *Sheer Dance* that we haven't thought of? Let us know! **E**

About Us

Sheer Dance is a monthly independent publication that presents news and information relevant to the partner-dancing community in the central United States and the nation at large. It is intended to be an accessible outlet for members of the community to discuss their experiences and opinions in a public forum. Published monthly, *Sheer Dance* is run by a group of skilled volunteers with extensive experience in creating and distributing successful partner-dance publications.

This magazine is meant to serve the community as a positive and unifying force by addressing the needs and desires of all groups within the community. *Sheer Dance*:

- Provides amateurs with a convenient way to share their dance experiences, seek advice from experts, and learn about events, services, and other opportunities in the wider ballroom community;
- Provides professionals with direct access to their target audience, spreading awareness of their expertise, events, and services; and
- Provides the entire community with a forum for discussion, cooperation, and problem-solving.

Sheer Dance is made possible by the generous contributions of members of the community. If you enjoy reading this publication, please consider contributing an article or photos, making a donation, subscribing, or volunteering your time and skills.

The staff of *Sheer Dance* can be reached at info@sheerdance.com. We hope to hear from you! **E**

Contribute

Submission Guidelines

Submissions are due to submissions@sheerdance.com by the 10th of the month prior to publication. Submissions received after the deadline may be used in the upcoming issue or may be saved for a later month. You may request a two-day extension if you include information regarding your topic.

Content is published at the discretion of *Sheer Dance* based on the policies outlined below. It is our goal to publish all of the content submitted to us in the issue for which it was submitted. Any rejected advertisement or article will come with communication on how it could be edited to be appropriate for publication, with a deadline extension when possible to allow time to effect the necessary alterations.

Advertisements

We print at 300 dpi and accept PDF, PNG, and JPEG file types. When buying a larger advertising package, you may swap in a different ad for each month at no additional fee. The chart below features our introductory rates, which are subject to change as the publication grows. Contact ads@sheerdance.com for more information.

Layout	Dimensions (width x height)	Price Per Ad	Price for 12 Consecutive Months
Full Page	7.5" x 10"	\$120	\$1200
Half Page	7.5" x 4.75"	\$75	\$750
Quarter Page	3.5" x 4.75"	\$50	\$500
Business Card	3.5" x 2"	\$15	\$150

Photos

When selecting photos to include in the magazine, we try to feature different dancers in each picture, when possible. We look for photos with good lighting, a clear focus, and smiling dancers who are actively dancing.

Articles

All articles must be clearly relevant to partner dancing. There are no length requirements or limits, but *Sheer Dance* may break up longer articles across multiple issues when appropriate. While articles may promote

specific events, that cannot be their primary function; they must have a broader applicability to enlightening the dance community. Articles must be respectful and productive. Harassment of any kind will not be published, nor will articles that fall below Contradiction on the scale of productive argumentation.

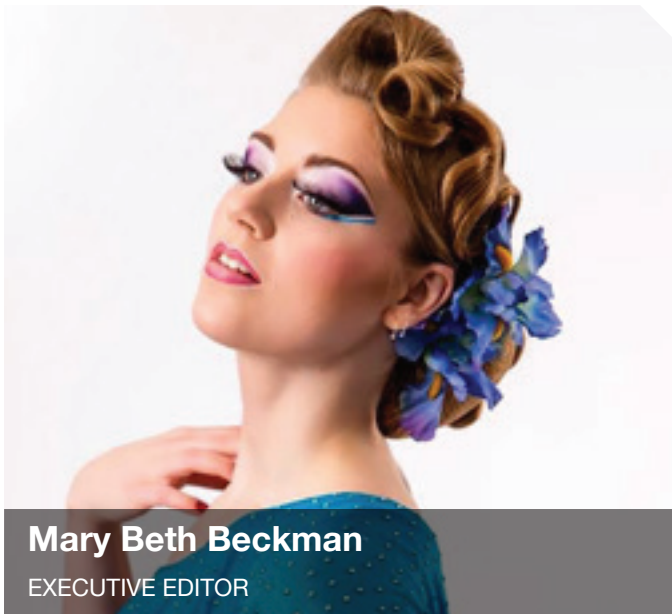
Refuting the Central Point	Explicitly refutes the central point
Refutation	Finds the mistake and explains why it's mistaken using quotes
Counterargument	Contradicts and then backs it up with reasoning and/or supporting evidence
Contradiction	States the opposing case with little or no supporting evidence
Responding to Tone	Criticizes the tone of the writing without addressing the substance of the argument
Ad Hominem	Attacks the characteristics or authority of the writer without addressing the substance of the argument
Name-calling	Discourse like "The writer is an imbecile"

Editing Policy

Content submitted to *Sheer Dance* will be edited for spelling, grammar, sentence structure, style, and appropriateness of content.

Any kind of bigotry, inappropriate religious or political statements, name-calling, verifiably untrue statements, unreasonable and unverifiable claims, and unpaid content that only serves to advertise goods or services are all subject to removal. Content that serves no appropriate purpose will not be published.

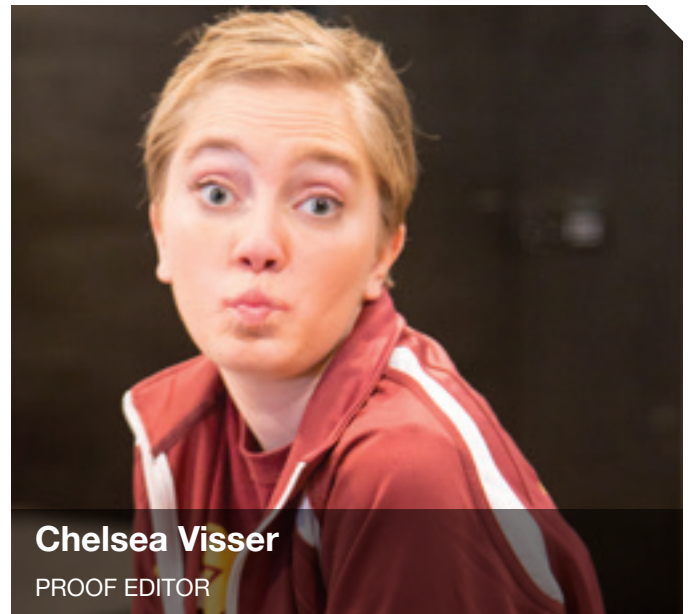
If you are dissatisfied with any edits made by *Sheer Dance*, you are welcome and encouraged to compose a Letter to the Editor, which, so long as it meets the submission guidelines, will be posted in the Discussion section of the subsequent issue with a response from *Sheer Dance*. *Sheer Dance* retains the right to discontinue public editorial discussions when they no longer add value for the dance community at large, though private exchanges may still be relevant. **E**



Mary Beth Beckman

EXECUTIVE EDITOR

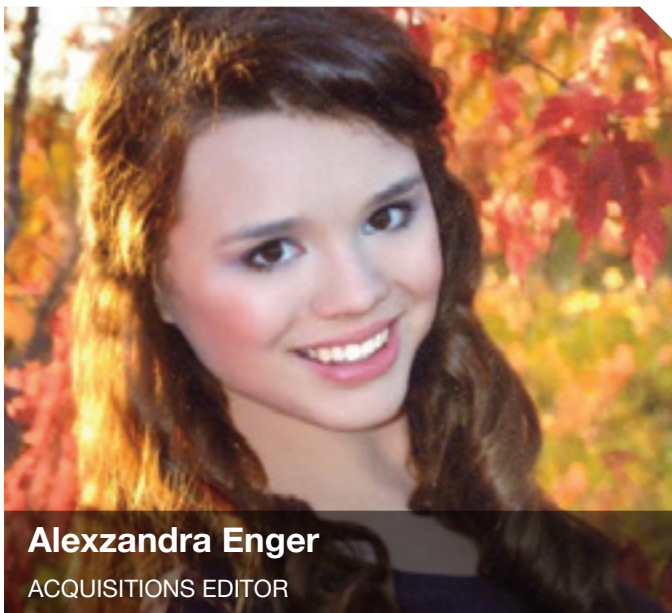
Mary Beth Beckman is the fearless leader of the Sheer Dance team, guiding the vision and scope of the magazine as well as editing the content to ensure its consistency with Sheer Dance's official style. She has been volunteering in the partner-dancing community for over five years and prides herself on being an excellent communicator and organizer of tiny scraps of data. Mary Beth can typically be found drinking buckets of coffee, engaging in fandom, improving her physical fitness, or watching sci-fi. She welcomes your questions and feedback at info@sheerdance.com.



Chelsea Visser

PROOF EDITOR

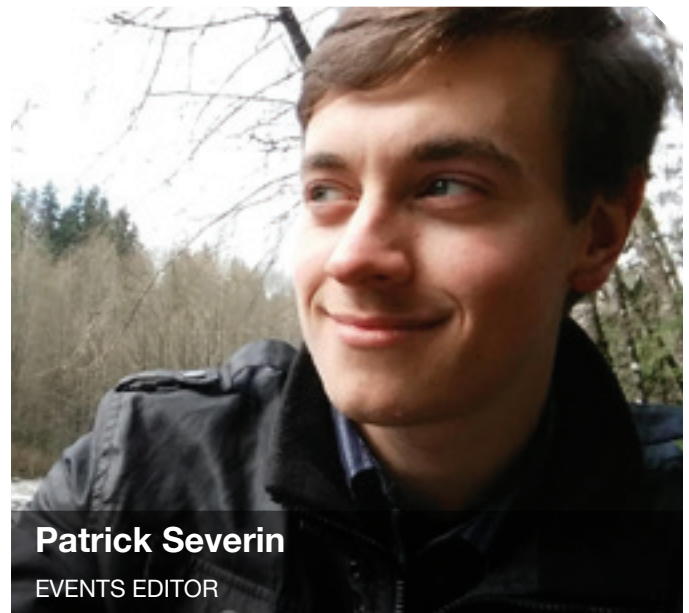
Chelsea Visser is an English and journalism student at the University of Minnesota and enjoys competing with the ballroom dance team as well as dancing socially around the Twin Cities. As Sheer Dance's Proof Editor, Chelsea reads each issue cover to cover to ensure all the finer details are exactly as they should be. Questions, comments, and concerns can be sent to visse017@umn.edu.



Alexzandra Enger

ACQUISITIONS EDITOR

Alexzandra Enger is treasurer of the University of Minnesota Ballroom Dance Club and a member of the competition team. When she's not busy dancing, volunteering, or studying, Alex will likely be found—coffee in hand—spending time with her friends, conquering video games, discovering new music, and whipping up delicious meals and desserts. She wants to travel the world, dance as often as she can, and be happy. As Acquisitions Editor of Sheer Dance, Alex is responsible for gathering all content for the magazine. If you've got articles or photos to share, send them to Alexzandra at submissions@sheerdance.com.



Patrick Severin

EVENTS EDITOR

Patrick Severin tried ballroom once, and it quickly became their favorite hobby. As Events Editor, they ensure dancers in the Twin Cities can always make it out to a social dance, because nothing makes Patrick smile like a floor full of happy dancers. When the dancing shoes are off, Patrick is developing software for hospitals and nonprofits, paddling a kayak in Lake Monona, commuting by bicycle, or hammering out letters on their Remington typewriter. They do freelance software consulting and enjoy philosophical chats; if either of those things interest you, feel free to email them at sever408@umn.edu.



Nicholas Westlake

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

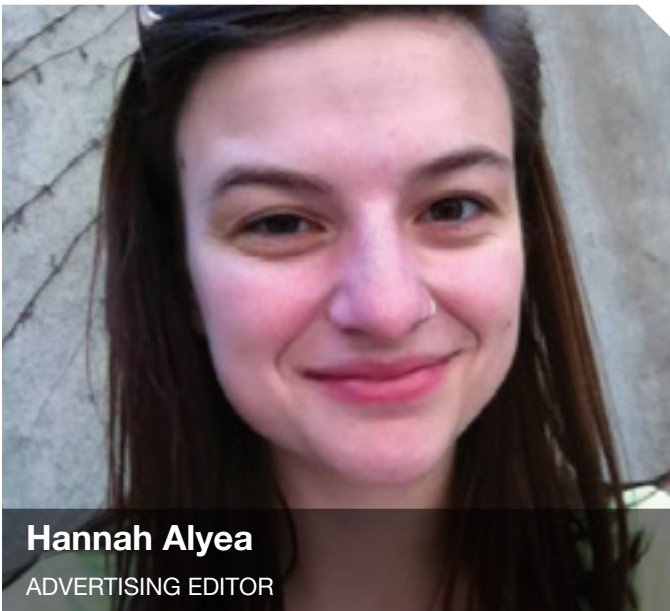
Nicholas Westlake crafts the look and feel of Sheer Dance. He oversees our design and publishing teams, building impactful visuals while ensuring each aspect of the publication complements the image and style you know and love. In the wild, he's also a passionate ballroom competitor, an avid dance instructor, and a no-nonsense system designer.



Julie Johnston

DESIGNER

Julie Johnston is, by day, a senior digital production specialist in the field of educational ebooks for iPads, etc. She has spent her entire career in print publications from catalogs to textbooks and is responsible for the layout of Sheer Dance. Julie has participated in Israeli dance and is in the beginning stages of learning the joys of partner dancing.



Hannah Alyea

ADVERTISING EDITOR

Hannah Alyea is rarely seen without a smile on her face and loves to spread the good news of ballroom dance. Originally from South Dakota, she has recently become the vice president of the University of Minnesota Ballroom Dance Club and is a member of the competitive ballroom team. Her favorite styles of dance are American rhythm and smooth and international standard. As Advertising Editor, Hannah is responsible for ensuring that Sheer Dance readers can connect with the vendors, products, and events of interest to them. If you're interested in advertising with Sheer Dance, email Hannah at ads@sheerdance.com.



Theresa Kimler

SUBSCRIPTION & MAILING COORDINATOR

Theresa Kimler has been an active member of the dance community for over twenty years. A seven-time USA Dance open smooth champion, nine-time rhythm champion, and four-time nine-dance champion, Theresa is an undisputed, long-standing champion of dance. Mechanical engineer by education, black-belt project manager, owner of Total Project Consulting, and lover of quadrupeds, Theresa graciously lends her expertise to Sheer Dance for the betterment of the dance community as our Subscription & Mailing Coordinator. Subscribe today to receive a gorgeous magazine in your mailbox every month, courtesy of Theresa's work.

All about That Bass(line)

Ballroom, Music, and Me

BY CHELSEA VISSER

EVERYBODY HAS A DIFFERENT reason for joining ballroom: the friends, the aesthetic of bow ties and beautiful dresses, the chance for interaction with people from a different college/major/gender. For me, it was the music.

I've always been a music junkie, from the day I got my dad's old Walkman and a Backstreet Boys CD. From high school marching band to car sing-alongs with friends, from Broadway to Backstreet Boys to Bastille, music has always been something close to my heart. So it's fitting that it was the music that caught my attention.

It was welcome week my freshman year, and the entire hockey stadium was filled with school groups and organizations trying to get the attention of thousands of bewildered teenagers. I was walking through the crowd with a free sample of bubble tea when I heard a familiar guitar riff around the corner. I had gotten an album by The Black Keys over the summer, and I would recognize "Gold on the Ceiling" anywhere. I rounded the corner, and up there on the stage were the representatives from the Ballroom Dance Club.

Honestly, I sort of fell in love.

Fast-forward a few weeks to the first week of lessons. I had had my two free classes and was sitting around during the social dance watching some of the more experienced students taking their turns on the floor. I was new, and shy, and who was I kidding? I couldn't dance! I had tripped on my own feet walking up the stairs to the gym!



Photo from Ballroom Blast by Erik Anderson

Someone announced that the last song of the night was a tango, and I instantly recognized the chords that blared through the speakers. It was the titular song from *Phantom of the Opera*, a show I've adored since I was a kid; my mom would play the soundtrack driving around town. I watched the couples take the floor, and the only thought in my head was, *I need to learn how to do this*. I brought the money for the semester's lessons the next week, and I never looked back.

So now it's almost two years later. I've danced to "Gold on the Ceiling" more times than I could possibly count, in ballrooms and bedrooms and backyards. I know more Rat Pack songs than your average baby boomer. I've got music from ballroom littered

through my iTunes library and half-built playlists for assorted styles (I've got my swing playlist on in the background as I write this article). I've danced in living rooms, in parking lots, and in at least one Jimmy John's when a hustle came on the radio. I have a habit of telling anyone who will listen that you can dance to whatever song is currently playing.

My favorite is when someone who knows I dance texts me with a song and a question: can you dance to this? I don't always know the answer, and sometimes the answer ends up being a resounding *no*, but that's never stopped me from having fun moving where the music takes me. **E**



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Making Up for Lost Time

A Small-Town Gent Meets Ballroom Dance

BY JACKSON FOSSEN



IF YOU'D ASKED ME A YEAR AGO what I thought of ballroom dance, my response would've been along the lines of, "Uh, like, fancy dancing?" I might've had a better guess along the lines of *Dancing with the Stars*, but it was really a vague idea. Fast-forward a year and my sudden and heavy involvement in the ballroom world has taught me a lot. Much of my interest in and enjoyment of the experience of ballroom dancing comes from my background in dance: absolutely nothing. Aside from

obligatory dances at prom and the awkward ... whatever the hell middle school dances were, dancing was just not my thing.

I come from a small town in northern Minnesota: Cloquet, population 12,000, described to most as *near Duluth*. I didn't have much exposure to dance in Cloquet, so when I moved down to the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities and encountered the Ballroom Dance Club, it was extremely new, and to my surprise, I liked it ... a

lot. I was first drawn to this romanticized vision of history, of wealthy aristocrats in Europe and great American cities partaking in their fancy activity. I quickly learned there was much more to it than that, having such stunning revelations as, "Hmm, swing equals ballroom," and, "Latin dances too?" The world of ballroom dance was far bigger than I had imagined: a forty-person competition team at the university in addition to a large club? Countless studios and instructors throughout the

area? There was a lot I didn't know, but like I said, I liked what I saw. And now I find myself writing an article for a dance publication.

Being from a smaller town, I can say many of the stereotypes are at least partially true. One in particular, that news travels and everyone knows everyone, was demonstrated repeatedly on my visits home. It seemed everyone I talked to had heard about my dancing escapades. I, not being overly talkative, assumed the information had spread from my parents, and spread far. It feels like there isn't a single person I've spoken to since being back who hasn't heard about me dancing and taken an interest. They are all, it seems, just as curious as I was, so I share what I know.

I've been asked to give lessons (am even I qualified to do that?), asked if I'll be on *Dancing with the Stars* (slow down; do you realize how freakin' good those guys are?), asked if I dance with any girls (occasionally, if I'm lucky). Hopefully I can turn some of this polite interest into genuine enthusiasm for something I've become passionate about.

A complete ignorance of dance for most of my life thus far is admittedly, in some ways, a disadvantage, especially for one who aspires to compete, but on the upside, now that I've finally started my journey into dance, it's exciting. It's brand-new, a novel pastime, a refreshingly large change in my life, and now I'm determined to make up for lost time. **E**



Photo from Dance Fest by Erik Anderson

A Look Back

My Journey as a Collegiate Dancer

BY MELISSA BADDIN



I'LL NEVER FORGET FINDING MY WAY to the Bierman gym for the first time.

Walking down the stairs searching for people who look like they could be ballroom dancers, I have absolutely no clue where I'm going. I'm alone, and while I'm not scared, I'm not exactly feeling confident, either. But one short forty-five-minute lesson later, I'm falling in love! I've been a tap dancer my entire life but have never felt a love for dance like this before. I ask an officer

if there's any way to get more involved than just taking beginner club lessons, and am directed towards the University of Minnesota's competitive ballroom team.

Two weeks later, I'm training for my first competition.

Fast-forward three years and I confidently march into the beautiful new recreation center at the university. It's the first night the competitive team meets this school year, and the room

is filled with fresh faces. The team has expanded considerably since I first joined, and I realize there are fewer than ten people in the room who have been around since I started and a large portion of the team are brand-new dancers.

Fast-forward again to this past March and I am at perhaps my last competition as a collegiate dancer in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Somebody from Michigan's team asks if I know their

pen pal, a girl who said she was part of the University of Minnesota ballroom team at one point, and I do! But it dawns on me that very few of my teammates would have ever even heard her name before. I spend a good portion of the bus ride home on a nostalgia trip with fellow long-time members thinking about our humble beginnings back in Bierman.

It's an interesting perspective. I started ballroom dancing with no knowledge or experience aside from a very limited amount of swing dancing. I looked up to everyone on my team and asked as many questions as I could come up with, whether about syllabus and styling or advice on hair and makeup. But then I slowly found the balance shifting from being the asker to being asked. As old team members left and my seniority grew, I found myself feeling more and more like a big sister or team mommy wanting to take care of every new dancer that came into my

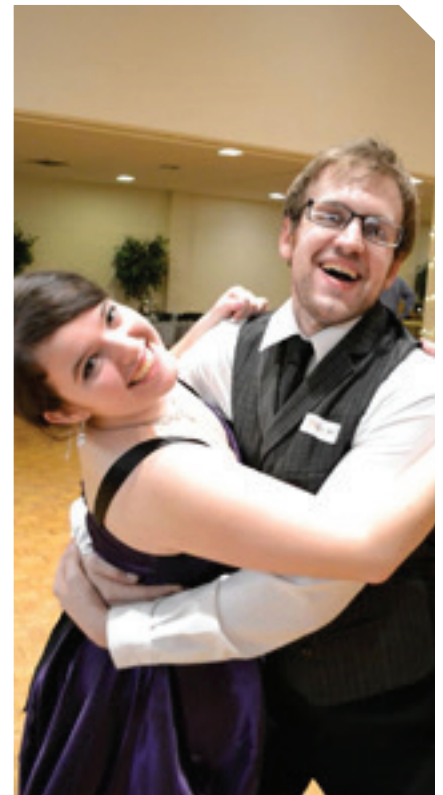
life. And while, each semester, I lost a couple of these dancers I had come to see as family, I also gained new ones.

With my own progress in mind, it's crazy watching how quickly new team members seem to grow and gain new skills. As a dancer who has never had a very permanent partner, it's especially encouraging to see new partnerships form that seem like they will last a very long time. As I started to feel like I was blooming as a dancer, the team began blooming as well. With a new practice space that was infinitely nicer than our old one, beautiful partnerships being formed around me, the team growing in size, and all of our scores continuing to improve, my pride in this team really skyrocketed.

It's sad realizing half my stories start by explaining whoever I'm talking about *used* to be part of the team, but at the same time, the amount of change and growth I witnessed over my four years dancing has been extraordinary.

Our team that was once small enough to share buses to competitions with other teams has nearly doubled in size and become one of the top collegiate teams in the nation. We have produced many lifelong ballroom dancers that will become (or already are) huge assets to the Twin Cities ballroom community, as well as members of dance communities nationwide.

I will forever cherish the foundations, friendships, and love of dancing this team has instilled in me and in many of my fellow dancers, and I can only hope the next generation of young dancers will grow to love it the same way I have. I am confident that the future of this team is bright and am happy that, even though I will be moving on, I know I'm leaving the team in the hands of unbelievably capable people that will only continue to do wonderful things. **E**



Life Through Dance

Staying Aware for Smooth Transitions

BY ELIZABETH DICKINSON

AFTER SEVERAL YEARS AWAY FROM international standard, the closed work in my smooth routines began to suffer, so my teacher and I started to incorporate a bit more standard work again. I love standard, too, so it's not a hardship.

One of the trickiest things about closed work in smooth is getting in and out of closed hold. It never seems as difficult if you're always in hold (as in standard), but it feels a lot more difficult if you're constantly transitioning in and out of hold.

Part of the challenge is staying aware during transitions. In dance, I find there are certain transitional moments that don't always register for me, like a closed twinkle leading up to a more difficult open step. I focus on the more difficult step and am unaware that how I produce the transitional twinkle (my setup, direction, orientation, balance) helps determine how successful the supposedly more difficult following step is.

Life sometimes asks us to make constant small transitions, in addition to the large ones (graduation, marriage, birth, death). Change in any form can be stressful. In a talk I give on stress, I reference the [Holmes-Rahe stress inventory](#). Most of the top stressors listed in the inventory are unambiguously stressful: divorce, family death or illness, etc. However, people are often surprised that what we think of as fortunate occurrences also are stressful. For instance, events like outstanding personal achievement or recovery from illness may force unanticipated consequences and a reappraisal of our life path.

In life and dance, questions arise during small and large transitions. Will I arrive at my destination? How does this new move change my relationship to myself and others? Will it be easy to move again out of this transition? What's next?

Know that the transition may be as important as arriving at the final



Elizabeth Dickinson is a life/executive coach and amateur ballroom dancer. If you enjoy her writing and would like to receive her weekly emailed coaching newsletter, visit www.pursueyourpath.com and sign up.

destination. This is true whether the destination is a new dance position, a new relationship, or a new job.

Living inside the questions, staying present to yourself and not losing awareness during transitional moments, helps determine your success in the next destination. May we pursue our paths, staying aware as we aim for smooth transitions. **E**



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Joel Torgeson is president of the University of Minnesota Ballroom Dance Club and enjoys dancing both socially and competitively. If you have feedback for Joel or would like to pitch an article idea, email him at joeltorgeson@yahoo.com.

Gaining Perspective

Modern Marvels and the Origin of Humankind

BY JOEL TORGESON

iPADS, NICE! I think as I pull up to gate G6, bags checked and security cleared. *This is great; now I can actually write my Sheer article.*

Somebody at a table a few feet away is already complaining about airlines, and a Louis C.K. monologue springs unbidden to my mind. *Listen, you, I want to say. You're about to fly, through the air, in what would amount to a mystifying, magical metal canister in any age but the last 100 years ... and you're complaining about Delta's coffee. I have no more words for you.*

Of course, I'm not actually going to say that, since I've complained about plenty of modern miracles. My iPhone 6 Plus won't connect to the LTE network (more magic?). This is the worst. The light rail's AC was too cold? *Horrible.* My life is too hard.

There's a church group headed to Uganda for missionary work next to me now. As much as that grates against my sense of social justice, ethics, and common courtesy, clearly I'm not going to convince them out of it, so I keep my mouth shut again. Plus, I'm generalizing. Maybe they're not full of the stereotypes and privileged socialization I'm assuming they have. Through unintentional eavesdropping, I learn I have two eight-hour flights with them to test these hypotheses about them. Good thing my Kindle is fully charged.

I'm hardly in a position to cast much judgment. I'm jumping across the Atlantic to Kenya to do anthropological

fieldwork, another in a long list of white, cis men who have returned to the home continent to study human origins. I faced this dilemma when I went to Thailand this winter as well: how do I acknowledge and understand my privilege while still accomplishing my goals and pursuing my dreams? It's a gray zone of ethics that I'm not fully qualified to handle. This is for another time, though.

I *am* looking forward to this trip, and it's going to be amazing. I received a National Science Foundation fellowship to attend the Koobi Fora Field School, one of the premier institutions in the world for learning anthropological field methods. I also received a grant from the University of Minnesota to conduct research in the National Museums of Kenya and on Rusinga Island on Lake Victoria, examining rodent dental morphology as it varies in the paleoecological record. I won't be back until August 24th.

With limited internet availability where I'm headed, I'm not sure whether my article for next month will be able to get through. I might send a postcard, though! Hopefully I'll have even more interesting stories and perspectives to relate when I get back from this adventure.

For now, gate G6 is beginning to board. A little bit of excitement tingles in these fingers. **E**



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Mary Beth Beckman is a long-term volunteer committed to serving the dance community and is the Executive Editor of *Sheer Dance*. To solicit her editing services, ask questions about *Sheer Dance*, or submit content, email her at info@sheerdance.com.

I FIND MYSELF WITH AN ENVIABLE problem: as *Sheer Dance*'s volunteer production team grows, so does its complexity. One of the goals of *Sheer* has always been to have a large volunteer team with an even larger pool of writers and photographers submitting content. As we take the slower summer months to work out the kinks and suffer the growing pains, my mission as Executive Editor is to become a better manager.

Sheer Dance started as a bit of a two-man show, with a clear division of labor: the other founding volunteer, Nicholas Westlake, was responsible for design, layout, and the website; I did everything else. When you're a perfectionist with a high degree of skill in a rather esoteric field, this arrangement is both satisfying and utterly unsustainable as a volunteer. Being unable or unwilling to delegate is a direct path to burnout, which is just another word for failure.

In the [May 2015](#) issue, I wrote about [preparing for the future](#) in the specific

Volunteer Report

Learning to Delegate

BY MARY BETH BECKMAN

context of my volunteering. People who have followed my writing for a few years won't be surprised to hear that, in many ways, I write to learn. The process of writing shakes loose many of my sticking points as I confront my own weaknesses, insecurities, and trust issues, and the process of writing that article helped me let go of my need to do it all myself.

Because the truth is that I'm not special. I'm not the best editor in the world or the state or the city. I'm not the only person with the combined skills, experience, ambition, and volunteer spirit to do excellent work. The more I can loosen my white-knuckled grip on this magazine, the freer it will be to grow and thrive. I can add more value to *Sheer Dance* as a manager than I can spreading myself too thin over many jobs that should be divided amongst many volunteers.

I know how to do it all, but that doesn't mean I do it all well. In fact, there are a great many pieces of the production of *Sheer Dance* I'm kind of terrible at. That isn't a failure on my part; the only failure was in doing these tasks so long when they weren't well suited to me. At the same time, I believe managers should understand the work of the people they supervise, so none of that time or effort was wasted. I will be a much better resource for the other volunteers because I've done these things and understand them. And because, to some degree, I was only ever making do, I trust and expect that the new crop of volunteers will do it better

than I did. Once they've acclimated to their roles, they'll streamline and take ownership, and the quality of the magazine will improve because of the unique contributions of every person involved in the process.

None of this is lip service; I don't say things I don't believe. Sometimes I just have to practice writing it out to see how I really feel about something. If you hadn't guessed, that's what I'm doing now, and I'm pleased to discover that I have the utmost faith in all of our volunteers. I thought *Sheer Dance* was something special before, but soon it's going to be downright amazing, and I'm excited to facilitate this flourishing by being an excellent manager.

Delegation is the first of many managerial skills I'm working on. Trust that you'll hear about other skills in future issues. Until then, I welcome your insight, critique, questions, advice. Shoot me an email; give me your thoughts. **E**

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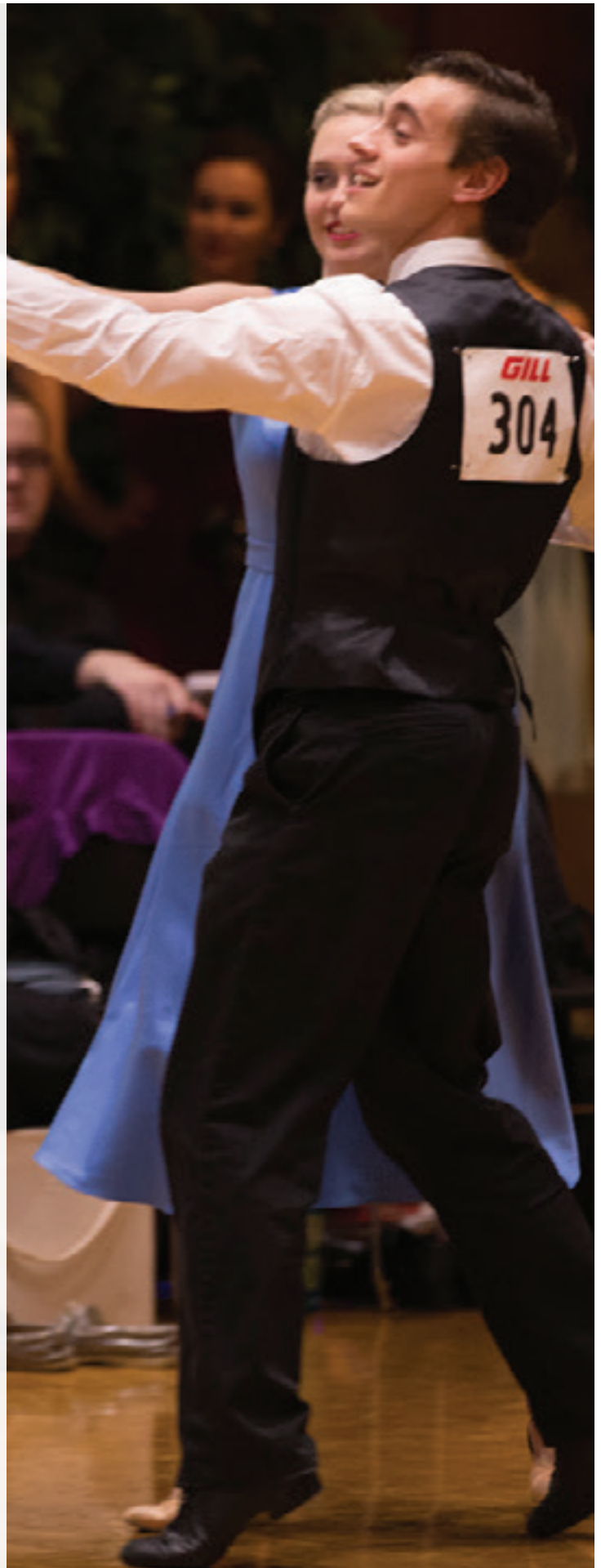
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NJ DanceSport Classic - Summer Sizzler

We apologize for the temporary break in results last month. Next month, we will feature competitors from Colorado Star Ball, the Millennium Dancesport Championships, and the Gumbo DanceSport Championships. Best of luck to those competing at Twin Cities Open!

Kyle Condiff and Hannah Alyea

2nd (of 3) - Amateur Adult Bronze Rhythm
 1st (of 3) - Amateur Adult Bronze Rhythm Swing
 1st (of 1) - Amateur Adult Bronze Rhythm Mambo
 5th (of 6) - Amateur Adult Silver Rhythm
 2nd (of 3) - Amateur Adult Bronze Smooth
 2nd (of 3) - Amateur Adult Bronze Smooth Tango
 4th (of 6) - Amateur Adult Silver Smooth
 2nd (of 3) - Amateur Adult Bronze Standard

Jackson Fossen and Alexzandra Enger

3rd (of 3) - Amateur Adult Bronze Rhythm
 3rd (of 3) - Amateur Adult Bronze Rhythm Swing
 4th (of 6) - Amateur Adult Silver Rhythm
 3rd (of 3) - Amateur Adult Bronze Smooth
 3rd (of 3) - Amateur Adult Bronze Smooth Tango
 6th (of 6) - Amateur Adult Silver Smooth
 3rd (of 3) - Amateur Adult Bronze Standard
 4th (of 4) - Amateur Adult Bronze Standard

Michael Kasinkas and Taylor Wall

1st (of 2) - Amateur Adult Pre-Champ Rhythm
 2nd (of 2) - Amateur Adult Championship Rhythm
 2nd (of 3) - Amateur Adult Novice Smooth
 2nd (of 3) - Amateur Adult Pre-Champ Smooth
 1st (of 2) - Amateur Adult Gold Standard
 3rd (of 3) - Amateur Adult Novice Standard

Daniel O'Connell and Rosemary O'Connell

1st (of 1) - Amateur Adult Novice Rhythm
 2nd (of 2) - Amateur Adult Pre-Champ Rhythm
 1st (of 6) - Amateur Adult Silver Smooth
 2nd (of 3) - Amateur Adult Gold Smooth
 2nd (of 4) - Amateur Adult Silver Standard

Seth Westlake and Shelby Gilliland

1st (of 3) - Amateur Adult Bronze Rhythm
 2nd (of 3) - Amateur Adult Bronze Rhythm Swing
 4th (of 6) - Amateur Adult Silver Rhythm
 1st (of 3) - Amateur Adult Bronze Smooth
 1st (of 3) - Amateur Adult Bronze Smooth Tango
 2nd (of 6) - Amateur Adult Silver Smooth
 1st (of 3) - Amateur Adult Bronze Standard
 1st (of 4) - Amateur Adult Silver Standard **E**



Would you like to see your results or your studio's results at an event here? Email us at info@sheerdance.com with the name of the event, some pictures, and your results, and we'll be sure to include them!

Learning and Applying Carnegie's Techniques

How to Win Friends and Influence People

BY SETH WESTLAKE



Photo from the NJ DanceSport Classic

ONE OF MY COACHES SAID that while I may become a brilliant dancer someday, it wouldn't matter much if I didn't have a partner. As a start to acquiring seldom-taught partnering skills, a book was aggressively suggested to me. Reading the work of Dale Carnegie, it's become quickly apparent how much work my social and relationship skills need.

After being in print for more than seventy-five years, Dale Carnegie's *How to Win Friends and Influence People* has remained a popular and powerful reference for those interested in improving their managerial and people skills. This book, in fewer than three hundred pages, covers a vast array of topics and information ranging from the importance of remembering a person's name to the subtle advantages that arise

Seth Westlake is the Publicity Manager for the University of Minnesota Ballroom Dance Club and a dedicated member of the competition team.

from having your acquaintance say yes a couple times. Using this material to my advantage and applying it over the past week, I was able to influence and

affect not only the people I came into contact with but my own mind as well.

One of the recurring themes in *How to Win Friends and Influence People* is that people like to talk about themselves. Few people, regardless of status or education, will pass up the chance to discuss their hobbies and accomplishments. Carnegie encourages us to listen more than we speak and to yield the majority of the conversation to our acquaintances. Changing the focus onto oneself is not only rude but also places an abrupt stop in the flow of conversation.

Recently while preparing for a dance lesson with some friends, I tested this method to see if I could increase the average length of my conversations. Talking about myself and using stories from my own personal experiences, I couldn't get a conversation to last more than a minute. Then, instead of proposing a topic of my own for discussion, I asked for elaboration on someone else's. "What do you think about that?" and "Tell me more about..." were among the phrases I commonly used. To my surprise, not only did this prove to increase the length of conversation, but it also served to improve the speaker's mood.

Then, later that week, while driving with several friends to Wisconsin Dells, I had the chance to test this again. Instead of discussing my own interests, I latched onto a different conversation and had the speaker expound their interests. This method, in practice, has provided insight into how people enjoy interacting. If we put others' needs ahead of our own, they become more inclined to treat our business or our friendship with open arms.

Another part of creating that open-arms experience with people, according

to Carnegie, is making all first impressions with a smile. Quoting an old Chinese proverb, Carnegie writes, "A man without a smiling face must not open a shop." This is true for everyone, not only shop owners, because even if we are not selling someone on a particular store or product, we are always trying to sell ourselves.

Saturday afternoon, while at the Wisconsin Dells waterpark, I made an effort to brighten the day of a few of the lifeguards we passed. I greeted one of them with a particularly warm and genuine smile, and throughout the rest of the day, that lifeguard's behavior was warm and friendly. With a simple hello and a smile, a connection was developed, and that particular lifeguard frequently said hello and waved to us as we passed. The power of a smile, often underestimated, is worth leveraging when meeting new people. A genuine smile breeds happiness and connectedness. This is a big part of how friends and associates are made.

Arguments, however, are surefire way to jeopardize these relationships. Discussions and differences of opinion may be had, but as the heading of one chapter reads, "You can't win an argument." You're either wrong or you alienate the other person, and in that, there is no winning. Dancing with my partner this week, I've started to apply the notion that there is never any sense in arguing. After being told I'm wrong, it's natural that I'd want to defend my ego, but it's much more sensible that I try to see things from my partner's point of view and discuss how things could be communicated more efficiently and respectfully. In this way, no one's feelings are hurt, no one is at fault, and we become more open to

the comments we provide to help one another improve.

If it's absolutely necessary that we correct someone or change their opinion, then it is best done by doing it in such a way that they believe they thought of it themselves. Nobody wants to be ordered around like a pet. People would rather be led to a conclusion they believe is their own idea. When approached with a friendly voice and a caring hand, our clients and friends are always more receptive to the process of changing their minds.

I was able to encourage a friend of mine to change preferences on what movie we should watch. I didn't argue that one movie was preferable to the other but rather that my preferred movie included elements they would prefer. Even though they had, at first, wanted to see movie A, they had, on their own, convinced themselves that movie B was better suited to their interests. I believe that had I demanded we watch movie B, the decision would not have gone over as well. With egos at stake, heels are dug into the ground. Considering that no one wins in an argument, being able to persuade others without harsh words or insistence is paramount to being a good manager, dance partner, or friend.

Through the trial and error of many thousands of classes and students, and now me, *How to Win Friends and Influence People* has consistently provided an array of powerful managerial methods. I'm surprised by how much I've learned in a single week through practicing these skills, and I'm excited to see where this material takes me as I find more applications for it. It will take more than a single read to truly learn and master Carnegie's methods. **E**

A Weekend of Firsts

New Jersey Summer Sizzler

BY ALEXZANDRA ENGER

FIRSTS—THEY'RE SO SIMPLE, yet oftentimes, first experiences hold great significance or sentimental value to people: first words, first steps, the first time you meet your significant other, the first time you have Chipotle after a lifetime of burrito deprivation. I'll admit that I'm on the more sentimental side of the spectrum. I prefer vivid memories, so I often use my handy iPhone to document as many of my important, exciting, or simply novel firsts as possible. A lengthy scroll through my camera roll will give the casual observer a basic run-through of my favorite experiences in recent

history, firsts included. My first ballroom social dance is preserved for posterity in there, as is my very first ballroom competition. Even my first pair of Latin shoes has its prerequisite thumbnail in my ballroom album.

When I broke into the competitive ballroom community, it was as a collegiate dancer. Recently, I had the opportunity to break into the amateur circuit, and I grabbed hold of that chance with eager hands. The first weekend of June saw me, my partner, and several good friends in New Jersey for the New Jersey Summer Sizzler. It was a weekend of great fun, fantastic experiences

with friends, and, of course, many firsts.

First Time on an Airplane

In today's fast-paced world, almost every person you meet will have been on an airplane before, but not me. This trip was the first time I'd ever set foot upon an airplane that intended to take off with me strapped into it. I'd been given an equal number of horror stories and calming reassurances by my traveling partners, so I had been hoping for the best but was prepared for the worst (worst being intense motion sickness, something I'm not a stranger to, and turbulence that could be likened to a





rolling sea). It all went over much better than I'd been led to believe; I would actually say it was exciting.

First Time in New York City

It's one of the largest cities in the world and arguably the most well known. It's a very touristy city, which is something I was expecting, yet the sheer volume of people and the fast-paced atmosphere was still impressive and gave me a moment's shock and awe. Along with visiting New York City as a first comes a host of other firsts: the Natural History Museum, FAO Schwarz, Koreatown, and Central Park. Each was a spectacular experience in its own right. The Natural History Museum was absolutely fascinating and, coupled with the Hayden Planetarium, easily

made the finals for most exciting event of the day. Central Park yielded some fabulous people-watching, and parts of it looked as though they'd been plucked straight out of a prime-time cable detective drama.

First Amateur Ballroom Competition

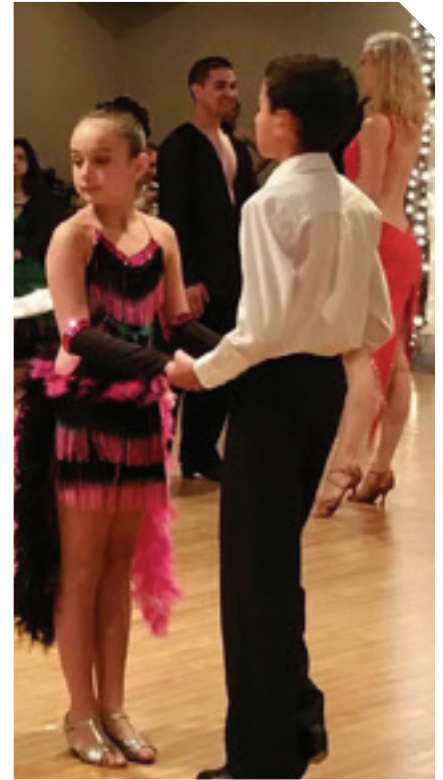
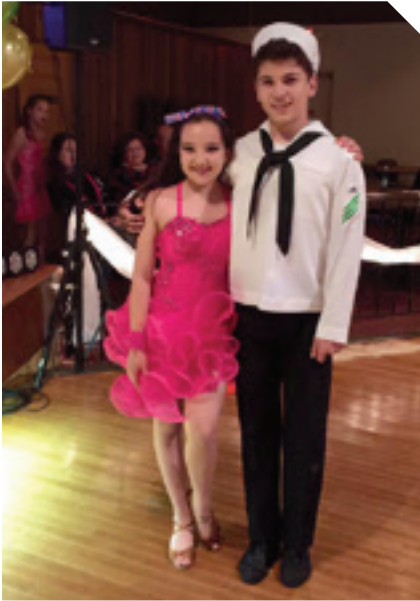
I've competed in collegiate competitions before but had always heard about the amateur circuit; it seemed like some far-off, mysterious land filled with beautiful evening shows and dressing rooms with racks of bejeweled dresses hanging about. Unsurprisingly, it was very similar to a collegiate competition (by design, perhaps—in my limited experience, USA Dance regulations seem to be the standard

even for non-USA Dance events) but had a new mix of faces and even more fancy dresses. The floor was sparsely populated in comparison to the collegiate competitions I've been to. There was only one heat for each category, and sometimes different levels of the same style were on the floor at the same time. The time I spent dancing was much more condensed, which was both a blessing and a curse: my feet thanked the timeline, but I wanted to keep on dancing. Thankfully, my ballroom itch was quickly scratched by the spectacular evening show.

I can only imagine what other firsts will come my way as I continue my journey in this wonderful world of ballroom dance. **E**

Dance with Us America Showcase

Dance with Us America's May 31st showcase was a hit! Students relished the opportunity to show off their dancing skills to family and friends in the audience.



Long-time dance advocate and pro/am star Shannon Yee shows her finest with partner Gene Bersten at the Dance with Us America Showcase.



Love for Teaching, Love for Dance

The Dance with Us America Family

BY MEREDITH MCKINNEY



ONCE, MY FRIEND RUSSELL watched a lesson my partner Matt and I had with Dance with Us America co-owner and instructor Elena Bersten. He said, “You’re so strict!”

Elena replied, “I’m not strict; I’m loving!”

Ever since hearing her say that, I have seen it confirmed. Especially

in light of how much Elena knows about dance, I am constantly amazed at her patience. When she taught at the University of Minnesota Ballroom Dance Club last year, I couldn’t help wondering how she could remain so focused and optimistic when teaching so many fledgling dancers such basic technique.

Another thing that impresses me about Elena is that she seems happy just to get people dancing. For example, she seemed pleased when, on the day of Dance with Us America’s showcase, I asked if Matt and I could participate in Latin rounds even though we had not practiced our routines together in months. I also observed a group of her young students dancing in a circle, and she said, “Who was smiling the most?” and awarded him a prize.

During one of the rounds, I saw Elena come down from the stage to dance with one of her students whose partner was missing. Seeing that somehow struck a chord with me. You might say teachers are supposed to dance with their students, but it’s not like those kids were dancing pro/am. I’m pretty sure that girl had an amateur partner who just wasn’t at the showcase. Elena didn’t need to join her student on the floor and make her feel included; she chose to. It just felt like a family, seeing all those kids dancing out on the floor with Elena joining in. And I got to be a part of it. I was there to dance with a formation team taught by Elena, and therefore, I got to be a member of the Bersten dance family, a family that inspires and encourages each other.

Being at the showcase and at Dance with Us America has shown me that the Berstens have something special, into which I am blessed to have been welcomed. While I am considering leaving Minneapolis in September, I will not forget the experiences I have had in the dance community here. ■

A Dance with Us America Limerick

BY ALEX SICK AND JORDAN SICK

THERE ONCE WAS A TEACHER NAMED GENE;
his dancing is always pristine.
He dances with flair—
all girls surely stare.
To dance with him is their dream.

Elena is a teacher of mine.
Her dancing is simply divine.
She dances with Gene,
a gorgeous routine.
It's her job to keep him in line! E



Dancing Classrooms Coming to Minnesota!

BY ANDREA MIRENDA AND EMBER REICHGOTT JUNGE



HEATHER DIDN'T HAVE A HAPPY childhood. The challenges in her family caused her so much trauma that she rarely spoke. Some thought she was mute. Then her mother found a way to enroll her in dance classes—ballet, jazz, tap.

"Dance transformed my life," she told us. "Without dance, I don't know where I would be today." Heather continued to dance over the following

decades and even trained to be a ballroom dance instructor but decided that wasn't for her. "I wanted to work with children, not adults," she said. "I wanted the children to have the same experience I had."

We are delighted that Heather has joined our newly formed Minnesota nonprofit Heart of Dance as our newest teaching artist bringing Dancing Classrooms to fifth-graders in

Minnesota. We invite you to join us on this exciting journey.

Maybe you've seen *Mad Hot Ballroom*, an award-winning documentary capturing the Dancing Classrooms journey from classroom experience to the culminating Colors of the Rainbow Team Match. Or maybe you've seen *Dancing in Jaffa*, a feature-length documentary released in 2014 depicting founder Pierre Dulaine's work in bringing

ballroom dance to fifth-grade Israeli Jewish and Palestinian children in his hometown of Jaffa. (The lasting friendships bridging the divide bring tears to your eyes). Since 1994, Dancing Classrooms has reached almost five hundred thousand children in hundreds of schools in twenty-four cities across the United States and five sites internationally.

Dancing Classrooms is now coming to Minnesota! Heart of Dance has been granted a license from global Dancing Classrooms to become its thirtieth site. When we set our goal of ten classrooms of fifth-graders for each semester of the 2015-2016 school year, Dancing Classrooms thought we were “ambitious;” they don’t know Minnesota! Today we have eighteen of twenty classrooms confirmed or pending confirmation for the coming school year. We hope to exceed our goal so that even more fifth-graders can participate in our inaugural year.

The semester curriculum includes two forty-five-minute dance classes each week for ten weeks. But Dancing Classrooms does more than teach ballroom and Latin dance steps: the program is about young people overcoming social anxieties and learning gender respect, conflict resolution, teamwork, and social etiquette. It is a highly developed curriculum that is integrated into other subjects like cultural studies, writing, visual arts, music, math, and physical education. Dancing Classrooms teaching artists collaborate with school teachers to connect the program to the rest of the curriculum. The results are clear. Research has shown that Dancing Classrooms:

- Increases self-confidence and self-esteem
- Increases student awareness of other cultures

- Increases student physical development, coordination, and participation in physical activity
- Has a positive impact on variables that lead to childhood obesity
- Meets national recommendations of at least fifty percent class time in moderate to vigorous physical activity

We are delighted with the interest we’ve seen from educators in public district schools, charter schools, and private schools in the Twin Cities area and beyond. We are pleased to work with allies like the Cowles Center for Dance and Performing Arts, the Perpich Center for Arts Education, and a variety of prospective funding groups. But we need your help to make this successful.

Here’s how you can help!

Introduce us to your favorite educators!

Would you like to see Dancing Classrooms come to your former elementary school or the school your child, niece, or grandchild attends? We still have room for additional schools each semester in 2015-2016 in the Twin Cities area. Now is the time to connect us with your school principal or teacher friends! Yes, each school is asked to contribute to the cost of the classroom—usually around \$2,000 per classroom—but don’t let funding stop anyone. Heart of Dance provides assistance to school leaders and helps them identify fundraising opportunities outside their normal budget through local businesses, vendors, parents, and other local school-based donors.

Connect us with potential sponsors!

Maybe you know someone who is passionate about bringing dance to children at their neighborhood school and would consider becoming a school sponsor. Let us know! We’ll do the rest.

Build a post-Dancing Classrooms pipeline!

How can we keep our Dancing Classrooms alumni engaged in dance? Might we build an infrastructure together where dance volunteers mentor or “adopt” Dancing Classrooms alumni after their Colors of the Rainbow Team Match? Perhaps this would be of interest to our collegiate dancers. What a way to build our ballroom dance community of the future!

We founded Heart of Dance because we are passionate about bringing ballroom dance to those who haven’t experienced it and who stand to gain from its benefits, including young people, older adults, veterans, and those struggling with mental health issues. We begin our journey with this proven program for young people as a foundation for possible expansion to other future constituencies in Minnesota.

As founders, we bring experience as well. Andrea Mirenda is a ballroom dance educator of over twenty years who coaches, judges, and MCs and was long-time owner of several studios. Ember Reichgott Junge is an amateur ballroom dance student, lawyer, former state senator, nonprofit executive, and development professional who currently serves as a national consultant in nonprofit board governance and charter schools.

Would you like to join us and help build Minnesota’s future ballroom community? Send us an email at HeartofDanceMN@outlook.com or contact Andrea at 651.283.6799 or Ember at 612.750.1262 to learn more. Or check out our booth at the Twin Cities Open!

Dancing Classrooms of Minnesota is about transforming young lives one step at a time. Thank you for your support; it will make all the difference! **E**

Chalk Zone

Making the Most of Summer on Campus

BY HANNAH ALYEA



SUMMER—A TIME FOR BEACHES, vacations, basking in the sun with friends, and having as much fun outside as possible before Minnesota, once again, becomes a frozen tundra. School is generally the place students are happy to be free of during the summer season, but that is where you'll find me. Before you start feeling bad for someone still on campus this time of year, I promise there's a good reason.

My friend and I have taken the campus grounds, chalk in hand, music jamming. This summer, we have been involved in projects geared towards promoting the University of Minnesota Ballroom Dance Club (which can prove to be difficult when most students are enjoying their summer as far from campus as possible), mostly because incoming freshmen are coming for orientation. Our job is to chalk the



Photos by Alexzandra Enger

campus with bright colors, pictures, and phrases like, "You don't have to be a fancy pants to learn how to dance!" with the hope that these fun images might stick with them until they return seeking clubs to join.

I really enjoy this process, because not only do I get to be outside soaking up some sun, but I also get the opportunity to talk to a lot of students, parents, and even some faculty about ballroom dancing. The most interesting thing is that there is no specific type of person interested in ballroom. I have seen a large variety of people show interest in partner dancing, which is heartening. It never ceases to delight me that, within all of us, there seems to be a desire to dance, and I don't just mean twerking. **E**



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