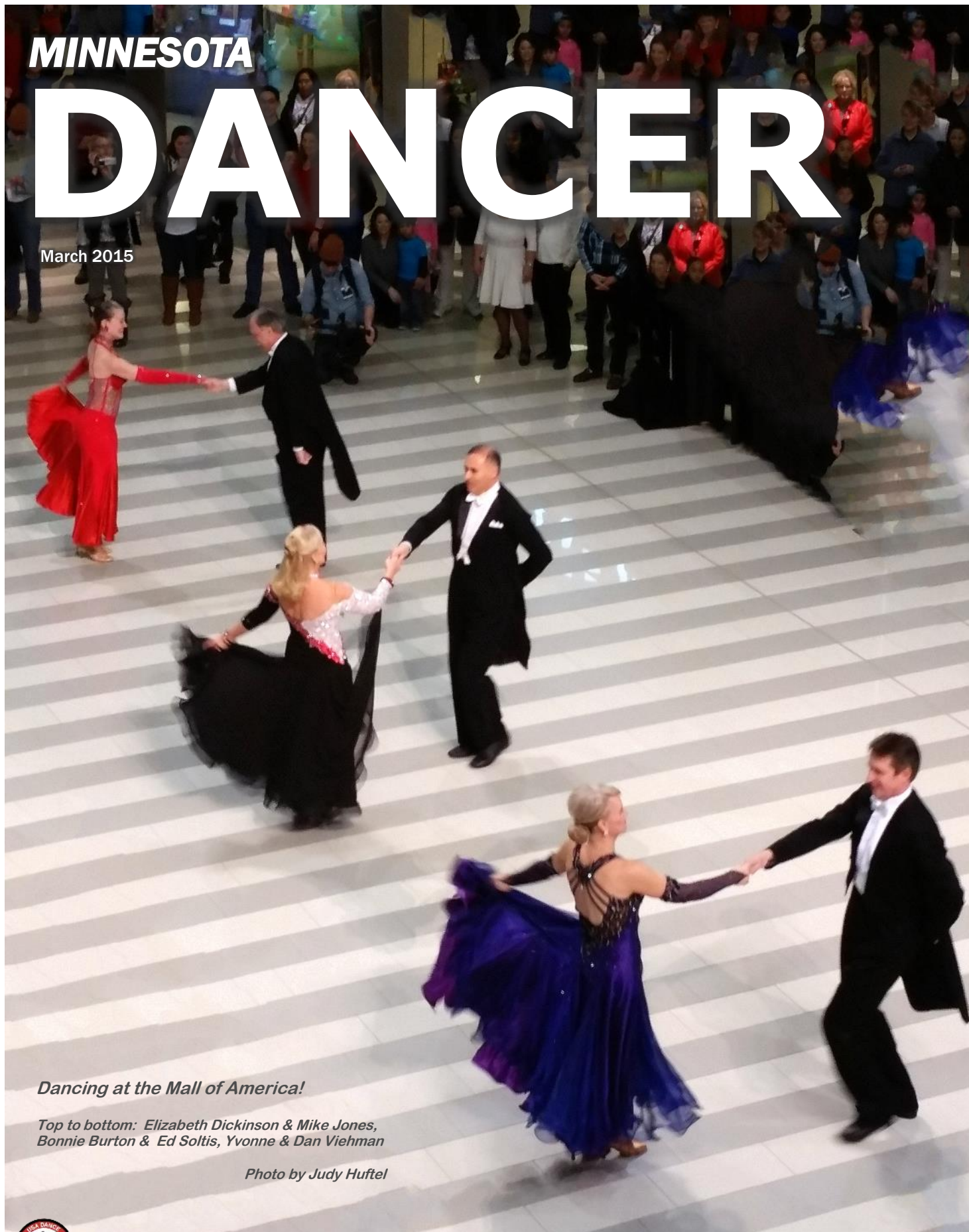


MINNESOTA

DANCER

March 2015



Dancing at the Mall of America!

*Top to bottom: Elizabeth Dickinson & Mike Jones,
Bonnie Burton & Ed Soltis, Yvonne & Dan Viehman*

Photo by Judy Huftel



Official publication of USA Dance Minnesota Chapter #2011



A Night in HAVANA!

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Beginner Waltz



Sunday, March 1 — 2:00 pm
Sunday, March 8 — 2:00 pm
Sunday, March 15 — 2:00 pm
Sunday, March 22 — 2:00 pm

Classes with Shinya McHenry at

DanceLife Ballroom

6015 Lyndale Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55419
612.345.4219



Check out our website:

www.usadance-minnesota.org

Contact us:

info@usadance-minnesota.org

Project Dance Minnesota offers free dance instruction to members of USA Dance. Non-members pay \$5. Become a member of USA Dance at membership.usadance.org. A different professional instructor teaches a new dance at a different location every month.

DANCER'S NIGHT OUT

Want to see your dance listed here? Email the details to newsletter@usadance-minnesota.org.

Sun 3/1 USA Dance Minnesota Beginner Waltz Lesson with Shinya McHenry; 2:00 PM; \$5 or Free to USA Dance Members! DanceLife Ballroom, 6015 Lyndale S., www.usadance-minnesota.org

TC Rebels Swing Dance, Social Dance Studio, 7–10:30, 3742-23rd Ave S, Mpls, www.socialdancestudio.com

First Sunday Dance at Tapestry, 6–9:30, \$7–\$10, Shinya McHenry teaching Hustle, 3748 Minnehaha Ave S, Mpls, www.tapestryfolkdance.org

Pizza Practice Party, 7-9, American Classic Ballroom, \$10/\$8 for ACB private students and USA Dance members, 550 Market St, Chanhassen, www.acballroom.com

Mon 3/2 Social Dance Studio West Coast Swing Social, 9:30–11, 3742 23rd Ave S, Mpls, www.socialdancestudio.com

Tue 3/3 Social Dance Studio Salsa Social, 8:30–9:30, 3742 23rd Ave S, Mpls, www.socialdancestudio.com

Wed 3/4 Dancers Studio WCS Party 8–9, 415 Pascal St N, St Paul, 651-641-0777, www.dancersstudio.com

Cinema Ballroom Practice Party, 8–9, 1560 St Clair Ave, St Paul, 651-699-5910, www.cinemaballroom.com

Thu 3/5 Dancers Studio Dance Party 7:30–9, 415 Pascal St N, St Paul, 651-641-0777, www.dancersstudio.com

Social Dance Studio Late Night Swing 10pm-2am, 3742 23rd Ave S, Mpls, www.socialdancestudio.com

Fri 3/6 DanceLife Ballroom Variety Dance, 8–9:30, 6015 Lyndale S, Mpls, 612-345-4219, www.dancelifeballroom.com

Social Dance Studio Club Salsero, 8-11, 3721-23rd Ave S, Mpls, www.socialdancestudio.com

Sat 3/7 Social Dance Studio First Saturday Swing Dance, 7:30–12:30, Live Swing Band, Lesson, 3721-23rd Ave S, Mpls, www.socialdancestudio.com

DanceLife Ballroom 1st Saturday of the Month Dance, 7–10, 6015 Lyndale S, Mpls, 612-345-4219, www.dancelifeballroom.com

Sun 3/8 USA Dance Minnesota Beginner

Waltz Lesson with Shinya McHenry; 2:00 PM; \$5 or Free to USA Dance Members! DanceLife Ballroom, 6015 Lyndale S., www.usadance-minnesota.org

Cinema Ballroom Sunday Night Dancing with Jerry O'Hagan and His Orchestra, 6:15PM–10, 1560 St Clair Ave, St Paul, 651-699-5910, www.cinemaballroom.com

Mon 3/9 Social Dance Studio West Coast Swing Social, 9:30–11, 3742 23rd Ave S, Mpls, www.socialdancestudio.com

Tue 3/10 Social Dance Studio Salsa Social, 8:30–9:30, 3742 23rd Ave S, Mpls, www.socialdancestudio.com

Dancelife Ballroom Newcomer Party, 8–9PM, 6015 Lyndale S, Mpls, 612-345-4219, www.dancelifeballroom.com

Wed 3/11 Cinema Ballroom Practice Party, 8–9, 1560 St Clair Ave, St Paul, 651-699-5910, www.cinemaballroom.com

Dancers Studio WCS Party 8–9, 415 Pascal St N, St Paul, 651-641-0777, www.dancersstudio.com

Thu 3/12 Dancers Studio Dance Party 7:30–9, 415 Pascal St N, St Paul, 651-641-0777, www.dancersstudio.com

Social Dance Studio Late Night Swing 10pm-2am, 3742 23rd Ave S, Mpls, www.socialdancestudio.com

Fri 3/13 DanceLife Ballroom Variety Dance, 8–9:30, 6015 Lyndale S, Mpls, 612-345-4219, www.dancelifeballroom.com

Social Dance with Scott Anderson 8-10, Morningside Church, 4201 Morningside Rd., Edina, MN

So. MN USA Dance, Lesson & Dance, 7-10:30, The Castle, 121 N. Broadway, Rochester, MN. www.somnusadance.org

Sat 3/14 Café Bailar Dance Party, 7:30–11:30, Balance Pointe Studio, 5808 W 36th St, St. Louis Pk, www.cafebailar.com

Sun 3/15 USA Dance Minnesota Beginner Waltz Lesson with Shinya McHenry; 2:00 PM; \$5 or Free to USA Dance Members! DanceLife Ballroom, 6015 Lyndale S., www.usadance-minnesota.org

TC Rebels Swing Dance, Social Dance Studio, 7–10:30, 3742-23rd Ave S, Mpls,

www.socialdancestudio.com

Third Sunday Dance at Tapestry, 6–9:30, \$7–\$10, Hustle with Duayne Wincell, live music by Café Accordion Orchestra, 3748 Minnehaha Ave S, Mpls, www.tapestryfolkdance.org

Pizza Practice Party, 7-9, American Classic Ballroom, \$10/\$8 for ACB private students and USA Dance members, 550 Market St, Chanhassen, www.acballroom.com

Mon 3/16 Social Dance Studio West Coast Swing Social, 9:30–11, 3742 23rd Ave S, Mpls, www.socialdancestudio.com

Tue 3/17 Social Dance Studio Salsa Social, 8:30–9:30, 3742 23rd Ave S, Mpls, www.socialdancestudio.com

Cinema Ballroom Practice Party, 8–9, 1560 St Clair Ave, St Paul, 651-699-5910, www.cinemaballroom.com

Dancers Studio WCS Party 8–9, 415 Pascal St N, St Paul, 651-641-0777, www.dancersstudio.com

Thu 3/19 Dancers Studio Dance Party 7:30–9, 415 Pascal St N, St Paul, 651-641-0777, www.dancersstudio.com

Social Dance Studio Late Night Swing 10pm-2am, 3742 23rd Ave S, Mpls, www.socialdancestudio.com

Fri 3/20 DanceLife Ballroom Variety Dance, 8–9:30, 6015 Lyndale S, Mpls, 612-345-4219, www.dancelifeballroom.com

Social Dance Studio Club Salsero, 8-11, 3721-23rd Ave S, Mpls, www.socialdancestudio.com

Dancers Studio Spring Showcase 7–10:30PM, 415 Pascal St N, St Paul, 651-641-0777, www.dancersstudio.com

LYNNE'S DANCE NEWS

Dance events for *every* day of the week.
Updated daily.

[http://www.organizersonduty.com/
testimonials.html](http://www.organizersonduty.com/testimonials.html)

Dance address book also on the website

Variety Dance with Scott Anderson, 7-10, Ballroom & Latin Dance Club, 1103 W. Burnsville Pkwy., Burnsville

Sat 3/21 Linden Hills Dancing Club-dancing couples. DanceLife Ballroom, 6015 Lyndale S, Mpls, 6:30 -10:30. Lesson, dancing with Shinya McHenry. Dessert/ coffee. First visit \$10/couple. Reserve: 651-636-9747 or www.LindenHillsDancingClub.org.

Sat 3/21 Monthly USA Dance Minnesota, Cinema Ballroom, 7-11; \$5-\$7-\$10; 1560 St Clair Ave, St Paul, 651-699-5910, www.cinemaballroom.com

Sun 3/22 USA Dance Minnesota Beginner Waltz Lesson, Shinya McHenry; 2:00 PM; \$5 or Free to USA Dance Members! DanceLife Ballroom, 6015 Lyndale S., www.usadance-minnesota.org

Costa Rica Ballroom Showcase, 1:00-4:00PM; \$25 cover; 580 Mainstreet, Hopkins, MN, 952-303-3339, www.costaricaballroom.com

Cinema Ballroom-Jerry O'Hagan Orchestra, 6:15PM-10, 1560 St Clair Ave, St Paul, 651-699-5910, www.cinemaballroom.com

Mon 3/23 Social Dance Studio West Coast Swing Social, 9:30-11, 3742 23rd Ave S, Mpls, www.socialdancestudio.com

Tue 3/24 Social Dance Studio Salsa Social, 8:30-9:30, 3742 23rd Ave S, Mpls, www.socialdancestudio.com

Wed 3/25 Dancers Studio WCS Party 8-9, 415 Pascal St N, St Paul, 651-641-0777, www.dancersstudio.com

Cinema Ballroom Practice Party, 8-9, 1560 St Clair Ave, St Paul, 651-699-5910, www.cinemaballroom.com

Thu 3/26 Dancers Studio Dance Party 7:30-9, 415 Pascal St N, St Paul, 651-641-0777, www.dancersstudio.com

Social Dance Studio Late Night Swing 10pm-2am, 3742 23rd Ave S, Mpls, www.socialdancestudio.com

Fri 3/27 DanceLife Ballroom Variety Dance, 8-9:30, 6015 Lyndale S, Mpls, 612-345-4219, www.dancelifeballroom.com

Sat 3/28 Café Bailar Dance Party, 7:30-11:30, Costa Rica Ballroom , 816 Main St, Hopkins, cafebailar.com

Sun 3/29 TC Rebels Swing Dance, Social Dance Studio, 6-7:00, 3742-23rd Ave S, Mpls, www.socialdancestudio.com

Mon 3/30 Social Dance Studio West Coast Swing Social, 9:30-11, 3742 23rd Ave S, Mpls, www.socialdancestudio.com

Variety Dance with Scott Anderson & Shinya McHenry, 7-9, DanceLife Ballroom, 6015 Lyndale S., Mpls.

Tue 3/31 Social Dance Studio Salsa Social, 8:30-9:30, 3742 23rd Ave S, Mpls, www.socialdancestudio.com

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USA Dance-Minnesota Chapter #2011

MONTHLY DANCES

BECOME A MEMBER OF AT OUR DANCE AND GET IN FREE!
www.usadance-minnesota.org

MARCH

Saturday, March 21

7-8 pm lesson: Waltz
Instructor: TBD
8-11 pm Variety Dance Music

\$7 USA Dance members
\$5 Students under 25 with ID
\$10 Non-members

Cinema Ballroom
1560 St. Clair Ave.
St. Paul, MN

APRIL

Saturday, April 18

7-8 pm lesson:
Instructor:
8-11 pm Variety Dance Music

\$7 USA Dance members
\$5 Students under 25 with ID
\$10 Non-members

LOCATION TO BE DETERMINED

MAY

Saturday, May 16

7-8 pm lesson:
Instructor:
8-11 pm Variety Dance Music

\$7 USA Dance members
\$5 Students under 25 with ID
\$10 Non-members

LOCATION TO BE DETERMINED

USA DANCE MINNESOTA HOT-LINE

651-483-5467

www.usadance-minnesota.org

Call for information on dance events. Leave a message for membership information.

Dancer

February 2015

An Official Publication of
USA Dance-Minnesota Chapter #2011



USA Dance: Who Are We?

We are a nonprofit organization that promotes ballroom dancing. The Minnesota chapter, USA Dance Minnesota Chapter #2011, was formed in 1991. Membership in USA Dance is open to dancers of all levels.

USA Dance Minnesota Chapter #2011 sponsors monthly dances and other special dance events. Members receive discounts on admission to monthly dances, as well as other benefits.

The *Minnesota Dancer* is published monthly by the USA Dance Minnesota Chapter #2011, providing information and news about ballroom dancing. Subscriptions: \$22/year. Make checks payable to USA Dance Minnesota #2011; send to Jane Phipps, 9018 Zanzibar Lane, Maple Grove, MN 55311

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Mailing: Committee member

Contributions: Articles submitted may be edited for length, clarity, content. Photos should be high-resolution jpg, png, or pdf files. Email submissions to: newsletter@usadance-minnesota.org.

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USA Dance Minnesota Chapter #2011 Board Minutes

Tuesday, January 9, 2015. Submitted by Leslie Whitney. In attendance: Lee Whitney (President), Ed Soltis (Vice-President), Jane Phipps (Treasurer), Leslie Whitney (Secretary), Joyce Thompson, Tom Crable, Dan Fitzgerald, Karen Maldonado, Carol Post

Location: DanceLife Ballroom Studio, 6015 Lyndale Avenue South, Mpls., MN 55419

Call session to order.

1. Agenda – Unanimously approved

2. Director-at-Large Appointments and Seating – Motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved to appoint Carol Post and Jane Phipps as board members. They are officially seated as Chapter Directors-at-Large.

3. Confirmation of Compliance – Completed with the signature of each board member

4. Minutes – Motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved to accept the minutes from each board meeting held in December.

5. Treasurer’s Report – Motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved to accept the December treasurer’s report.

6. Reporting Requirements:

Director List – Lee will submit to Nationals 1099-Forms – no forms need to be submitted
Annual Report – Jane will submit
Financial Report – Jane will submit
Coordinator Budget Estimates – estimates due 2/28/2015

7. Other Appointments

Special Project Coordinator – Motion made, seconded and unanimously approved to combine three coordinator positions – Special Projects, Volunteer, and Social Dance – under one position. Joyce Thompson was unanimously approved to this position.

Fund Raising Coordinator – Motion made, seconded and unanimously approved to name Lee Whitney to this position. Jane will help to identify and write grants.

Chapter Treasurer – A motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved to accept Tom Crable’s resignation as treasurer. A motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved to appoint Jane Phipps as the chapter’s treasurer.

Ethics Oversight Coordinator – A motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved to appoint Tom Crable to this position.

8. Membership Coordinator Report

– 12/1013 – 98 members
12/2014 – 277 members
1/6/2015 – 287 members + 10 people who joined on 1/4/2015 at Project Dance

9. Project Dance Coordinator Report

– Karen is scheduling for the coming months. January Project Dance will be at Costa Rica Ballroom.

10. Social Dance Report

– Joyce is working on the monthly dance schedule for 2015. The board asked Karen to contact the U of MN Ballroom Club to submit a request for the dollar dance in February. Joy Davina requested that the West Coast Swing Club perform at the March monthly dance.

11. Communications Coordinator Report

– The chapter has filed a complaint with the National Arbitration Forum (FORUM) to regain our domain names: usadance-mn.org and sotncomp.com.

12. Special Projects

– Work has begun on the Tea Dance to be held in May.

13. Nels Petersen Grievance Status

– A meeting is scheduled for January 16th.

Next Meeting:

Tues. Feb 3, 2015, 6:00 PM

**DanceLife Ballroom,
6015 Lyndale S., Mpls, MN 55419 ▲**

Yes! I want to receive the USA Dance Minnesota Dancer Magazine! Please send my one-year subscription to:

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Address _____

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Please mail your check for \$22 with this form to: Jane Phipps, 9018 Zanzibar Lane, Maple Grove, MN 55311 Janep1951@gmail.com



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Leland Whitney, President, USA Dance Minnesota Chapter #2011

One new Ballroom dance studio in the Twin Cities has opened recently:

- Ballroom and Latin Dance Club in Burnsville, <http://www.ballroom-club.com/>.

Two dance studios have announced that they are closing their doors:

- Mill City Ballroom closes March 1. Owners Kate and Gordon Bratt will be looking for a new location while remaining very active in the community. Mill City will be missed but we are delighted that the Bratts will continue their artistic work here.
- Social Dance Studio closes April 30. Founder Joy Davina, will be missed. We thank her for making dance better in the

Twin Cities for the last 15 years.

Dance studios and professionals change, but the desire of local amateur dancers to be patrons of the arts through active participation in dancing is strong and growing.

As amateur dancers, we support our local dance professionals, true artists that they are, by attending local dances, taking group and private lessons, and by attending and/or dancing at the various studio showcases and dancesport competitions and workshops.

We are very fortunate to have so many wonderful dance studios and professionals right here in the Twin Cities metro area. ▲

Leland and Leslie Whitney, after competing eight times nationwide last year, have qualified to compete in 10 events at the USA Dance National Championships in Baltimore in March. They will be practicing hard this month!

Cherry Blossom Spring Showcase



Saturday,
April 11, 2015
6-10 pm

DanceLife Ballroom

\$15 in advance
\$20 at the door

612-345-4219

6015 Lyndale Ave S
Minneapolis, MN 55419

dancelifeballroom@gmail.com www.dancelifeballroom.com



DanceLife Ballroom

Dance is life · health · happiness

Warm, friendly, inviting - some of the most fun you'll have dancing in the Twin Cities!

- March 7, 2015 First Saturday of the Month Lesson & Variety Dance Party from 7-10 pm - \$10.
- Newcomer Party March 10, 2015 from 8-9:30 pm - FREE!
- Thursdays with Laia: Specialty Class of Styling & Technique at 7 pm & Advanced Rhythm at 8 pm (\$10 or 10 for \$80).
- Silver Technique at 3 pm on Saturdays!

**50 % OFF NEW STUDENT DANCE PACKAGE
Called The Too Good To Be True Package \$200
Includes 5 private dance lessons, unlimited
group classes & Friday night dance parties.**

GIVE US A TWIRL

OPINION:

BALLROOM DANCE HONORS AND CELEBRATES WOMEN

I was saddened to read a recent article in a local publication, where the author lamented that ballroom dancing "constantly dismisses and downplays the worth of a woman". The author enveloped her friends, family, and colleagues in this negative umbrella of influence cast by ballroom dancing, and credited the sport with "damaging gender schemas" and "empirically harmful behaviors". What an awful picture of ballroom dance! I was shocked to learn that a woman could possibly feel this way when dancing, and I would like to offer a very different perspective.

I am a woman and I have been dancing for seven years. I have danced at every studio in the twin cities area, I take private lessons every week, I compete in several competitions each year, I have done showcases and formations, I have worked with numerous local instructors, I have danced and competed in all four styles plus show-dance. I feel I am experienced enough and entrenched enough in the ballroom dance world to have a valid and grounded opinion.

To me, ballroom dance elevates and celebrates women. Women are an integral part of it. We're not there as an accessory, or because we forced our way into an otherwise man-dominated sport. We are required! We are half of a partnership that truly needs us. Further, we play a unique role that is ours and ours alone. Ballroom dance, by its very nature, showcases feminine beauty. The final result of a dancing partnership is far more than the sum of its parts; but take one half away and it is nothing. Women never need wonder if they are important to the team. They are hugely so!

My first impression of ballroom dance was that it was a woman's sport. Women dominated. Women outnumbered men in all my group classes. We are the ones trying to get more men to join. In my years of conversing with non-dancers on the subject, I have found that women think it's beautiful and fun, and men lack the interest. Not once have I heard a comment or opinion expressed that even remotely suggested men were the kings of this sport and women were dismissed or downplayed. We are the "commercials" for ballroom dance, the ever-willing extollers of its virtues, the ever-ready recruiters. We energize this sport.

I can only imagine that the "damaging gender schemas" is a reference to the fact that men lead and women follow. To me, this is an example of confusing "good and bad" with simply "different". Yes, gender roles are different in a ballroom dance partnership. But that's only a negative thing if you decide that one role is good and the other is bad. Not so in ballroom! Both roles are equally important, and neither deserves a value placed on it.

That's like trying to decide if your hand or your foot is more important, or even worse, if one is good and one is bad and therefore one has the ability to "dismiss or downplay" the other. The body functions well when each part does its role, rather than assuming something else's role is better and trying to do that instead. Similarly, a dance partnership functions well when each participant does his/her role--both are equally necessary, both are equally good.

Ballroom dance showcases women in a way

no other sport comes close to doing. We are taught that women are the picture of the dance and men are the frame. Men are deliberately showing us off! Rather than downplaying us, they are elevating us. Add to this the fact that every man is wearing an identical black suit and women are decked out and blinged in the fanciest shiniest attire we will ever wear, and you can understand why audience's eyes are usually drawn to the woman.

I have never felt more feminine than when I'm dancing. I daresay I've never felt more beautiful either. Life doesn't often give us the means to be so expressive with our bodies. If someone told me to strike a pose or give a smile or say a phrase to embody my femininity, I wouldn't be able to adequately convey it. But I could do that in dance. To me, it allows a basic part of my femininity to blossom. The fact that I'm dancing with a man makes me feel even more like a woman. The contrasts make the final presentation even more beautiful; the differences show the strengths of both sides. I have been to numerous dance events and I have never observed a woman dancing who seems to be begrudgingly participating in something that strips her worth. Countless women have discovered how enjoyable our sport is, and they are thriving in it. Ballroom dance is a sport that lets women shine--it honors us, celebrates us, showcases us, expresses us. I hope that, far from feeling downplayed or dismissed, its women participants feel and enjoy its thrill and beauty.

Lorie Hurst,
Minneapolis, MN





Bonnie Burton is Editor of Minnesota Dancer Magazine. She and her husband Ed Soltis have qualified in several events for the USA Dance National Championships at the end of March, 2015; and are working hard to prepare to compete.

EDITOR'S COLUMN

By Bonnie Burton

Two years ago, almost to the day, I had back surgery. A benign cyst the size of my thumbnail had attached itself to my spinal cord, inside my spine. It was large enough to press firmly on the nerve roots running down both legs; and it caused constant, excruciating electrical jolts of pain; like being plugged into an electrical socket!

Ed and I had danced at a ballroom competition a few months earlier in June, and I'd felt a little back pain, but nothing more than the average dancer might have. Sadly, by August, back pain was getting in the way of dancing; by October, I was having trouble walking due to excruciating leg pain.

Concerned I might become an invalid for life, and very much missing my normal activities, including dancing, I finally went to Tria Orthopedic, who diagnosed the problem with an MRI. They insisted on trying 'conservative', but ineffective, measures first (shots and physical therapy). By the end of February, 2013, I was BEGGING for surgery to get rid of the pain. I was frightened and worried I would never dance another day in my life; that the last competition in Baton Rouge was it - but that frustratingly, I hadn't known that at the time; so I had taken it for granted and hadn't 'savored the moment'.

As cliché as it sounds, it seems we must be on the verge of losing the things we love, in order to appreciate their value to us when we hold them in our hands. My take-away: never pass up an opportunity to dance, or do

something you love. It may well be your last chance, but by the time we figure that out, it's often too late to get a re-do.

Unlike some others, my story has a happy ending, thanks to modern medicine, a fabulously skilled neurosurgeon, and lots of physical therapy. I've been very lucky to live to dance another day.

And so I was grateful to be able to participate in the surprise Viennese Waltz performance event at the Mall of America this past month. What a fun adventure! The joy of being out on the floor, looking up at the whooping and hollering crowd in the balconies; feeling the music and the excitement, the thrill of performing; the satisfaction of a well-executed *développé*; to have been 'in the moment'.

In this issue, read about the preparation for the MOA Viennese Waltz event: the behind the scenes planning, practice, and detail that goes into producing this type of an event. Learn about Beyond Ballroom Dance Company's final year; read about how to choose a dance instructor; costume tips for body types; and an update on the new ballroom in Burnsville, MN.

Also, Dancing Classrooms is coming to Minnesota! You can read all about it in this issue to find out how you can participate or help this important initiative.

Happy dancing! ▲



DANCING CLASSROOMS

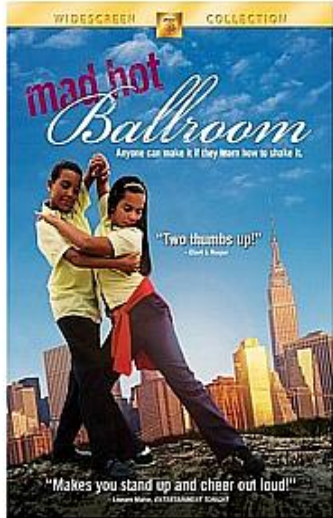
Coming to Minnesota!

By Andrea Miranda and Ember Reichgott Junge



Bringing the benefits of ballroom dance to 5th grade boys and girls

www.DancingClassrooms.org



Brought to Minnesota by:

Heart of Dance

HeartofDanceMN@outlook.com

As amateur and professional dancers, you know the mental, physical and emotional benefits of ballroom dance firsthand. You already know the transformational impact that partner dance can have on young people.

That's why we are delighted to bring Dancing Classrooms to area fifth-graders through our newly-formed Minnesota nonprofit organization, Heart of Dance. We invite you to join us on this 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 5th grade Israeli-Jewish and Israeli-Palestinian children in his hometown of Jaffa. Since 1994, Dancing Classrooms has reached almost 500,000 children in hundreds of schools in 24 cities across the United States and 5 sites internationally.

Now Dancing Classrooms is coming to Minnesota and the Upper Midwest! Heart of Dance expects to bring the program to area fifth graders in the 2015-2016 school year with ten classrooms each semester. The semester-long curriculum includes two 45-minute dance classes each week for ten weeks.

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 (www.DancingClassrooms.org) that is integrated into other subjects like cultural studies, writing, visual arts, music, math, and physical education. Dancing Classroom teaching artists collaborate with school

teachers to connect the program to the rest of the curriculum.

The results are clear. Research has shown 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 positive impact on variables that lead to childhood obesity; and
- Meets national recommendations of at least 50% class time in moderate to vigorous physical activity.

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

Here's how you can help right now:

Network: Do you know educators in the 10-county Twin Cities area, Rochester, St. Cloud, or even Duluth who are passionate about the benefits of dance and the arts and would like to bring this program to fifth graders in their school? Now is the time to contact us!

Volunteer: Do you have the time, passion, and experience to be a member of our Heart of Dance Board of Directors? Or can you help with specific tasks to implement our launch year and support our planning, marketing, website and program events, including the Colors of the Rainbow Team Match at the end of each semester?

(Continued on next page)

COMPETITION CALENDAR

(Dancing Classrooms, continued. . .)

Sponsor: Can you or your organization help offset the cost of the program for schools serving a significant number of low-income students? Each school is asked to contribute to the cost of the classroom, consistent with their resources, and some will need funding assistance.

Donate: Your (tax-deductible) contribution in any amount payable to *Heart of Dance* will help pay for costumes, training, print materials and more.

We founded Heart of Dance because we are passionate about bringing ballroom dance to those who haven't experienced it and who can gain so much 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 these other communities in the future in Minnesota.

As founders, we bring experience as well. Andrea Miranda is a ballroom dance educator of over 20 years who coaches, judges and MCs and was long-time owner of several studios. Ember Reichgott Junge is an amateur ballroom dance student of Scott Anderson and is a lawyer, former nonprofit executive and development professional, and is 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.

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! ▲

Mar 21, 2015

Phoenix USA DanceSport Challenge

Hosted by Phoenix Chapter #4033, Phoenix, AZ

Mar 27-29, 2015

2015 National DanceSport Championships

Baltimore, MD

May 17, 2015

MN Star Ball

Organized by Eliecer & Rebecca Ramirez, Medina, MN

June, 2015

NJ DanceSport Classic-Summer Sizzler—NQE 2016

June 6-7, 2015, Hackensack, NJ

June 26-28, 2015

Gumbo DanceSport Championships—NQE 2016

Hosted by Phoenix Chapter #4033, Phoenix, AZ

July 9-11, 2015

Twin Cities Open Ballroom Championships

Hosted by Scott and Amy Anderson in Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN

Sep 12, 2015

Kansas City Dance Classic

Organized by Matt & Ellen Pansing, Overland Park, KS

Sep 25-27, 2015

New England DanceSport Championships – NQE 2016

Hosted by MASSabda Chapter #3002, Waltham, MA

Oct 2-4, 2015

Carolina Fall Classic - NQE (2016)

Organized by Wayne & Marie Crowder, Charlotte, NC

Oct 30–Nov 1, 2015

Chicago DanceSport Challenge – NQE 2016

Hosted by Chicagoland USA Dance Chapter #2001, Chicago, IL

Nov, 2015

California State DanceSport Championship – NQE 2016

Date to be announced—Hosted by NorCal Chapter #4004



Photo by David Chin

Viennese Waltz at the Mall of America: Recipe for a Surprise Dance Performance!

By Bonnie Burton

Start planning this delicious treat five months in advance! Ingredients include 60 enthusiastic amateur ballroom dancers and a liberal portion of Strauss Waltz music; hire master chef Scott Anderson to mix up a great choreography sauce with a dash of American Smooth to spice things up; simmer and stir the mix twice weekly at practices in large secluded spaces; just before serving, garnish with glittering costumes and tailsuits; and with hair and make-up magic. Serve it up live at the Mall of America in front of an appreciative audience of hundreds of on-lookers and enjoy!

How great if it were that simple! The real story behind this, and any large performance event, is hard work. Plain and simple. That, and an incredible attention to detail. Team captains Yvonne and Dan Viehman have been coordinating the USA Dance Minnesota demos for years and they make it look deceptively easy.

Yvonne was contacted by the Mall of America (MOA) last fall to discuss a joint venture with the Minneapolis Institute of Arts (MIA) and USA Dance Minnesota. The MIA was preparing surprise events to celebrate their 100th anniversary, and they were also planning for a large Habsburg Viennese exhibit due to open in February, 2015. As part of their celebrations, they wanted a surprise ‘pop-up’ Viennese Waltz performance event. So where does one go to find dozens of skilled ballroom dancers? Why, USA Dance Minnesota, of course! They wanted to know if our organization was interested in partnering with them on this venture.

Yvonne contacted myself and Leland Whitney, officers of USA Dance Minnesota, to start the planning process. We were all excited about the possibility of a large fun project such as this. It was decided I would become team captain Yvonne’s assistant and helper. I knew nothing about planning a

large dance demo, but I was willing to work hard, and wanted to make myself useful and gain experience along the way.

The essence of this pop-up performance was to be that of surprise; random participation; beginning and ending suddenly with the appearance of spontaneity. The MOA and the MIA had a vision of what they wanted to see and they emailed a sample video to help us get started. Their initial vision included 25 couples doing a traditional Viennese Waltz. Even more fun was that these sponsors were willing to pay a stipend to fund the preparation costs for the event!

It was decided to hire professional dance coach Scott Anderson for choreography. Scott chose some Strauss waltz music, and he and wife Amy Anderson added some American Smooth patterns to spice up the Standard Viennese waltz moves.

Viennese Waltz at the Mall of America

The next step was to recruit experienced ballroom dancers – a tricky thing, when what you’re doing is to be a secret! We posted notices on Facebook; Yvonne sent emails to her lengthy list of dancers who have participated in dance demos with her over the years; I contacted everyone I knew from recent competitions and social dances whom I thought might know Viennese Waltz even a little bit.

In the end, we assembled a performance core group of 12 couples – a far cry from the original, desired 25 couples - to attend the first choreography lessons with Scott and Amy Anderson. This original group was comprised of silver level or better dance experience and ability. Competition experience, with its emphasis on technique was highly desirable.

Many of our performance dancers had formation experience, but some did not, and this presented another level of challenge to their learning. Mastering choreography is one thing; adding to that, the knowledge of where one had to be at all times in relation to other dancers during the routine, was another layer of learning.

We met with Scott Anderson one December evening last year to start learning the choreography and get the party started! In situations like this, video can be your best friend. While it’s not as beneficial as working with an instructor who can offer immediate feedback, at least it guarantees all couples are seeing the same example. So we taped video, and shared it with our teammates, so each couple could practice on their own, or take a private lesson, depending on their situation. We also held a session with Natalie Botes of American Classic Ballroom for instruction on skirt handling and to help with technique.

Yvonne and Dan were proactive in scheduling practices. Their motto was to get as much as possible from the instructors, and

then meet often as a group and work it, work it, work it. Several months of twice-weekly practice sessions were valuable – as much to get the routine drilled into our muscle memory, as well as to become accustomed to working with the group and getting to know our places in the line-up. We rented practice space in studios in the south and west metro and practiced evenings and weekends. A big thank you to American Classic Ballroom, Studio TimeOut, Tapestry Ballroom, and Williston Fitness Club for use of their space.

Speaking of our places in the line-up, we decided to arrange the dancers from tall to short. Perhaps this is the first time Ed and I (at 6’2” and 5’8”, barefoot), were not the tallest participants! That honor went to Dan and Yvonne Viehman (at 6’4” and 5’9”)

The level of detail that went into the planning process was quite impressive: the MOA representatives wanted to see photos of all the ladies ballgowns. They wanted to know if all the men had tailsuits? The ladies’ hair and make-up was done by Jana Rose. The Minneapolis Institute of Arts planned to videotape from all angles to create their promotional video. USA Dance volunteers were recruited to take still photos to commemorate the event. Sincere thanks to David Chin, Cathy Dessert, Scot Gore, Judy Huftel, and Mary Lou Konz for your gorgeous photos!

A few months into the process, Yvonne met again with MOA and MIA representatives, who specified they wanted a beautiful performance group, such as we were rehearsing. But they really thought that to get a good effect, we should be surrounded by support dancers dressed in street clothes, who looked like random shoppers and Mall guests, who would ‘spontaneously’ begin to dance. They requested an additional 25-30 ballroom couples! Apparently they believed we had a warehouse full of ballroom dancers waiting for the call.

(Continued next page)



DAN & YVONNE VIEHMAN

Dan & Yvonne Viehman met on a blind date in 1995 and they’ve been dancing and volunteering together ever since!

The couple’s experience directing large productions is impressive and wonderful. They have been coordinating dance performances and demos for almost 20 years. In 1998, they developed a production for USA Dance Minnesota called *Dancing the Night Away*, which included 100 dancers performing in 35 numbers! They produced a new show every year for six years, all with different themes. Dan and Yvonne invited dancers of all skills and abilities to participate. The shows played at the Hopkins Center for the Arts, had an annual budget of about \$12,000, and were entirely self-funded with revenue from ticket sales. Props were often built by Dan in his garage. Not only did they dance in the show, Dan and Yvonne were the directors, rehearsal coaches, and emcees! Incredibly, their contributions were all volunteer.

Dan and Yvonne continue to bring professionalism, organizational skills, and kindness to their work arranging dance demos for USA Dance Minnesota, including the holiday demos at local malls; and performances at nursing homes and service organizations. Each fall, they coordinate the large dance demonstration at the Mall of America for National Ballroom Dance Week.

In addition to their volunteer work as the USA Dance performance coordinators, they are also volunteer hosts of a show called *Music around the World - Polka Spotlight*, which is produced through Northwest Community Cable TV. They video several episodes on Saturdays, and the show airs each day from noon – 1 PM. *Polka Spotlight* plays to a potential audience of 1 million viewers, although most of its viewers are retirement age. Dan and Yvonne are often recognized as local celebrities by fans who ask them for their autographs!

Viennese Waltz at the Mall of America

MOA/MIA/USA Dance Viennese Waltz Participants

Performance Dancers:

Bernie & Scott Osborn
Bonnie Burton & Ed Soltis
Bridget & Jeff Knickerbocker
Dede Ouren & Yeun Chou
Elizabeth Dickenson & Mike Jones
Leslie & Leland Whitney
Linda & Tom Crable
Lisa Wu & Daniel Lai
Lorie & CJ Hurst
Stephanie Riley & Ha Tuong
Yvonne & Dan Viehman

Support Dancers:

Allison Lund & Jimmie Dillon
Amy Anderson & Tyler Bridges
Anjelica Montano
Celeste & Jim Gibson
Chris Garklavs & Stan Silver
Chris Trask & Yeun Chou
Choua & Cheu Lee
Dusty & Leslie Sarazan
Fran & Paul Stachour
Jackie Dalton & Russell Alliev
Jessica Schreier
Julie & Bobby Killey
Karen & Lance Boole
Karen Genetti & Gordon Frandsen
Karen Kettler Tepley & Mark Tepley
Karen Voels & Jeff Chin
Kathy Rippberger & Russ Scott
Roxanne Denysiuk & Bob Anholt
Suzi Blumberg

Choreographers:

Scott & Amy Anderson

Photographers:

David Chin, Cathy Dessert, Scot Gore,
Judy Huftel, and Mary Lou Konz

Team Captains & Rehearsal Coaches

Yvonne & Dan Viehman

Unfortunately, nothing was further from the truth. The dance event was scheduled on Valentine's Day weekend, guaranteeing that many couples were unavailable. At least a dozen dancing couples we knew were in Florida, or Belize, or Hawaii, or on cruises the day of the event, because that's what people in Minnesota do in February. Yvonne confided that she had a sleepless night or two, wondering where we would find the dancers. We needed to advertise, but didn't want to publicize what we were up to. We went back out to Facebook, sent emails, made promises, and offered bribes! I believe it's a testimony to Yvonne's and my persuasiveness, that we were able to recruit an additional 20 couples to be our support dancers! Our profound thanks to those couples who heard the call and met the challenge!

We were within a month of the event, we'd recruited our dancers; now it was time to put it all together in a few large group practices, including a dress rehearsal late the night before the event.

Here we go! Cue the Habsburg exhibit video on the gigantic screen in the Mall rotunda! Listen for the intro music, and here come the support dancers, led masterfully by Mark and Karen Tepley! Three performance couples dressed in ballgowns and tailsuits now move to the center to do some gorgeous lifts! (Thank you, Linda & Tom Crable, Lorie & CJ Hurst, Lisa Wu & Daniel Lai!)

The first song fades, and here are the performance dancers, cued to nonchalantly stroll to their places, while the support dancers retire temporarily to the sidelines. Ready, set, go!

The Strauss music fills the air and the performance group springs to action, dancing their first iteration in a large circular formation! When the repeat begins, one couple moves to the center of the circle, the support dancers again join in the dance, and the entire rotunda is a flurry of gorgeous, whirling dancers and Strauss Viennese Waltz music!

What a triumphant production! What a fun adventure! The joy of being out on the floor, looking up at the whooping and hollering crowd in the balconies; feeling the music and the excitement, the thrill of performing; the satisfaction of a well-executed *développé*; to have been 'in the moment'!

And then, as quickly as it started, it was over. All our emails, phone calls, lists, and months of pre-production planning, all for a 5-minute performance!

The story doesn't end here for these dancers. This group already has received requests to dance this routine again at other venues. And in doing so they will share the rewards of teamwork and *esprit de corps*; the feelings of pride, fun, and the satisfaction of supporting community institutions like the Minneapolis Art Institute; the satisfaction of raising funds for USA Dance Minnesota from generous sponsors; and perhaps most importantly, the joy and beauty of dance!

[Editor's note: Would you like to participate in dance demonstrations? Contact Yvonne Viehman at danvman@aol.com so you may be notified when dance opportunities become available!] ▲

Viennese Waltz at the Mall of America



Viennese Waltz at the Mall of America



Photos by David Chin Photography

Viennese Waltz at the Mall of America



Photos by Scot Gore



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For brunch reservations, send a check by April 28 with your phone number or email address, to:

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Tea Dance c/o Sharon Kennedy
4347 Abbott Ave. So.
Mpls, MN 55410

For information: 612-308-9022 or sk.dance8@gmail.com



Sponsored by USA Dance
Minnesota Chapter #2011



Ballroom Dance & Latin Dance Club, Burnsville, MN. Photo by Amy Anderson

I'm excited for you to meet Rose & Tony who just opened the new Ballroom and Latin Dance Club in Burnsville! It's Burnsville's first ever ballroom studio! Rose is the primary instructor and Tony DiPietrantonio, her life partner, helps her manage the business and operations. Rose and Tony are very excited with their new business.

Rose learned ballet and Chinese dance when she was growing up in China and discovered her passion for ballroom dance when she was a college student. Ballroom dance was very popular in China and it wasn't unusual to have dance parties during the day!

Rose worked for a university in China and taught Chinese-style ballroom and folk dance for a university program set up for the employees' entertainment. She eventually moved on to work in the Human Resource Department of an international education company. For many years, she ran a dance program that offered ballroom dance for the company's nearly 1,000 employees.

Rose moved to the United States in 2007 and settled in Rochester, MN. She pursued a professional career in ballroom dance instruction. She began training at Fred Astaire and trained to be a certified professional instructor after she passed her NDCA social bronze level testing. She is certified to teach both follower and leader

Burnsville's First Dance Studio: Ballroom & Latin Dance Club

By Suzi Blumberg

roles in a wide variety of dances including Waltz, Foxtrot, Rumba, Tango, East Coast Swing, West Coast Swing, Mambo, Samba, Cha-cha and Merengue.

Rose loves teaching students of all ages and abilities, with a focus on beginners. She has been teaching in the US for seven years and is a patient instructor, always keeping an eye on creativity and detail. She adjusts her teaching plan and speed to match her students' experience and skill levels. She enjoys watching her students overcome challenges. Her motto is: "Life is beautiful. I hope that by teaching others to dance, I can add to that beauty!"

After a year as a full-time dance instructor with Fred Astaire, Rose began teaching dance in five local community schools, and at a Chinese school. Three years ago, she moved to the Twin Cities and taught in her home, as well as in the community education program in Burnsville. Her dream was to open her own dance studio. She had many students and they often asked her where they could go to dance because there wasn't a dance studio in the area. So she and Tony decided to open a studio in the south area. They finally found a wonderful location in Burnsville, right off 35W and Burnsville Parkway, and Ballroom and Latin Dance Club had its grand opening on October 6, 2014.

Scott and Amy Anderson noticed that a studio was opening in the area, which is close to where they live, so they called and stopped by to meet Rose and Tony and welcome them to the area. Scott offered to help her promote the studio, and he is having three dance parties to make people aware of this wonderful new dance studio. The first two were on January 30 and February 20. The last one will be Friday, March 20. There's a lesson at 7:00-7:45

pm; the dance is 8-10 pm. Mark your calendar for March 20!!

If you haven't been to Ballroom and Latin Dance Club, you have to check it out! Lessons are very reasonably priced and there is a wonderful floating wood floor. There are weekend dances- Friday is variety dance and Saturday is Salsa- and you can buy a monthly or annual membership, and punch cards at a discounted rate, or you can just drop in.

Rose and Tony are hoping to draw in the local community to enrich their social life by providing affordable, healthy and enjoyable dance instruction in a friendly, relaxing and entertaining environment.

Ballroom & Latin Dance Club is willing to work with other instructors who wish to teach dance or other related fitness-style programs. Check out their website at www.ballroom-club.com for details.

I'm looking forward to seeing you there on Friday, March 20th! ▲



Rose is one of the owners of the new Ballroom & Latin Dance Club, located in Burnsville, MN.

Photo by Amy Anderson

USA Dance Minnesota Music

By Joyce Thompson

I have been involved with providing music for USA Dance since 1994. At that time we put together 2 cassette tapes of music for dances (remember those?!) We increased this to 5 cassette tapes to rotate every 5 months. Technology changed to CD's, for which we used variable speed CD players to adjust the tempos. In 1997, we purchased software that provided an avenue to not only change tempos but to edit out non-danceable sections, and rewrite the music to a CD, ready to play. Some music was taken apart, edited, and put back together, not necessarily in the same order.

The past few years most of the music has been downloaded onto a computer and played as is with a DJ in control. Most ballroom dance music CD's are international tempo making it difficult for beginner dancers.

The February USA Dance monthly dance moved to the next step in providing music for the dance. A play set was developed to include a prerecorded announcement of the dance, followed by edited music for appropriate tempo and length of song. The chair behind the DJ table was vacant for most of the dance. Imagine, push a button and dance for the evening.

I believe the process went very smoothly for our first run. A big thank you to Leland Whitney who located free software for the announcement portion, arranged the music, and set the volumes. This is a time consuming task.

We will be evaluating this new process and making changes to improve as we move forward. If you have comments or thoughts about the music played at the monthly USA Dances, please share them at info@usadance-minnesota.org. ▲



The February monthly USA Dance was at Costa Rica Ballroom.



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THE DANCING LIFE: Choosing a Dance Teacher

By Elizabeth Dickinson

I didn't exactly choose my first dance teacher. It had taken me so long to act on my dream of learning to ballroom dance that the mere act of walking into a ballroom—any ballroom—was enough.

I chose Cinema Ballroom initially based on simple proximity to my home. I told them I wanted to take a lesson. I seem to remember the receptionist asking me if I had a preference for any teacher, and since I didn't know any, they assigned me to a new teacher.

First lesson, free...hurrah!

And so it began. I had only taken a few community education ballroom classes with my husband, but never in a real ballroom. Finding you could take all group lessons for free during the week you had a private lesson was a huge bonus.

There was also huge leap in the quality of instruction compared to the community ed courses. Pretty soon I was taking every group class (and I mean every group class) for several years. Including social dance parties and outside coaches, the time commitment ranged from 9 to 18 hours a week.

I credit that time with helping me become the dancer I am today.

After the first year, my first teacher left. I was passed onto a second, more experienced teacher, and then chose to work with one of the studio owners. I continued to take as many group classes as I could, even re-doing beginning classes (during which time I quietly worked on technique since I knew the basic steps). Finally I chose to work privately at another studio.

If you're able to make the financial commitment for private lessons, it's a good idea when starting out to choose a studio where a private lesson will give you the added benefits of unlimited group classes. It truly will

develop you faster than almost anything else. (It becomes less important the more experienced you get, because—unfortunately—there are far fewer intermediate and advanced group classes than there are beginning classes...)

So why change teachers? Here are the top reasons in no particular order:

- 1) You've hit a plateau that you can't shake. (Plateaus are natural...but staying on one forever isn't good.)
- 2) You're not enjoying the process anymore (Again, it's okay to be frustrated occasionally, but it shouldn't be the ongoing norm.)
- 3) You hear great things about another teacher's ability in the styles you're most interested in learning or progressing in.

Ask other students you trust about their experiences with different teachers. If you're a competition dancer, go to competitions, and see how the teachers act with their students, and how well they place. Take a group lesson with the teacher you're considering to evaluate them. Take advantage of the fact that many teachers will give you a free private lesson so you can see if you gel with their personality and teaching style.

And remember, what works for you at one point in your dancing life may change as your priorities/goals change. The "right" teacher for one student at one time may be the "wrong" teacher for another student at another time.

When you're starting out, it's hard to leave one studio for another—there are memories and a social circle and the comfort of the familiar. Remember, you can always return for social dances while studying elsewhere. But sometimes it's necessary to leave the familiar to grow into the best dancer you can be. ▲

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, contact her at: elizabeth@pursueyourpath.com.

BALLROOM ON A BUDGET

By Bonnie Burton

Ballroom dance, like many other hobbies, can be a very expensive. For those who like to save a little money, or who seek value in everything they purchase, there may be ways to economize. Thank you, Anne LaTourelle, for this month's tips!

- Use group lessons to learn some basics which saves money and allows you to explore different teachers/studios.
- Purchase used ball gowns from local competitors instead of buying custom made.
- Purchase a regular dress and have it tweaked to be a ball gown.
- Find an amateur practice partner to practice what you learn in lessons/groups/with your pro.

- Record yourself dancing and have someone more advanced comment on it. You won't be able to see some things to start with.
- Work hard on basics to begin with. It will save you money when you get more complicated moves. Without the right technique on things like spirals, everything will be more difficult, and you'll spend coaching time down the road. Get the best you can afford to avoid developing bad habits that are hard to over-come later.
- Avoid pressure to take coaching lessons from out of town coaches unless you feel ready. A group lesson taught by the visiting coach is a good way to get a sense of their style and pick up what you can.

Whatever do to save money on your dance hobby, the entire dance community wants to know! Email your budget tips to newsletter@usadance-minnesota.org and we'll print them in *Ballroom on a Budget*. ▲

Volunteering to help at USA Dance Minnesota Events

By Joyce Thompson

Hello! I am the new coordinator for the monthly dances, special events, and volunteers for USA Dance Minnesota Chapter #2011. Karen Maldonado will continue her role as the Project Dance Coordinator. We need volunteers to assist in providing events for our dance community.

Volunteering is a great way to meet new people and rewarding in that it provides a valuable service to the dance community. We currently need volunteers for the following events.

Monthly dances:

- Greet, welcome, and check in attendees.
- Set up/cleanup. Chairs to be arranged for seating, pick up used water bottles at the end, so the location is inviting upon arrival and is clean on departure.

- Dance buddy. Wear a name tag indicating you are available and willing to dance. This helps new dancers and those who feel reluctant to ask someone to dance.
- Music/DJ. A computer has been purchased, music donated, and templates and guidelines developed to assist in providing dance music. Training is provided. Music is a key element for a successful dance.

Project Dance:

- Greet, welcome and check in attendees. Answer questions about USA Dance, Project Dance, and provide other dance information.
- Assist the dance instructor as needed and fill in as lead/follower as needed.
- Take photos.

The amount and length of commitment can be determined by you. Thanks for considering this! I look forward to hearing from you: Joyce Thompson at pmmaki@visi.com or 651.483.5456 ▲

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Deborah J. Nelson is the founder, president, and head designer of Satin Stitches Ltd. More costuming tips at: www.satinstitches.com

There was a recent news article about the addition of new designs to a local corporate giant – for plus-sized customers. The average size of American women is a size 14. That means there are plenty of women smaller and plenty of women who are larger than the standard ‘junior’ or ‘misses’ markets.

The “Bible” of fashion retail, ‘Woman’s Wear Daily’, reporter, Sharon Edelson states: ‘Target Eyes Plus Sizes...’ And then goes on to report that Target wants to grab a hefty piece of the rapidly growing \$17.5 billion plus-size market. They are really late to the game. And personally, I feel this statement was an intended, but unfortunate phrasing. Hefty and plus-size shouldn’t be in the same sentence.

I have been a part of that ‘plus-size market’ since my high school days and partially because of the lack of any viable choices for a fashion conscious woman, I went into the fashion/garment industry. Before my formal fashion design education, I was designing and creating for myself, as there wasn’t much in the way of options for a fashion-minded, plus-size teenager.

I’ve always created custom options for my clients, which include people of all sizes, who

FITTING DESIGNS

© Deborah J. Nelson/Satin Stitches Ltd.

haven’t found what they want on the racks of any stores. I know I’m biased, but there has been and continues to be, a definite lack of fashionable, flattering styles for the plus-size market.

Once I made the leap to entrepreneurship with creating Satin Stitches, I’ve always worked with creating solo and group garments that are flattering for ALL sizes and shapes, and have strived to create the most flattering options for individuals who either request dance costumes or wedding or evening apparel.

Flattering apparel is near and dear to my heart. I have not shopped at the non-existent plus-sized department at Target for decades, and have opted for specialty stores that HAVE offered flattering plus-sized apparel. Will I give the ‘new’ options at Target a try? Probably not, as I’ve become loyal to the retail establishments that haven’t ignored ‘people of size’ as Target has. I would often hear about a new line and a new designer they were teaming up with, but they never included plus sizes until now. They are a little late to the party, and I’m over it.

In street apparel and also specialty costuming, there are designers who understand flattering for plus-sizes and those who don’t. There are many options for flattering versus not-so-flattering designs, colors and fabrics. And being aware of your own best features and those features you would like to gloss over and camouflage is a must.

Here are some tips!

Generally speaking, design features or ‘focal points’ should draw the eye to the face or upper bodice area. Design features that highlight a waistline are perfect for those with a fabulous waistline. Design features that draw attention to your fabulous legs work for that purpose.

With any size range of women, there are four basic types of body shapes. The top-heavy,

the bottom heavy, the perfectly hour-glass figured, and the straight up and down shape. There are different design features that will flatter one or more of these body silhouette shapes. If you know your type, and have been dressing yourself for decades, you should know what silhouette that you have.

Don’t accent the body area that you feel least confident about. Accent the area of your body that you like the most. Me? I have no waistline, so no design feature will ever stop at my non-existent waist area. My daughter is top heavy, so she struggles to fit her bustline, while calling attention to her long, shapely legs. My mother is short, with a mostly straight up and down shape, so she strives for fashions that give her height.

Everything that we automatically do to show off our shapes to their best, with street apparel, you should also be doing with your personal dance apparel. If you shy away from sleeveless tops, you should also do the same with your dance costume. If you have a fabulous waistline – show it off with design features at your waist. If you have stunningly long legs – feature them in your dance costume. If you would rather not feature your lumpy and bumpy midriff – don’t pour yourself into a dance costume that is tight and telling, in this area.

When considering dance costume designs, be sure and take a look, and consider the view from the side and the back, in addition to what the front of the costume looks like. Especially with dance costumes, you will be seen from every vantage point, unlike a dinner dress where you are mostly seen from the waist up, on the front.

For more tips and information on flattering focal points in costuming, refer to my March 2012 article for Dancing Times.

<http://www.satinstitches.com/pdfs/articles/look-your-best/dancing-times-mar-2012.pdf>





Linda & Tom Crable at the Mall of America.
Photo by Scot Gore

Just before Thanksgiving, we received an e-mail asking if we would like to be part of a unique opportunity to dance Viennese waltz at the Mall of America for the Minneapolis Institute of Art's (MIA) 100th birthday celebration in February! Tom and I have been participants in the annual USA Dance Minnesota's dance demos at the Mall for several years, so of course we said yes. I had never been part of a formation team before, but we knew that Scott Anderson was creating and teaching the choreography. We were familiar with his style as he had been our teacher for five years, and we enjoy learning from him.

Viennese waltz is a very elegant and beautiful dance but it moves pretty fast. This routine goes for three minutes or so. At first it seemed to be a lot to take on, but after almost two months of twice a week practices, we got it down.

Viennese Waltz Formation Team Experience

By Linda Crable

We were surprised by the schedule for practices. After Christmas the project seemed to get bigger and more involved than we first thought. There was a lesson to work on arm styling and how to work with adding in movement with our skirts, and a polish-up lesson so Scott could see if we were all doing what he had in mind. We were not just dancing for ourselves as we usually do in a solo routine, but representing the MOA and MIA.

One of the requirements for participation was that each man have a tuxedo and each woman have a ball gown. I had sold my dress a year ago at Snowball so thought at first that I might be able to borrow or rent a dress. Fortunately, DORE Designs had a sale here just before Christmas and I found a beautiful, sparkly gown to debut at this event.

Tom and I are used to learning choreography and working on it over time. Practicing in a group of ten other couples was both helpful and frustrating for me. As we worked together, everyone seemed to want to get things right. There was an open exchange of ideas about what was working and what we might change. As things went along, we received video of the routine which I found useful. It was also good to practice in the different studio and fitness center spaces, as it helps me be able to adapt better.

The rotunda is large and very spacious so we

were encouraged to "go big" with the arm movements and try to remember to look up because there are people looking down at you.

There was a dress rehearsal at the Mall of America after hours the night before our performance. Some props were added as a visual center since the space is round and had no real boundaries. It was nice to be able to spread out yet still maintain our circle. The MOA representative and her staff were there to see how everything had come together and seemed pleased with what they saw.

On Friday, February 13th, I feel we had our "15 minutes of fame". There was a hair and makeup session, I felt good in my new gown and Tom looked very handsome in his tux. Both performances went well for us and for the group. I was surprised by all the people taking pictures and video from all different sides every step of the way. You can see the video promoting the *Habsberg* exhibit on the Minneapolis Institute of Art website. Two months of work pared down to a few seconds!

I'm not sure if I would do it again, but I enjoyed the experience of what a formation team can do and I met some very nice people. This group will be sharing our Viennese waltz at a couple of other events this year. It'll be fun to get together each time to share what we've worked so hard to create. ▲

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Beyond Ballroom Bids a Fond Adieu

By Deanne Michael

dance that allows for an entire evening to tell our tale. And what stories we've told!

We started our journey with a dinner party for seven where the antics of the characters were portrayed through the distinct characteristics of the different ballroom dances. We played, and challenged the genre by creating pieces that had an odd number of partners, or explored musical choices that wouldn't traditionally match the dances portrayed. We added an even more intricate storyline in creating Murder at the Green Lantern Saloon, based on St. Paul's colorful gangster history. We've told stories about the lives of random strangers interacting at a city bus stop, and we experimented with the idea of adding dialog in an adaptation of Cinderella. We've reprised company favorites like Nightingale and Red Riding Hood, which demonstrate that the same dances can be either poignant or slapstick depending on how we manipulate them.

BBDC has been a playground for dancers and choreographers to collaborate, create, and take risks. We started 12 years ago supported entirely by the local ballroom community who embraced the endeavor. Thank you! We now find our audiences are made up largely of non-dancers who have been introduced to this form of dance through our productions, collaborations, and outreach. The company has truly become an asset to the entire community.

We have had the honor of collaborating with outstanding arts organizations such as the MN Orchestra, The Metropolitan Ballet, The Nimbus Theater, and MacPhail Center

for Music. Our outreach programming has given BBDC the opportunity to impact the lives of numerous students by introducing them to ballroom dance with school residencies in the metro area as well as around the country through the Cowles Center distance learning program. Our workshops for students of BLIND Inc. support their goals of teaching life skills to students who have lost their vision. For over a decade we have continued our relationship with Project SUCCESS, a non-profit organization that serves Minneapolis/St. Paul public school students. Our programming has reached seniors through classes and performances in assisted living facilities, as well as workshops in partnership with the Alzheimer's Association Early Stages Meetup Group.

Alas, all good things must come to an end. The company founders are moving on to other endeavors and are extremely thankful to all of you who have supported BBDC with your contributions of time, money, and attendance at our shows. Beyond Ballroom has demonstrated what it means to stretch the boundaries of ballroom dance- it is a testament to our vibrant dance community, the strength of the arts in Minnesota, and the amazing talent of the artists who have graced BBDC with their gifts. Thank you all once again for a great run!

[Editor's note: there is one more chance to see the final performance and hang out with the company. BBDC will be performing their last show at the Rochester Civic Theater April 4th, 2015.] ▲

Deanne Michael is the Executive Director, and co-Artistic Director with Julie Jacobson, of Beyond Ballroom Dance Company.

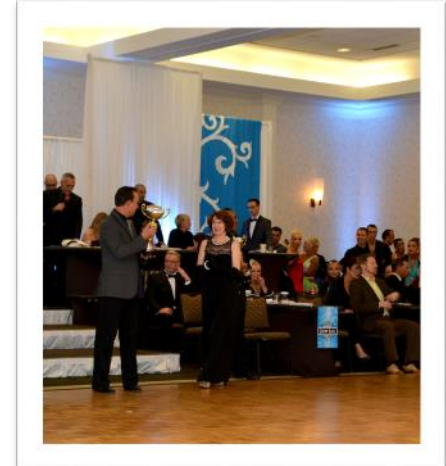
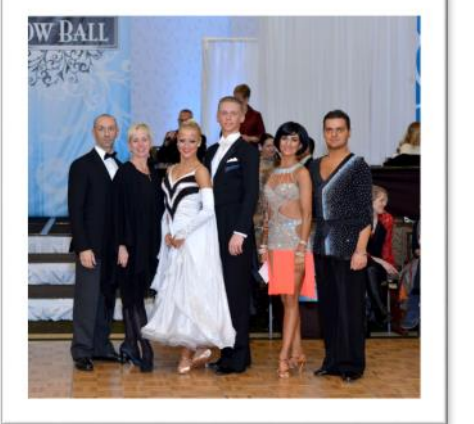
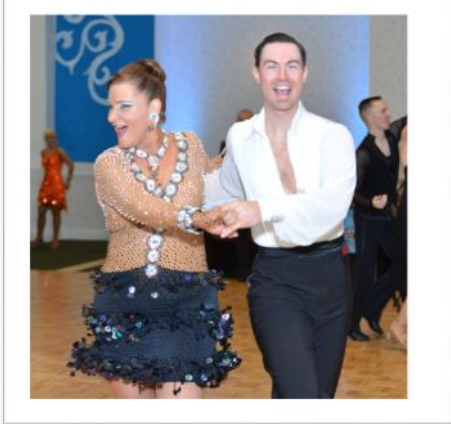
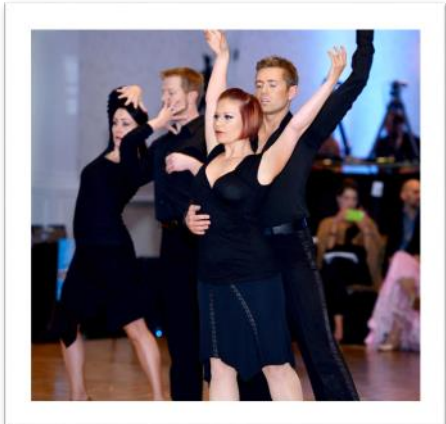
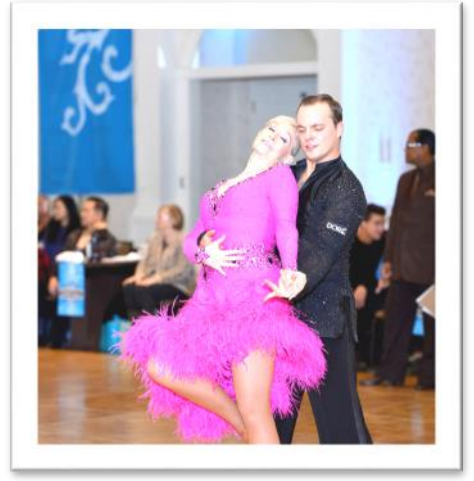
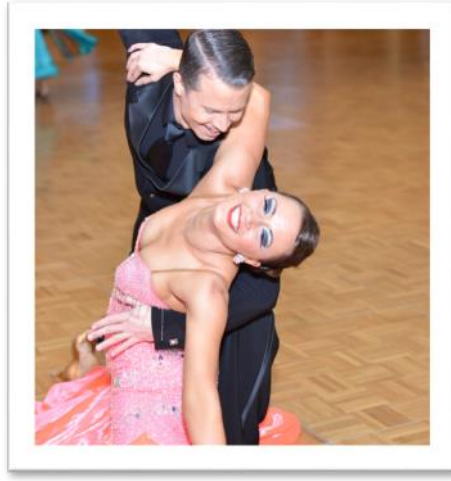
Many of you have heard that 2015 will be the final performance season for Beyond Ballroom Dance Company. It's with mixed emotions that we make this difficult decision. We are so thankful to all of you who have expressed everything from sadness and wistful nostalgia, to outright indignation. We love that we've touched people enough through dance that the company's future matters!

This was not a decision made lightly, but one that we wanted to make at a time and manner that felt right for us. We created something unique that had not been done before. We didn't just want to put competitive ballroom dance on stage. We wanted to be able to tell the intricate, touching and sometimes funny stories, of human relationships – exactly what ballroom dance is all about!

After years of only having a few minutes to tell those stories on the competition floor surrounded by other dancers telling their own stories, we embraced the format of concert



More Photos from Snow Ball 2015



Photos by Karin Lynn Photography

ASK DR. DANCE

Submit your questions to Dr. Dance at newsletter@usadance-minnesota.org.



What are the important things judges look for when judging different skill levels at dance competitions? For example, what skills are important at the bronze level, and at the silver, gold, open, and championship levels.

Donna says: Every judge will state what they are looking for in their own way, so I can only speak for myself when answering this question. For me, judging is a layered process that is determined more by who is on the floor competing, rather than what level they are entered in.

For example, from the very beginning levels on up I'm looking for timing, musicality, posture, frame, footwork, a natural quality of movement, visually logical leads and follows, and good grooming. Sometimes all of those elements are present in a number of couples. Sometimes few of them are exhibited.

If some of the competitors demonstrating all of these elements danced well, then I start looking at a more advanced tier of skills to help me make my decision: use of weight and counterweight; the characterization of each dance; the relationship within the partnership and with the audience; and a performance that is genuine and touches me.

From very advanced dancers and professionals, I'm also looking for that special something that I've not seen before -- the way that their unique personality coalesces with their interpretation to make me see the dance in a new and interesting way. Sometimes it is very exciting to judge when you are witnessing beautiful dancing that draws you in,

touches you, impresses you, and makes you want to watch more. Generally the dancers who can achieve this effect have a combination of great technique, a clear vision of what they want to produce, incredible balance and flexibility, a fantastic relationship with each other, and uncommon artistry.

While all competitors want to win, it's best to focus on your dancing, and strive to continuously practice and improve. You have no control over the judges' marks, but all sorts of control over your own improvement. Be the best that you can be, compete regularly over a period of years, and the rest will come. Good luck, and enjoy your dancing!

Paul says: Dancing is a skill and as in all skills, it will improve with time and practice. Judges expect a bronze level dancer to be aware of some basic patterns, to be on time with the music, have reasonably good posture and have a basic understanding of the elements of lead and follow. Having all of that, the difference in a placement may rest on a better use of the feet and/or better musical interpretation as well as staying true to the character of the dance.

At the silver level, expectations rise with the level of the dances. Floor craft, an im-

proved level of performance skills, and impeccable grooming are now a must if you want to do well. Elementary mistakes like incorrect footwork or dancing off time are now viewed as more serious infractions and will not easily be overlooked by judges. Consistency is more important than flashes of brilliance.

At the gold and above levels, judges are now also judging the couple, not just the student in pro-am competitions, and as such more is expected to excel. Partnership skills (developed over time) now play an important role; and good floor craft, which showcases that, indicates a more mature understanding of the art of ballroom dancing. Individuality is something that stands out and is something that a dancer develops over time. The correct use of feet, frame, and phraseology of the music is something that will appeal to the most discerning of judges and will ultimately result in success. Remember that no matter what level you compete at, it is also always a comparison to the other dancers on the floor. Sometimes the winner is the dancer that least offends. ▲



Donna Edelstein is a coach, judge, and organizer of the Snow Ball DanceSport Competition. www.donnawrites@msn.com

Paul Botes is a dance instructor, coach, choreographer, and judge. He is an owner of American Classic Ballroom, located in Chanhassen, MN.



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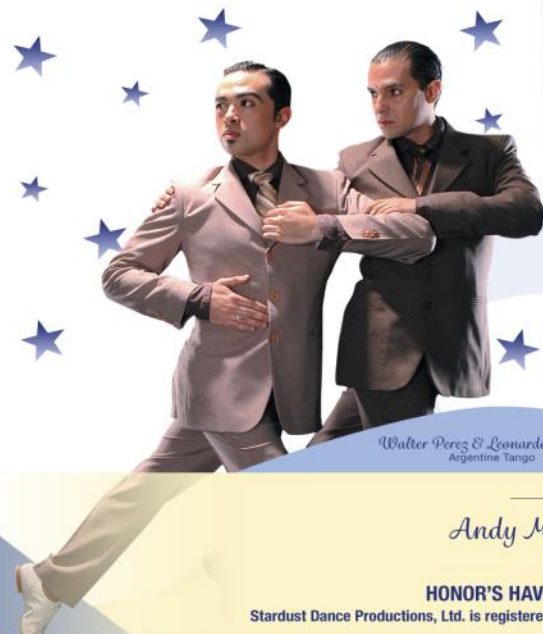


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