

BERKSHIRE BALLROOM CHAPTER 3045 USA DANCE MARCH 2016 NEWSLETTER



March Monthly Dances

March 4th, Votre Soiree Dance at Polish Falcons in Pittsfield, MA starting at 7:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. Admission is \$10.00 per person.

March 19th Berkshire Ballroom USA dance at the Masonic Temple, Pittsfield, MA. Ron Tritto will be doing the music and he will be teaching the Waltz at 7:00 p.m. General Dancing from 8:00 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. Admission: \$10 members, \$15 guests.

March 12th and March 26th, Evie Garstang will be holding dances at the Polish Falcons Club in Pittsfield, MA. She will be doing the music for both dances. Starting at 7:30 p.m. Admission is \$10 per person.

Sunday, March 13th Ron Tritto will host a Tea Dance at Berkshire South Regional Community Center from 2:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Admission is \$10 per person.

The ITAM hosts a weekly dance each Sunday beginning at 7:00 p.m. with live music. Go to the ITAM web site <http://itam564.org/> for a schedule. Admission is \$10.00 for non-members.

Also get calendar of dances in our area at <http://ballroomdances.org>

The web site covers dances in Western Mass. and NY. You will find scheduled dances for all the types of dance, not just Ballroom along with Teachers in the area.

Berkshire Ballroom and USA Dance Mission Statement

Our mission is to "increase the quantity and the quality of ballroom dance in the United States." We do this by organizing and supporting programs for the recreational enjoyment of ballroom dancing by people of all ages and to create affordable opportunities for the general public to participate in ballroom dancing in communities all across the country. A related mission is to educate the public regarding the physical, mental, and social benefits of engaging in a regular program of ballroom dancing.

We need your Suggestions

Do you have any ideas you would like us to try at the dances or themes for the dances?

We would love to hear them, after all they are your dances too. Please contact any of the board members. We will consider any suggestion **but you have to let us know.**



Outreach Committee

Our Outreach Committee has been going to local senior facilities in Lenox, Lee, Dalton and Pittsfield for the past two years. We schedule an hour where some volunteer dancers come and dance for the residents of the facilities. We have been asked back to many of them and enjoy interacting with the people there.

The facilities we have gone to are Kimball Farms in Lenox, Sugar Hill in Dalton, Melbourne Place in Pittsfield, Mount Carmel in Lenox, Timberlyn Heights in Gt. Barrington, Devonshire Estates, in Lenox, and Laurel Lake in Lee.

Thanks to our terrific volunteers for making the Sugar Hill event a good one. Nine dancers gave us all time to relax and talk to the Residents about different types of ballroom dance, with help from Ron Beals.

Our next dance will be on March 17th at 6:30 p.m. and we will be going to Melbourne Place in Pittsfield. Thank you to Sherry Roberts for asking us back.

Without volunteers there would be no program. This is one program our group does to give back to our community and bring ballroom dance to our seniors who cannot get out to enjoy our monthly dance. Many of these seniors were dancers and some like to get up and dance also. If you might like to participate we usually schedule these dance on Thursday at 6:30 p.m. Please contact me at 518-781-4165 or kpulver@taconic.net. **You are important!!!**



Dance Instructors/Classes in our Area

Cheryl Wendling holds lessons at Berkshire Community College. For more information on lesson dates, times and cost call Cheryl at 413-443-6263.

Steve Dessereau, teaches in Pittsfield, MA and Loudonville, NY. He has been dancing since 1975 and teaches American Smooth and Rhythm style dance. Call 518-434-4941 for information or stevied68@yahoo.com.

Alan Franco Teaches Salsa at Berkshire Yoga, Dance & Fitness at 55 North St, Suite 201 in Pittsfield, MA Call 518-766-4027 for information on Classes times and cost.

Jim Apicella at Danceland, in Latham, NY has a variety of Dance style Dances and Exercise Classes there. For a calendar of his events please go to <http://dancelandboomers.com/Calendar> or call 518-785-3888 for more information.

Hershell Allen holds a Friday night Dance Class at ABC Sports and Fitness in Latham, NY. Time: is 6:30 p.m. Place: ABC Sports and Fitness behind Trustco Bank on Johnson Road, Latham. Cost: \$15 per person Call 518-292-8360 for more info and privates.

Ron Tritto holds a monthly tea dance, group and private lessons. For more information on times, places, and cost go to his web site at www.Learntadance.com or call 518-766-4027

You can go to Ralph's web site where a list of teachers in our area with their contact information, type of dance lessons and costs is included. If you have a particular dance teacher you want included please let me know.

Berkshire Ballroom Dances for 2016

All of our dances are usually on the 3rd Saturday of the month (unless indicated differently) and are held at the Masonic Temple on South Street in Pittsfield, MA.
Time: 7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. Lesson
General Dancing till 10:30 p.m.
Admission: \$10 Members, \$15 Guests, \$5 for in-school students

Saturday, March 19, 2016

Music and lesson will be provided by Ron Tritto. The lesson will be a Waltz. Possible showcase also.

Saturday, April 9, 2016

Our Annual Black Tie “**An Enchanted Evening**” will be held at the Berkshire Hills Country Club in Pittsfield, MA. The Overtones will be playing for our dancing pleasure. The Overtones continue to provide classic, ballroom music for dancing. The group was formed in the early 1980's, spent several years as a trio, then morphed back into a quartet. The versatile group features various combinations of: drums, accordion, trumpet, sax, flute, keyboard and clarinet. The Overtones enjoy “**playing your music**”, and being a part of the elegance, grace and beauty of ballroom dancing. This dance is by reservation only.

Saturday, May 21, 2016

Music and Lesson will be provided by Ron Tritto. Lesson for the night will be East Coast Swing.

Saturday, June 18, 2016

Music and Lesson will be provided by Paul and Louise Giuliano.

What we have been doing

We are hoping to have showcases at some of our dances. Many of the people we have met dancing love to do them and we would love to give them the opportunity to show the rest of our dance community their fun dances they have come up with.

Our Board Members

Bob Romeo, President

bobromeo@berkshireballroom.org

Bob and Claire Hotchkiss, Bob Vice Pres.

Claire and Bob also do Special Events plans, get snacks and food for our dances, help set up and cleanup.

rhhotchkiss@verizon.net

Lynette Gagnon, Secretary/Treasurer

lynettegagn@aol.com

Sue Schwartz, Decorating committee for our dances

sschwartz01256@yahoo.com

Pat and Karen Pulver, Karen Heads up Outreach committee along with Pat & set up and cleanup at dances. kpulver@taconic.net

We are also looking for help either as a member of the board or volunteers.

The Board meets once a month usually on third Thursday of the month to go over the previous dance and plan themes and ideas for next month. We are looking for people who would be willing to help with special projects, ideas for new projects (ex: Black Tie, summer dances, and theme ideas.) and ideas for Music, either DJ's or bands.

If you are interested please contact us. We can use your help. **Please send your suggestions for the newsletter or articles to me at** kpulver@taconic.net **or call me at 518-781-4165 I will put them in monthly.**

MEET OUR BOARD MEMBERS

I would like to introduce you all to your USA Board members. This month I would like to introduce you to our Vice President, Bob Hotchkiss. Bob's Duties as Vice President according to USA National are:



Chapter Vice President

- ☐ Acts in place of President in his/her absence or incapacity.
- ☐ In the event of a vacancy in the office of President, VP assumes Presidency.
- ☐ Performs duties as designated by the President or Board of Directors.
- ☐ May be assigned to guide the board on managing the nomination and election process using the USA Dance bylaws, Article XII and Election Procedure.

On a personal note Bob wanted you to know this:

In the 1970's an interest in square dancing led to membership as a dancer and committee chair in the *Down County Squares*, a group headquartered in Gt. Barrington, MA. Professional responsibilities reduced the time available to participate and I eventually had to put away the string ties and pearl button shirts. However, the pleasure of membership in a dance community wasn't forgotten. There was a brief fling with disco when Olga Dunn offered instruction at Berkshire Community College. Retirement brought more time for leisure activities and about six years ago Berkshire Community College again stepped forward with a series of classes in ballroom dancing led by Chris Hookie. Dancing brought together a congenial group of people who shared a common interest and introduced my wife and me to the local venues where we could practice our new skills. When Chris's position with DCR required him to relocate outside the Berkshires, we began our first private lessons with Esther and Irving Mindlin. Our experiences with the Mindlins made apparent the social, physical and cognitive health benefits of ballroom dancing. Now that the Mindlins have retired as instructors, we have continued our dance education with Ron Tritto.

Berkshire Ballroom Chapter 3045 of USA Dance had been one of the organizers of events where, as beginners, Claire and I could practice our new dance steps. In a short time we developed an appreciation of the chapter's efforts to ensure that Berkshire area ballroom dancers would have good quality local dance opportunities. Approximately three years ago I became a member-at-large of Berkshire Ballroom's Board of Directors and began assisting with monthly dances and co-chairing special events (annual Black Tie and holiday ball). More recently I have stepped into the Vice-Presidency. **KEEP ON DANCING!!!!**



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4 Votre Soiree at Polish Falcons 7:30 PM	5
6 ITAM Dance	7	8	9	10	11	12 Evies Dance at Polish Falcons 7:30 PM
13 Tea Dance Ron Trittos ITAM Dance	14	15	16	17  Melbourne Place Sr. Dance-6:30pm	18	19 USA Pittsfield 7– 10:30 PM
20 USA Albany ITAM Dance	21	22	23	24	25 Good Friday	26 Evie's Dance Polish Falcons 7:30 PM
27 SOS Dance Albany ITAM Dance Easter Sunday	28	29	30	31		

If you have any other dances, teachers, or dance events you would like me to include in this calendar please let me know. I will be glad to include them. kpulver@tconic.net

Today, the underarm turns, spins and other open moves where the partners separate, may be a fundamental part of American style ballroom today, but they were just not the vogue in these early days, at least not in the dancing of the "Ballroom Dancers".

In film through the ages, we also find many impressive examples of "Exhibition Dancing" (Fred & Ginger; Gene Kelly, and others) with its showy and theatrical moves; but the everyday social dancers were making a clear distinction to avoid them, all in favor of a very basic dance style where partners almost never separated.

Today, the distinction between the exhibition dancer and the social dancer may seem far less clear, as dancers on social floors often desire to test their skills and emulate the complex moves and patterns of exhibition dancing.

Did the Jazz Age dancers know something we have forgotten? Those flashy theatrical moves could sometimes serve as crutches – ways to avoid a partner and the music rather than engaging them. Another thing to notice in all the great archival photos and film is how closely together people actually danced. Body-to-body contact seemed fully accepted, across the board, from slow to fast Foxtrot, Waltz and Tango. Today, we find this closeness in Argentine Tango or competitive International style dancers, but generally, the social ballroom dancers are still maintaining more partner separation.

This more intimate "social embrace" in the Jazz Age was not a minor stylistic detail. The two partners sought to move as one to the music. When they swayed, they swayed together, and the lead was relaxed, natural and seemingly effortless. This created a very strong connection, which is also strongly related to the "simplicity" factor.

It can be said that leaders, who emphasize connection with their partner and the music, will be less worried about having to "bust a new move" every four bars. And with this more simplistic understanding about dance, the leader will be able to do pretty much anything, and the partner will more instantly and instinctively follow, to dance as one. *JD*

LESSONS IN HISTORY

Dance Connectivity Through Simplicity

Dances have evolved over time. Just look and you will see the internet brimming with video of people dancing "mash-ups" to current songs or the reappearance of classic dance clips from old movies. Just a few years ago, dance footage of olden days was a big deal to even obtain, requiring significant time and expense to obtain a few brief snippets. Now, almost overnight, the internet is flooded with these dance interludes. And there's always

something to be learned from them.

One of the most striking things about these legacy films is how simple and unadorned the dancing was. The essential step was usually some variation of walking, as though the other steps were options. Even ballroom masters on screen seemed content performing just a few basic, well executed steps, and they were judged on their grace and smoothness rather than fancy patterns.

Mike Nelson sent this series on 'RULES OF DANCE' to me and gave me permission to print them in our newsletter. This is the first of five rules. Hope you enjoy them.

Rules of Dance

Rule #1: Line of Dance

This is the first of a series on a hierarchical approach to social ballroom dance, which I am arbitrarily calling "Rules of Dance." Follow these, and you will be a desirable dance partner; neglect them, and you won't be desirable, level of mastery notwithstanding. **Rule #1.** Follow Line of Dance. Line of Dance tells us macrocosmically where to step. This is the first rule because no matter what your skill level, if you neglect it, you will be an impediment to others. Line of Dance guidelines are violated at all levels - by the novice, the ignorant, the advanced, and the professional. I'm sure each has their own reasons for violation, but the consequences are the same - other dancers are inconvenienced, and the violators appear rude and offensive.

1. Line of Dance guidelines are to dancers what rules of the road are to drivers. While you read the following, think about how it would feel to experience comparable violations on an interstate highway or urban freeway. Then reflect on how much more comfortable dancing would be if dancers were even as conscientious as the average driver. Surely that isn't too much to ask. **2. Travel in a counterclockwise direction** on the dance floor. Slow down when approaching others, pass only on the right, and don't tailgate.

3. Fast traffic keep right. Use the outer lane if you are moving fast, pass only on the right, and do not take shortcuts across the interior of the dance floor. **Slower traffic** keep left. Use an inner lane if you are not moving very fast so as not to interfere with the faster traffic. Pass only on the right, and only if you can do so without interfering with others. Some dance floors can accommodate three outer lanes. If so, adjust your position accordingly, and, again, pass only on the right and only if you can do so safely. **4. If you are not progressing**, stay in the center portion of the floor. This is a safe area for spot dances, static gesturing, and working out problems. You can even have a brief conversation in the center, or adjust clothing or jewelry. **5. With foxtrot/swing**, adjust your foxtrot or swing spot appropriately, and try not to interfere with other dancers. If the floor is too crowded with swing dancers to comfortably dance foxtrot, dance swing or take a break. If the floor is not crowded, and there is a mix of swing and foxtrot, move your swing toward the center so that the outermost lane is free. For styles that are predominantly spot dances, don't insist on your own right to a progressive lane. **6. Do not stop** or move clockwise in a progressive lane. Feel free to turn and change direction of the individual partners, but do so in a progressive manner, and do not change the direction of the partnership, which should always move counterclockwise. If you wish to stop for a gesture, common in international style, move toward the center of the dance floor. Stopping to gesture in an outer lane is like coming to a halt in the fast lane of the expressway. Moving clockwise on the dance floor is like backing up in the fast lane of the expressway. **7. Be polite**, follow Line of Dance, and you will find that you rarely interfere with others. Furthermore, if all social ballroom dancers followed Line of Dance, events would be much more enjoyable, and dance floors could accommodate more dancers more comfortably. Be nice, follow Line of Dance. ©J M Nelson, 2016

Our February Dance Highlights



At our February 20th Valentines Dance we had a special couple who taught the Bachata lesson and later in the evening they performed a Bachata routine they came up with. Joy Leslie and Ron Barnard, from Albany, have only been dancing together for a very short time but you would never know it by looking at them. Ron has only been dancing for about 4 months and he catches on quickly. Together they learned their Bachata routine in three days. They are working on a Waltz routine for their upcoming Wedding in August.

We'd also like to thank Evie Garstang for doing the music that evening. A good night was had by all who came.

Our next dance is March 19th at the Masonic Hall where Ron Tritto will be doing the music and teaching the Waltz.

Berkshire Ballroom Chapter 3045 of USA Dance Facebook Page

This I just a little note for those who may not know that our chapter does have a Facebook page. You can put in USA Dance Berkshire County Chapter and it should come up or you can click [here](#) to go to the page. We post our dances on this site and other information about activities within USA Dance that you might be interested in. You can post questions and comments on this page and please like the page also. This is just another way to keep in touch with our members and find out what you would like to see our group doing.



**DANCE LIKE NO ONE IS
WATCHING, LOVE BEYOND
WORDS, SING AS THOUGH NO
ONE CAN HEAR YOU, LIVE
LIKE IT'S HEAVEN ON EARTH.**