



Center Stage *Behind the Scenes at Dancing With The Stars* by Jean Krupa and Marta Pascale

Knowing that this year, the USA Dance National Championship Competitions would be held in Los Angeles, Jean Krupa who serves as National Social Dance Vice President for USA Dance, requested tickets to attend Dancing With the Stars (DWTS) which is filmed close to Los Angeles. She was eventually informed that she would be provided with three tickets: one for herself, one for her significant other, Henry Eure, and she offered the third to Marta Pascale, president of our chapter and Jean's successor as Florida Coordinator for USA Dance.

However, tickets were not to be had... by anyone... Instead, we learned, a few days prior to the show being filmed on April 8, by email from DWTS, that there would be no tickets. Instead, our names would be on a list with ID required (do NOT forget ID, they cautioned) and do not be late or your seat will be given to another.

Before we actually entered the studio, we had gone through four security check points. The email alerted us not to wear jeans **no matter how nice or expensive**, and not to wear white clothing. We were also alerted that no cell phones or cameras would be allowed. So, our cell phones and cameras were checked and returned after the show.

Somehow, we were guests of Bruno. Perhaps that is why we were in the first row of the first balcony directly above the judges: Bruno, Len and Carrie Ann.

During the pre-show warm up, a stage director prepared us: when to clap, how loud to clap, when to be loud, when to quiet down, when to stand and when to sit down.

The set is much smaller than it looks on TV. It was especially interesting to see what all they do to the dance floor, stage, lighting, props and special effects during a 2-minute commercial. Carrie Ann's hair and makeup were refreshed almost every commercial, especially when she cried, not teared up, but cried, after a particular dance.

As the stage director interacted with the audience, Jean remembered that she brought a star-shaped hand clapper and waved it at him. He pointed up to her in the balcony and said, "You brought your own props? I'm coming up to you next." And, sure enough, at the next commercial break, he did just that! He made a joke that he had some similar hand clappers once and became known as the "clap guy," not a good nickname to have, he said. He chatted with Jean for awhile and Jean mentioned that we were USA Dance members from Florida. Before leaving us, he gave Jean a DWTS souvenir T-shirt. Maybe she will wear it to a dance sometime to show us all!

Jean was in a one shoulder royal blue dress and Marta was in a turquoise dress. So, we, including Henry, were easy to spot. In fact, we could be seen in the background between the dancers' shoulders almost every time the dancers were interviewed after performing, as our seats were directly across from that balcony.

What a fun, yet surreal, experience this was! We all know that dancing provides us with wonderful experiences! But who knew that those experiences could include being a member of the audience of Dancing With the Stars? I guess the "Lord of the Dance" knew! :)