

Turning the Mall into a Ballroom!

by Tom Sanders

On any given day, the Volusia Mall wing that houses Macy's is full of shoppers enjoying a variety of stores offering everything from coffee to jewelry to sporting goods. Shoppers eat their Wetzel's pretzels and listen to the Mall Muzack system. Who could have imagined what that same area would look like and what spectacular occurrences would take place on Sunday, September 15.

Your Greater Daytona Chapter of USA Dance Board had a vision: **The Mall Ball, an event for the general public to see our chapter members doing what they love to do . . . dance.** Our chapter members, along with dance professionals (also our members) and their students, demonstrated Ballroom and Latin dances and invited the audience to join us for general dancing.

Our chapter shared that vision with Mall management and on Sunday morning, September 16, it all began to take shape. The obstacles that were in the center were removed and seating for approximately 150 on benches and chairs set the perimeter of a wonderful dance floor area. Then, the USA Dance troops arrived and a DJ area was born to create the wonderful sound of dance music. The USA DANCE banners were hung and the information tables displayed all the benefits of being a member, or becoming a member of, the **National Chapter of the Year**, the **Greater Daytona Chapter** of USA Dance #6026. Yes, we were ready!

Soon, a steady stream of dancers began walking toward the newly constructed Ballroom. You could tell they were dancers! The women wore stunning dresses; the men were decked out in their sharpest outfits. All of them owned that dancer's posture and poise that said "Let me on that Dance Floor." There was no doubt what they were there to do. Some practiced; others chatted to release their nervous energy; but, all were aching to dance. Then, it began!

"Welcome! The Greater Daytona Chapter of USA Dance is proud to sponsor a celebration of National Ballroom Dance Week, called The Mall Ball, here at the Volusia Mall." The resounding voice of Chapter President Marta Pascale opened the party.

Like bees to honey, the shoppers began to fill the benches and chairs and soon there was standing room only. As if from nowhere, more than 200 spectators oohed and ahed and applauded the dance couples. Each couple was welcomed by the crowd and left the floor walking on air. If you have never felt this level of accomplishment, then let me invite you now to Mall Ball 2013. Not only did the crowd appreciate the dancing, but they couldn't hold back and the dance floor filled with each general dance session between demonstrations.

We, who planned, worked and participated in this event were pleased by the growing interest in Ballroom Dance as we provided many spectators with applications to our Chapter and the opportunity to begin dancing through our chapter-sponsored beginner dance lessons.

The audience experienced Waltz, Cha Cha, Swing, Foxtrot, Rumba, Night Club Two Step, Tango, Salsa, Bolero, Viennese Waltz..... I could go on and on. And how about that Team of youngsters who impressed us with their Swing and Cha Cha routines and Jean Krupa's Samba line dance that filled the floor with members and spectator dancers. To say the least, it was an exciting day! Cameras were flashing, videos were recording, and journalists were writing.

Thank you to all the dancers who swallowed those butterflies and celebrated their dance bravado and success! Congratulations on making many people wish they can dance like YOU! Thank you to our members including professional dance instructors: Jerry Lawrence, Marta Pascale, Caleb Young, Joe Mounts, and Diedre Williams! We hope to see you at the Mall Ball 2013... Better yet, we hope to see you **in the Mall Ball 2013!**