

Marchese's Danceland

Source: http://www.slabs.org/history/local/business/directory/saloon_tavern/marchese.htm

DANCERS HAVE A BALL DISPLAYING ELEGANCE, GRACE

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (WI) - Sunday, March 11, 2001

Author: LORAYNE RITT, Journal Sentinel staff

While on a vacation trip to Mexico with his wife, Craig Lewandowski of Vernon was called up on a night club stage to perform with three flamenco dancers. He didn't do very well.

So when they got home, Craig and Mary Lewandowski signed up for dance lessons at the Social Life Dance Center in Waukesha. Last Sunday night, they joined a group of more than 100 people at a public ballroom dance at Marchese's hall in Lisbon. Sponsored by the United States Amateur Ballroom Dancers Association -- Milwaukee chapter, the dance drew people from all over the area. Many of them had taken lessons and displayed the elegance and grace of the accomplished ballroom dancer.

Jim Barnes of New Berlin has belonged to USABDA for 12 years. He said people come to the dances to utilize what they have learned. In addition, it's an economical way into ballroom dancing without the pressure of the studio, he said.

Ron Kobiske, Waukesha, is president of the Milwaukee chapter of USABDA. His wife, Ann, serves as secretary of the 250-member organization. The retired chairman of the physics and chemistry departments at the Milwaukee School of Engineering, Kobiske also served as disc jockey at last Sunday's event. He explained that live music does not go over well with ballroom dancers. The music he plays is usually recorded abroad and must be purchased at major ballroom competitions. Each disk can cost from \$20 to \$40.

Joe Marchese is proud of the hall he built for dancing. His father, Ben, was in the tavern and dance hall business in Milwaukee for many years. When the family bought the Lisbon land in 1969, the community was dry. Eventually they secured a liquor license, but Joe's father did not live to see construction of the building.

The oak parquet floor must be specially prepared before each dance. Marchese himself used to be a dancer and says he won several contests at the famous Roseland Ballroom in New York. He's proud of the fact that some of the greatest dancers in the world have competed on his dance floor. Noting that many of the dancers drink non-alcoholic beverages, he says his motto is: no rough-necks allowed.

Welcoming dancers were Tom and Betty Barnum, formerly of Oconomowoc. New Berlin's Cathy Binko, who sometimes gives instructions before the dance begins, joined others from the area, including Jan Isaacson, Hartland; Ron August, Nashotah; Bob Blomgren, Lake Keesus; Dottie Sitte and Al Liske of Genesee Depot; Lindsay Hale of Elm Grove; Debbie Sundholm, Menomonee Falls; Paul Beard, Waukesha; Connie Berendt, Sussex; and Hoa and Van Truong of Waukesha.

Continuing dance lessons as well as dance events are sponsored by USABDA. The Wisconsin State Dance Sport Championships will be April 19-22 at the Pfister Hotel in Milwaukee. Questions about any of these events may be directed to Ron Kobiske at (262) 542-2672.

WATCHING THE MEMORIES DANCE AWAY

Regulars mourn; auction cleans out Marchese's

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (WI) - Thursday, November 17, 2005

Author: DAVE SHEELEY, Staff: Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

Lisbon — Hours before an auctioneer would clear the bar stools, turntables and disco ball from Marchese's dance hall Wednesday, a nostalgic John Ziegler approached its owner to share memories of his three children's weddings there. "This is bad," Ziegler said gravely to Joe Marchese. "You got your heart and soul in this thing and it's going."

Ziegler came to the recently closed Marchese's Wednesday to say goodbye to Joe Marchese during an auction of anything and everything inside what for decades had been a Milwaukee-area magnet for ballroom, polka and square dancers. Ziegler and many other Marchese's regulars came to the auction Wednesday without plans to purchase anything. Instead, they came to relive memories, forming a noticeably large population in contrast to the auction-goers who milled about hoping to score deals on worn Pabst Blue Ribbon and Lowenbrau beer tappers and larger items, such as the geometric bar that seats 45 people.

Marchese spotted two bright yellow "Marchese Light" tappers in the pile and quickly grabbed them. A brewery had designed them especially for his business. "They will be my souvenirs," said Marchese, a Waukesha County Board member of almost 25 years. He and his wife, Marilyn, are also holding on to the first dollar bill that went into the cash register when Marchese's opened 36 years ago. It was spent by Marvin Burg, a former town chairman who was in office when Marchese's became the first business in town to receive a liquor license. It was granted after a successful town referendum requesting the license. "The Town of Lisbon was dry," said Sonny Menringer, who had hauled stone used for the construction of Marchese's.

Marchese's, along Highway 164 near Sussex, closed for good after about 200 dancers paired off for the hall's last dance last month. Marchese had pledged to close one of the area's few ballroom dance halls once he turned 80 in October.

Area's center for dancing

Throughout the auction Wednesday, old friends swarmed around Joe and Marilyn Marchese, paying last respects to an establishment where they danced for decades. "This was the center of ballroom dancing in the Milwaukee area," Jim Barnes said, ticking off a list of cities across the state from which Marchese's visitors traveled. And they came well dressed. "Most of the men wore suits," said Barnes, a cruise ship dance host. "We never had a person come in here wearing Levis." In the hours before the auction, more than 50 people strolled by hundreds of chairs and tables, wedding and Christmas decorations, and bar and banquet items such as plastic picks, paper towel and coat racks, celery salt and speakers. Ice cream machines, wine fountains and beer signs were also on hand.

Then auctioneer Rollie Bast launched the auction and summoned the crowd to say hello to Joe Marchese. "Go over and say hello to him and give him a hug, you ladies," he said. First on the auction block was a bundle of mops. Frequent auction participant Al Downs bought it for \$1. In coming weeks, the Marcheses will close on the sale of the property. The building will be razed and replaced by a development the family knows little about.

Watching everything go Wednesday was difficult, their daughter Lisa said. But she's excited for her parents' future. "I find a lot of peace in the fact that my mom and dad will be able to enjoy their lives now a little bit and be able to dance on the weekends like everybody else did here."

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MARCHESE'S MAY BE REPLACED

By Tom Daykin of the Journal Sentinel, March 17, 2015



The former Marchese's Danceland in Sussex could be replaced by a Kwik Trip, Taco Bell and other commercial buildings under a proposal seeking village approval., *photo by Rick Wood*

A longtime former Sussex dance hall is to be demolished and replaced with a Kwik Trip, Taco Bell and other commercial buildings under a proposal seeking village approval. The demolition work on Marchese's Danceland, which closed in 2005, could begin in June, pending village approvals, said developer Roger Duchow. If that happens, the Kwik Trip and Taco Bell could open by the end of this year, he said.

The former dance hall and tavern sits on 8.9 acres at W249-N6424 Highway 164, east of Highway 164 and south of Main St. Duchow's Pewaukee group, Concord Property Management LLC, is seeking to rezone the site to allow for a retail development, known as Sussex Town Center. The Plan Commission is to review that request at its Thursday night meeting.

Duchow would create four lots from the site, with Kwik Trip planning a 7,000-square-foot convenience store and gas station, and Taco Bell planning a 2,100-square-foot restaurant. Duchow also is in discussions with a bank, which hasn't yet been publicly identified, to develop a 4,000-square-foot branch location. Additional uses for Sussex Town Center, which would include an adjacent lot on Main St., remain undetermined.

Marchese's opened in 1969, in what was then the Town of Lisbon. It was the first business in town to receive a liquor license, which was granted through a voter referendum. It became a popular spot for ballroom dancing before closing nearly 10 years ago. It was operated by Joe Marchese, a longtime Waukesha County Board member who died in 2010.





Marchese, Marilyn A.

(Nee **Witon**) Of the Town of Lisbon, November 29, 2011, age 64 years. Beloved wife of the late Joseph. Loving mother of David (Sheri) Beres, Lisa (Scott) La Fleur and Andrew Beres. Proud Nana of Jacob, Gabrielle, Sidney and Nickolas. Dear sister of Richard, Raymond (Dorothy), Fr. Russell and Robert (late Virginia) Witon. Further survived by other relatives and friends.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated Thursday, December 1, at 7PM, at St. James Catholic Church, W220 N6588 TownLine Rd., Menomonee Falls. Private burial St. James-Rosehill Cemetery. Visitation Thursday 4PM until time of the Mass AT THE CHURCH. In lieu of flowers, memorials to Sussex Hamilton High School Foundation appreciated.

The Marchese family would like to give a "special thanks" to Vitas Hospice, Dr. Hari and the staff at Froedtert Hospital Cancer Care Center for all the care they gave to Marilyn.



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Marchese, Joseph C. "Joe"



Of the Town of Lisbon, August 18, 2010, at the age of 84 years. Beloved husband of Marilyn (Witon). Loving father of David (Sheri) Beres, Lisa (Scott) La Fleur and Andrew Beres. Proud Pa Pa of Jacob, Gabrielle, Sidney and Nickolas. Dear brother-in-law of Richard, Raymond (Dorothy), Rev. Russell and Robert Witon. Fond cousin of Marge Michaels and Betty Warneke. Further survived by other relatives and friends.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated Monday, August 23, at 6:30PM, at St. James Catholic Church, W220 N6588 Town Line Rd., Menomonee Falls. Private burial St. James-Rosehill Cemetery. Visitation Monday 3PM until time of the Mass. In lieu of flowers, memorials to Sussex Hamilton High School Foundation appreciated.

Joe was a member of the Sussex Lions Club, a Waukesha County Supervisor for 26 years, Past President of the Waukesha County Tavern League, volunteer member of the Town of Lisbon Fire Department, and owner of Marchese Danceland.

The Marchese family would like to give a special thanks to the Vitas Hospice Group, especially to Dr. Carrie, Sarah, Debra A., Cindy and Diane and the staffing partners Debbie V. and Lucinda.



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