

**MINNESOTA**

# ***DANCING TIMES***

A publication of the Minnesota Chapter of the  
United States Amateur Ballroom Dancers Association January 1999



**IN THIS ISSUE: Advice From The Pros: SALVAGE YOUR SELF-ESTEEM  
ON THE TOWN With Lois Donnay  
ASK DR. DANCE (new!)**

# Dancers Nite Out

Medina Ballroom (Thursdays, 8pm)	612-478-6661
Shakopee Ballroom (Fridays, 8:30pm)	612-445-0412
Wabasha Street Caves (Thurs 7:30pm)	651-224-1191
The Manor (Fri, Sat, 8:30pm)	651-690-1771
MN West Coast Swing Club	651-731-9768 or 651-730-4468
Web Site: <a href="http://umn.edu/~rybsk001/wcs/">http://umn.edu/~rybsk001/wcs/</a>	
Rebels Swing Dance Club	612-941-0906
Web Site: <a href="http://www.tcrebels.com">http://www.tcrebels.com</a>	
Rendezvous Ballroom	612-728-3792
The Front (Tuesdays)	612-378-5115
Quest (Wed. - Swing)	
Twin Cities Ballroom	651-292-8463
Web Site: <a href="http://members.aol.com/tcbdo/dance.htm">http://members.aol.com/tcbdo/dance.htm</a>	
TGIS (Thank God I'm Single) (Sat)	651-644-3443
Town House	651-645-4028

**Thu 12/31** New Year's Eve Ball, Twin Cities Ballroom, Group Class, Dinner Buffet & Beverages included. Showcases. Tickets in advance \$20: Call (651) 695-1582. Tickets also available at the USABDA Dance 12/19. At door \$25. See Web Site above.

**Sun 1/3** Rebels Swing Dance Club, Regular Dance, Everett McClay V.F.W., Bloomington, 3127 E. 78th St. Call 941-0906 or check Web Site.

**Fri 1/8** MN West Coast Swing Club - Regular Dance, B-Dale Club, 2100 N. Dale St. (651) 731-9768 or 730-4468.

**Sat 1/9** DanceSport First Monthly Dance, Knollwood Mall, Lesson 7 p.m., Gen. Dancing 8-11p.m. Admission \$10.

**Sat 1/16** USABDA Dance, The Dance Shoppe. Lesson 7:30 p.m., Dance 8:30 p.m. See ad this page.

**Sun 1/17** Rebels Swing Dance Club, Regular Dance, Everett McClay V.F.W., Bloomington, 3127 E. 78th St. Call 941-0906 or check Web Site.

**Fri 1/22** MN West Coast Swing Club - Regular Dance, B-Dale Club, 2100 N. Dale St. (651) 731-9768 or 730-4468.

**Sat 1/23** DanceSport Showcase, Knollwood Mall. Lesson 7 p.m., Gen. Dancing 8-11 p.m. Admission \$15, Buffet provided.

**Sat 1/23** On Your Toes Winter Carnival, Miracle Mile Shopping Center, 8 p.m. with Fox Trot Lesson.

**Sat 1/30** Swedish Hot Dog Ballroom/Swing Dance. Showcase by Abee Boy Stud Muffin & others. Twin Cities Ballroom, Dancing 9-12, \$10 at the door. Students with ID: \$5. (651) 695-1582 or 292-8463.

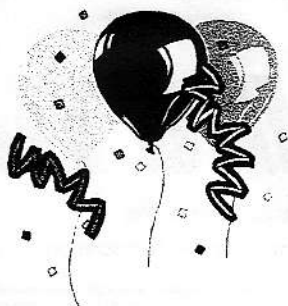
**Sat 2/20** USABDA Dance. Lesson 7:30 p.m., Dance 8:30 p.m.

**Sat 3/20** Star of the North Winter Festival DanceSport Competition, US Bank Trust Center, Downtown St. Paul.

**Sat 4/17** USABDA Dance. Lesson 7:30 p.m., Dance 8:30 p.m.

**Sun 4/25** USABDA Tea Dance, Lafayette Country Club.

For listings in Dancers Nite Out, contact Mats Roing: 651-695-1582.



**USABDA-  
MN  
Presents:**

## January Birthday Dance

### The Dance Shoppe

Hwy. 55 and Fernbrook Lane  
From 494 and 55, take 55 West,  
turn left on Fernbrook

**Saturday, January 16**

Group class 7:30 - 8:30 p.m.  
Dance 8:30 - 11:30 p.m.

with a

*Jack and Jill*  
just-for-fun  
*Competition*  
(remember last year's?)

\$3 for Group class  
taught by Jay Larson

Dance Costs are for  
This Dance Only!



\$7 students w/ ID  
\$9 USABDA members  
\$12 non-USABDA members

**USABDA HOTLINE**  
(651) 483-5467

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

## USABDA: WHO ARE WE?

**USABDA** (yu-SAHB-dah) : United States Amateur Ballroom Dancers Association, a non-profit organization formed to preserve and promote ballroom dancing, both as an art and a healthful sport. The Minnesota chapter, **USABDA-MN**, was formed in 1991.

Membership in USABDA is open to dancers of all levels. There are several categories available: Social, Competitor, Junior (17 and under) Collegiate, and Associate (professional/instructor).

USABDA-MN sponsors monthly dances and other special dance events. Members are entitled to discounts on admission to the monthly dances, as well as access to a great network for meeting other dancers.

As a member, you'll have fun dancing and meet many new friends. For more information, call the **USABDA-MN HOTLINE: 612-483-5467**.

### FROM THE BOARD

**Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of the USABDA-MN Board of Directors**  
by Melanie Helvig

The meeting was called to order by Vice President Gary Stroick at 7:32 p.m. at the Teacher's Federal Credit Union in Golden Valley. There were 17 board members present.

a.. Membership: Carol Stroick reported we have 332 members currently, 7 new members from the last dance and 3 new subscribers this month. This is the third time we've been a quality chapter as listed in Amateur Dancer. Watch for Post-It notes in the newsletter as a reminder for time to renew.

b.. Budget: The 1999 budget is being prepared and all committees will submit their requests.

c.. National Report: Gary Stroick was elected Vice President of the National DanceSport Council. He will run for a board member position but cannot run for Vice President of our local chapter. See the newsletter for a revised ballot.

d.. Birthday Dance: January 16, 1999. There will be a Jack and Jill event, food and an extra \$2 cost for every level to offset the cost of the food.

e.. Newsletter: The board voted to change the name of the newsletter to Minnesota Dancing Times after a lengthy discussion. Janis Livingston reported the changes in the newsletter format and design have been accepted well and have generated increased interest.

f.. Star of the North: Steve Vespested reported that preparations are going well. More volunteers are needed.

g.. Publicity: Dan Viehman has prepared a spectator package. There will be a free box lunch to anyone selling or purchasing 7 tickets. Nursing home activity directors and assisted living centers have been sent letters for advance ticket sales.

Next Meeting: TFCU, Tues..., Jan. 5, 1999, 7:30 p.m.

**OFFICERS:** Ellen Ardery, President  
Gary Stroick, Vice President  
Joyce Thompson, Treasurer  
Melanie Helvig, Secretary

### BIRTHDAY DANCE COMPETITION

The Jack & Jill Dance Competition is being brought to you for a second year by popular demand. This event will be conducted during the USABDA-MN Birthday Dance on January 16 at the Dance Shoppe. The format for the competition will be as follows:

- Anyone attending the dance may participate.
- There is no charge for participating.
- Participants should sign up at the door during the dance.
- Partners will be assigned at random.
- A maximum of 6 couples will be randomly selected to compete in each category.
- Competitive styles: Smooth, Standard, and Rhythm.
- Competitive levels: Bronze, Silver, and Gold/Open
- This is designed to be a fun, entertaining event.

As last year, judging will be performed by amateur competitors. Prizes will be awarded. Come and enjoy the fun! This ad is brought to you by your competition committee: Carol Post, Gary Stroick, Janie Sorheim, and Andy Nordberg.

### NEW MEMBERS AND SUBSCRIBERS

Lauren Hill  
Ashok Sabherwal  
University of St. Thomas Ballroom Dance Club  
Gerald Woodbridge  
Christina Malaque

Thomas Horton  
Margaret Bloemendal  
Lotti Allison  
Freddie Marsh-Lott

## WELCOME!



# DEMOS

## YVONNE VIEHMAN

**January 29** **St. Paul Winter Carnival Dance,**  
 "There's No Time For Cold Feet!"  
 Landmark Center, 75 W. 5th St.;  
 10:00pm - 10:20pm (a crowd of  
 1000+ spectators is expected to  
 attend; open dancing from 9:00-  
 midnight w/ 7-piece band!)  
**5 Smooth couples needed**

**January 30** **Latin/Rhythm Dance for Young**  
**Adults,** Landmark Education  
 Center, Sheraton Hotel @ 24th &  
 494 in Bloomington; 9:00 - 9:30pm  
**5 Rhythm couples needed**

**February 4** **St. Paul Winter Carnival Senior Day**  
 Landmark Center, 75 W. 5th St.;  
 1:00 - 1:30pm; "Dancing Through  
 The Ages" format — costumes  
 recommended for each era;  
**3 Smooth + 3 Rhythm couples**  
**needed**

**Call Yvonne at 612-553-1202 to sign up. Thanks!**



The sixteen brave adults (and one infant) who unpacked all 544 squares of USABDA-MN's brand new dance floor, freshly arrived from the factory.

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- It's important to set realistic expectations
- We should teach our children to save
- Start small, think big, and know your rights and responsibilities as an investor

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# LOOKING BACK --- LOOKING FORWARD

Dear USABDA-MN members,

Approaching the cusp of 1998-1999, I am in absolute awe of this Minnesota Chapter of USABDA. 1998 was a stellar year produced by you, the members, and by the most talented board of directors a president could hope for.

We began 1998 with our first Jack & Jill competition at our annual birthday dance. Social dancers and competitors were paired with surprise (and surprised!) partners in a competition format. The response was overwhelming.

In March Steve Vespested and his committee produced the best Star of the North ballroom competition yet. Some 130 competitors from Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois, Ohio, and Missouri danced 200+ heats in over 600 events --- a very elegant and well-run event.

Karen Kettler (now Karen Tepley), with the help of her committee, cast her spring magic as the Grand Hostess of our elegant High Tea Dance at the Lafayette Club.

Summer started with a miracle. In a few short weeks Yvonne and Dan Viehman transformed a motley crew of amateur dancers into a team of brilliant performers. "Dancin' Around the World" was a very polished show, complete with professional staging, lighting, sound, and special effects. WOW!

After painstaking research, our board voted to team up with Scott and Amy Anderson to purchase our very own World Class Dance Floor. The floor first used in July at the first Worlddance at the Target Center. The event attracted over 7000 spectators. Hub Nelson, The Andersons, and the Arderys arranged financing. Since then, our enthusiastic membership has been raising money at a surprising rate. If we keep up the momentum, we will pay off our five-year loan in 18 months, saving our organization a hefty sum of interest. Our beautiful new dance floor again in September at the annual Grand Ball, expertly directed by Jim Baker and his committee. Again, an elegant affair.

My special thanks go out to:

**Gary Stroick, Joyce Thompson, Melanie Helvig** --- capable and dedicated officers.

**Carol Post Stroick and her committee** --- we have now been named a National Quality Chapter, best in the nation in membership.

**Yvonne and Dan Viehman** --- Dance Demo coordinators extraordinaire and (Yvonne) the golden voice of USABDA-MN.

**Janis Livingston, Greg Moore and their team** --- producers of one of the best newsletters in the country.

**Pete Maki and Joyce Thompson** --- our wonderful and dedicated music makers.

**Steve Vespested and his committee** --- we can hardly wait for the 1999 Star of the North.

**Jason and Carolyn Borton** --- directors of a college program which turns out a fine formation team.

**David Schmit and Owen Gammon** --- writers of our Arts Council Grant Proposal, a huge undertaking.

**Doris Pease** --- our national award winner, who always makes sure we celebrate National Ballroom Dance week in grand style.

**Don Ardery** --- a brand new board member who sleeps with the president, does all of our legal work, and, without whose help and support, this president could not do the job.

**Our professional teachers** --- for their continued cooperation and support, and for their excellent coaching, as evidenced by this quote from the USABDA national newsletter, *AMATEUR DANCER*: "... Minnesota, where rising ranks of amateur dancers are kicking competitive butt at national competitions."

Most important, thank you, thank you to each and every member for making this a most remarkable year for this wonderful chapter.

Looking to 1999, our goals are even bigger and better.

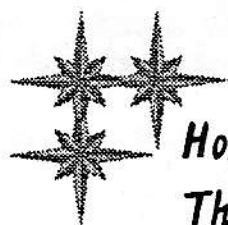
1. To provide an increasing variety of dance events for social and competitive dancers of all ages. I will be asking different teams to plan each monthly dance, and to provide fresh ideas and new themes. Carol and Gary Stroick, Janie Sorheim and Andy Nordberg kick off 1999 with our second annual Jack & Jill Competition at the Birthday Dance on January 17<sup>th</sup>. Don't miss this event!
2. To continue to attract new people to ballroom dancing, and to maintain our National Quality Chapter status.
3. To pay off our dance floor in 1999, and market it to generate income.
4. To produce an even bigger and better Star of the North.
5. To involve more people in planning and conducting events and projects, and in writing for the newsletter. We have so much talent in this chapter.
6. To direct more of our resources to our college program. I would also like to find elementary and high school teachers to help us create formation teams.
7. To explore new ways to reduce our costs and use the resources within our organization, so that all our events and services remain affordable to everyone.

With awe I look back at 1998. With excitement I look forward to 1999. We need all of you. Please call me to share your ideas and comments, time and talent: 612-694-1094.

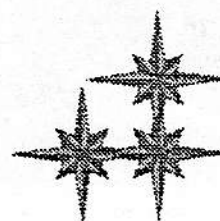
With gratitude and dedication,

Your president,

*Ellen Ardery*



*Hosted By  
The Dancers Studio*



*2nd Annual*

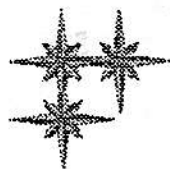


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# USABDA-MN Board of Directors Election Ballot (revised)

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

MEMBER NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail  
completed  
ballot to:

**USABDA-MN**  
**12530 58th Avenue North**  
**Plymouth MN 55442**

or bring to the January dance

**DUE: January 16, 1999**

## **A message from Gary Stroick:**

"I want to thank the membership for their support while I've filled the role of USABDA-MN Vice President over the past year. I conceded to run for VP this year on the condition that, if I was elected VP of DanceSport for USABDA, I would withdraw as a USABDA-MN VP candidate, due to the workload that I would have on a national level. The results have been tabulated, and I have been elected to the national post. As a result, I am withdrawing my candidacy for USABDA-MN VP. However, I am still interested in maintaining involvement in the local chapter and I will continue to run for a board member position."

## **Position: VICE PRESIDENT (two-year term)**

Vote for **one** candidate:

☐ **Steve Vespested**

"As vice president I would strive to reduce expenses, so that our dances can remain affordable, and to improve our relationships with other dance groups in order to promote ballroom dancing to other types of dancers."

☐ **Michael Youngdahl**

"As vice president I will be open to working with those who care about ballroom dancing. The renewed popularity of ballroom dancing has caused some growing pains. Prices have gone up, membership has increased, plus a myriad of other issues. I don't have the answers to these issues, but I will do my best to make ballroom dancing a positive experience for everyone."

## **Position: BOARD MEMBER (two-year term)**

Vote for **seven** candidates:

☐ **Dorothy Jones**

☐ **Gary Stroick**

☐ **Dagmar Kortshagen**

☐ **Steve Vespested\***

☐ **Uwe Kortshagen**

☐ **Dan Viehman**

☐ **Greg Moore**

☐ **Michael Youngdahl\***

☐ **Cheri Rolnick**

\*Also a candidate for Vice President — vote for only one office position



# REMEMBERING '98

**This question was posed to USABDA-MN members at random:**

**"What is your best USABDA-MN memory of 1998?"**

"My best memory is more of a holistic one. I am always amazed and delighted to find out what a wonderful spectrum of people there are at USABDA dances. I've met people from all over the world, and people doing all kinds of interesting things, from a young lady who's a genetic researcher to a great-grandmother who goes duck hunting. The love of dance transcends all boundaries and brings people together."

Bruce Willits

"The best USABDA memory I have for 1998 was when we were waiting for the curtain to go up for the first performance of "Dancin' Around the World" at the Anoka-Ramsey Community College. There was a tremendous feeling of anticipation and camaraderie on the stage. The show was a lot of fun, from the rehearsals to the cast party, and I think it showed USABDA at its best. We are a group of people who love to dance and want to share that feeling with others."

Katy Selberg

"Meeting nice folks who are accepting and supportive of people whose dance skills are not up to par. It's been so nice to get to know Nels and Hub."

Bonita Bartholomew

"Besides a plethora of wedding receptions, Star of the North -- that was an exhilarating day filled with adrenalin rush, more fun than any of us could have at the office!"

Shari Ackeman

"The Tea Dance and the Grand Ball were delightful and smashing events. The new floor had a dazzling christening at the Target Center."

Melanie Helvig

"Unhesitatingly: the USABDA-MN Grand Ball. It had outstanding entertainment, the First Bank Trust Center was lovely, members were gracious, and there was a good food selection. AND I had a charming partner to accompany me. Without a doubt: the Grand Ball."

Joseph Hannisch

"Our best USABDA-MN memory of 1998 has to be "Dancin' The Night Away." It was so much fun to be part of a production that showcased such extraordinary talent, without having to have any ourselves."

Wayne & Michelle Sharp

"The fantastic glow of all the participants at "Dancin' The Night Away" and the wonderful standing ovation we got from the crowd. What a thrill to have our debut performance in a venue like that!"

Yvonne Viehman

"I loved the camaraderie established by the many dancers who took part in "Dancin' The Night Away" at the Anoka-Ramsey Community College. I especially liked the huddle that took place in the fog before the curtain opened for the Disco Inferno number"

Dan Viehman

"The courage exhibited by the board in deciding to purchase the dance floor demonstrates the strength and commitment this organization has to perpetuate ballroom dance in the Twin Cities."

Gary Stroick

"As former president of USABDA-MN, it was pleasing to watch the organization continue to grow, and to see new people become involved during the year. Star of the North was a great moment for our chapter."

Jim Baker

"Seeing my picture on the front page of the USABDA Web-Pages. Being naturally unphotogenic, I was pleasantly surprised to see that I didn't look half bad! So dancing doesn't just make you feel better, it makes you look better, too -- guess I'll keep doing it."

Lois Donnay

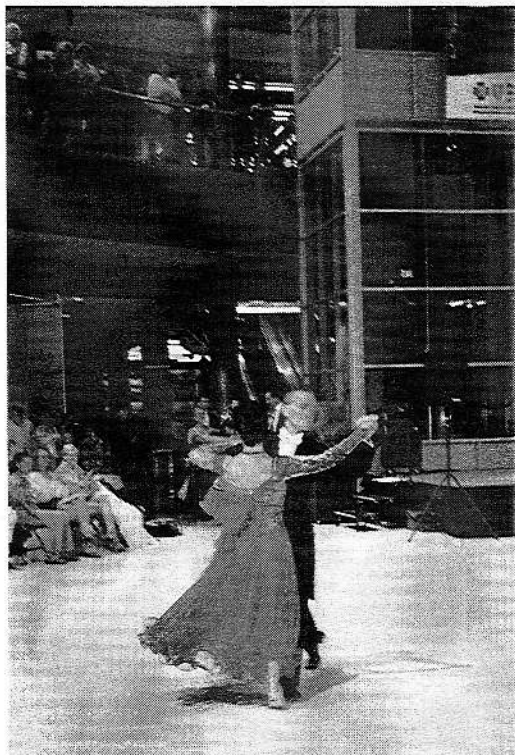


## EDITOR'S NOTE:

Well, that just about says it all. From the Birthday Dance and our first Jack & Jill event in January of 1998, to our first amateur competition, to our first dancing stage show, to our first purchase of a dazzling dance floor (christened at the first Worlddance at the Target Center), to our overwhelming showing at USABDA Nationals (8 first places), to our elegant and entertaining Grand Ball at the First Bank Trust Center, how can 1999 ever measure up? Knowing us Minnesotans, nothing is impossible!

Janis Livingston





Dancin' Around The World at the MegaMall



The Minnesota Machine at the '98 Nationals in Indianapolis

**Celia Mullen**

**Phone: 695-1582**

**Email: celiamullen@yahoo.com**

**Ned Kottmeyer**

**Phone: 702-6125**

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# ASK DR. DANCE



Are there questions doing a Viennese Waltz inside your brain? Want the spinning to stop? Relax. Just ask Dr. Dance.

**Q: If the lady is unable to follow the lead, is it her fault?**

Ah, the Eternal Question. Unfortunately, there is no single right answer. The big problem is understanding what "following" really is. If the lady follows blindly, moving, turning, and shaping exactly as the man does, she will only reflect any weaknesses in his lead. By moving only when and how he does, she will feel heavy or weak. When he turns, she will be in the way. When he shapes, she will not encourage more shaping. So the lady must do more than just follow. She must be a *smart* follow, and understand how she can help the man. The danger here is that she may be too independent, reacting prematurely to the lead. Each partnership must decide how strong the lead should be before the lady responds. After that comes practice, practice, and practice. Sorry — no easy answer here!

**Q: If I'm a social dancer, should I ask a competitor for a social dance?**

Sure! Competitors may not go to social dances often, because so much practice time is spent on the floor. But they're no strangers to social dancing. All of us started dancing at one time or another, creasing our foreheads over a new pattern and practicing on the social floor. Some may choose to pursue competitive dancing, but they still have their roots in social dancing. So go ahead and ask! If they're like me, they'll be glad to unwind from the pressures of competitive training.

**Q: Is it OK to dance "flashy" if I have a good partner?**

It's America. You can whatever you want — as long as you don't interfere with others. So wiggle away. Just don't kick or smack anybody with your fabulous styling. Do be aware that some people will not appreciate your display. If that's OK with you, go out there and do your thing!

We are happy to introduce a new column written by Celia Mullen, "Dr. Dance." The purpose of this column is to answer your questions about any dance-related subjects. Just e-mail or call the editor with your inquiry. "Dr. Dance" will give her opinion and sometimes seek out a guest "Dr. Dance" (professional dance instructor, or PDI) for consultation and further diagnosis.

*Introducing*

## CHANITYA HARDCASTLE

*Coming soon to the Twin Cities!*

Chanitya comes for a formal background of performing arts, including tap, jazz, modern, and ballet. In 1988 Chanitya won the United States Ballroom Championships Rising Star Modern Division. Her titles include: top six rising star Latin division at Breakers Championships, Grand Nationals, and Virginia State Championships. Later in her dance career, Chanitya partnered with amateur Blackpool champion Nigel Clark, placing in the top six in the Open Modern division at the Heritage Classic, Virginia State Championships, and the Emerald Ball, just to name a few. Chanitya has a Bachelor of Arts degree in communications and political science from the American University in Washington, D.C.. She has worked on Capitol Hill and launched a broadcasting career as a reporter/anchor for an ABC affiliate in Sarasota, Florida. As well as pursuing her broadcasting career, Chanitya will be teaching, coaching, and competing in the Twin Cities.

For more information, please call Charlie Hardcastle at Dancesport  
**938-0048**

# ON THE TOWN

with Lois Donnay



## My Personal Recommendations

This is going to be a tough one. How can I decide between all the great choices? I admit to a certain amount of fickleness in my choices of dance venues. Whereas in my personal relationships I am as true and constant as a poodle (please don't try to verify that with past boyfriends who, of course, cannot be trusted), I can tire easily of a dance joint. Especially if a younger, more attractive place comes along.

## Dance Band

Following bands is a great way to find venues with other dancers in them. My first pick is an unusual choice, and it's probable that many of you have never heard of them. Café Accordion is what might be called a specialty band, because they play "international music". But it's perfect for dancing — great tempo with lots of variety, including waltz, tangos, rumbas, cumbias, cha-cha and swing. Besides that, these guys are great musicians! The downside is that they rarely play anywhere that has a decent dance floor. Runners-up: Vic Volare and the Volare Lounge Orchestra, HotHead Swing Band, Minnesota Jazz Orchestra.

## Dance Floor

Medina. Hands down, no doubts, next question please. Of course, if that was all it took we'd be at Medina every night. Unfortunately, Medina has to pay the bills. Dancers aren't very good for that, being inclined to not drink enough alcohol

and keeping the waitstaff busy with requests for water. So this beautiful dancefloor is filled with music that is often less than desirable, and lots of people who don't dance or have a clue about floor etiquette. Besides that, it's so far away! Recently though, they have been getting clued into the new "partnered dance" phenomenon that Swing has created, and have booked some better bands like the Senders. The dance they had with the DJ this summer was one of the best dance opportunities of the year. Runners-up: Rodeo in Cottage Grove, Shakopee Ballroom and Quest in Minneapolis.

## All Around Choice:

You already know about USABDA-MN dances (I hope!), so I'll go on to the first runner-up. Actually it's a tie, since my first choice, The Quest, made changes to their Friday swing night. Their dance floor is large, and they have two bands, but Tony DeMarco now plays only one tempo: fast. They also doubled the cover charge to ten dollars. Mondays is Salsa night. Fine Line on Tuesdays has Vic Volare, whose gang of talented musicians play a great variety. If you want to practice floorcraft, you can do a foxtrot around the Swing kids, who are at both places in force. Runners-up: Rodeo on Wednesdays, and Rebels dances on Saturdays.

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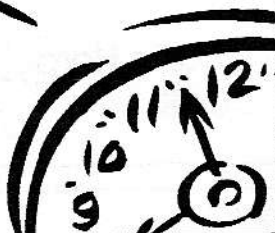
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Ever felt like a total dork on the dance floor? Sure, we all have. Stop worrying.

by Julie Jacobson

There's one particular studio party that I'll never forget. It was about 4 1/2 years ago, and I had just begun learning how to dance and train-in as an instructor. Right away, we new "trainees" were encouraged to practice our dancing at our studio practice parties. One evening, when there were quite a few ladies present and not nearly as many gentlemen, I stepped forward and asked one of the ladies to dance, as we female staffers do on busy evenings — it was, perhaps, only my third party. This lady gave me what seemed to be a rather condescending smile and said, "No, I don't think so."

I found out later that she actually sat out many dances, and her turn-down probably had nothing to do with me at all; she simply took quite a few rest breaks. However, it didn't stop me from thinking about that scenario over and over, both at the time it had occurred, and often afterwards. I remember feeling sheepish and inferior, especially when I asked others for a dance and I felt angry as well, creating a scene in my mind much more dramatic than it actually had been.

I chuckle at the memory now, but the incident and the feelings it aroused in me always serve as an indicator and reminder of the fragility of peoples feelings, and of their vulnerabilities. Now, hold on just a minute — I'm not trying to suggest that every social dance brings us to our knees, sobbing and quaking with fears of our inadequacies; but I'm sure we all remember an instance or two of rejection at a dance, and the accompanying feeling, somewhat akin to brown "matter" on the bottom of an old shoe.

Most of us get into ballroom dance during our adult lives, and we're constantly "exhibiting" ourselves every time we step forth on the dance floor, all of us attempting to convey a sense of grace in our movements. Let's face it: the last time that we had to learn something brand new, especially in our bodies, may have been square dancing in fourth grade, tennis in high school or listing about drunkenly at college parties. Frankly, I didn't give a rip how graceful I looked as I hid against the back wall in grade school dodge ball, awaiting my impending and certain doom. Most athletic activities we learned involved speed, agility and survival — not graceful movements.

Yet, all of the sudden, we are adults, young and old alike, all in the same boat: trying to master the complicated movements of ballroom dance. We have our heroes, whether on a local, national or international level; we have our favorite dance partners — they might not even realize it — yet they are the one we can dance with to the best of our abilities, or have the most fun with. And we have our dreams and aspirations, which range from leading or following just a little better at the next dance, or attempting our first showcase, or being in the top-six in both professional smooth and rhythm (All right — *first* in both

## ADVICE FROM THE PROS

smooth and rhythm. Yes, I have my aspirations too!) all equally laudable goals.

But oddly enough, it seems all too easy for us to forget our origins. It is disheartening to hear yet another guy say that a lady rolled her eyes when he asked her for a dance, or asked him if he could lead anything else. Or the gal who feels avoided, or is told she isn't following. Sometimes it may simply be a matter of us assuming that a mistake must be the other person's fault, or maybe we've been made to feel that we "don't deserve to be on the floor with the really good dancers."

Now, I hardly intend for this article to serve as an admonishment, but more to offer up the question: where does our sense of humbleness go? A tough question perhaps. One that I even now find myself stumbling upon to answer or even address. A few responses pop into my head: once we've gained a certain understanding of dance it usually seems easier to see someone else's mistakes rather than discover our own mistakes; or, there's a certain sense of achievement at having reached a "point" (whatever that point may be) if we can refer to the lesser point where someone else may be. These might be contributing factors, or perhaps not at all. They're merely ruminations on my part.

In any case, I have learned, and continue to learn, a few things that help me try to keep my feet firmly on terra firma. First, if something is going wrong as I'm dancing, I try it a second time. If it still fails, I try to figure out what I might be doing wrong, or what I might be able to strengthen. Even if the problem does turn out to be on the part of my partner or fellow dancer, my efforts will usually pay off anyway and contribute to better dancing overall. If I'm dancing with a beginning dancer, I try to work on a few simple technique issues of my own — better foot placement, or quicker head-spotting. And who hasn't heard that they need to stand up taller?

So even if my partner is only working on the foxtrot basic — who cares? This whole gig is about fun anyway, isn't it? Play a little Ol' Blue Eyes and let me get in touch with my spine...

Finally, I remind myself of the time one of my students and I went rolling down and across the floor during our Viennese Waltz showcase (he was such a ham!), or the time my Latin dress slipped off my chest during a long, long dip (unbeknownst to me — I was sweating at the time and couldn't feel a thing!), or teaching 3/4 of the way through a group class, and then completely forgetting how to make the end of the pattern work.

And most importantly, I remind myself of how I felt when I was turned down by that lady, and now I'm actually thankful for that experience and all that it brings to my mind.

# STAR OF THE NORTH Update

Preparations are progressing nicely. And the event looks to be bigger and better than our very successful first year. A two-day competition is being planned. Friday, March 19th will be the Pro/Am and Am/Am solo events. So even if you don't dance Am/Am, here's your chance to participate.

Am/Am Latin, Rhythm, Smooth, and Standard events will be on Saturday, March 20th. Costumes are not required. Several experienced competitors are willing to team up with inexperienced partners just to get everyone involved. Don't miss the chance to have the time of your life!

**VENDORS:** There are still a few spaces left. Contact Janis Livingston (phone: 651-481-1017 or e-mail: [Dancingtimes@integrityonline31.com](mailto:Dancingtimes@integrityonline31.com)) ASAP to reserve yours!



Your Star of the North organizing committee: (back, L-R) Mike Youngdahl, Dan Viehman, Julie Chase, Steve Vespested; (front, L-R) Greg Moore, Janis Livingston, Elaine Barrett. A happy bunch, to be sure.

We are pleased to announce that our illustrious panel of judges has been joined by:

**Jesse Smith** — two-time National Professional 9-Dance Champion, and winner of National Professional Rising Star titles in both Rhythm and Smooth

**Nathan Daniels** — 1998 U.S.D.C. finalist in Theatre Arts and Cabaret, and winner of the 1998 Dancers Cup Circuit Rising Star title in Smooth.



## AQUA GLIDERS DANCE CLUB

In September 1998 we started our 34th year as a dance club. The club promotes ballroom dancing through professional instruction — an opportunity for dance and great fellowship!

It all happens on the second Saturday of the month (September through May) in St. Richard's Social Hall, which has 4,500 square feet of tiled dance floor, located at 7540 Penn Avenue South in Richfield.

The fun starts at 8:00pm with an hour dance lesson by Jim and Kay Mondo. At 9:30 we dance to taped "big band music." At 11:00 we serve coffee and donuts, and follow with a short business meeting.

Membership in Aqua Gliders Dance club is open to couples, married and unmarried. Dues are \$40.00 per couple per quarter.

Come as a one-time complimentary guest for an evening of dancing fun. We know you will have a great time, and we hope you will consider becoming a member. For more information, please call Joe or Pam Krzyzaniak at 612-869-3062.

## LOSS OF INNOCENCE

It's Thursday evening, after our weekly lesson. Usually, at this time, Janis and I are trotting around the studio, trying to assimilate a speck or two of the information that Coach has given us. Tonight, however, we are sitting quietly making notes, like two schoolkids cramming for a test. Coach has just spent 45 minutes explaining the Mystery of the Seven Closed Positions (yes, seven), and the specific body-to-body alignment that is associated with each position. After we have dutifully written down each of the seven configurations, we look blankly at each other. Will we ever remember this code? If we do, will it ever make a difference that the judges will notice? And why do we even worry about what the judges will notice?

Something has happened, something has changed between us. This past year has been filled with "firsts" for us: first gown and tux, first lesson with a big-name pro, first competition, first award, first trip to Nationals, and on & on. Each has been a small step. Taken collectively, though, they represent a major shift in our thinking: from ballroom as a social art to ballroom as a test — from dance to dancesport.

When we made the decision to explore the world of dancesport we agreed that we could not afford to make an enormous investment of time and money, that we would work hard to get as much benefit out of a modest, repeat *modest*, program of lessons and practices. Outside the studio, each of us actually has a life, you know: family, friends, career, hobbies, that sort of thing. And plenty of bills to pay. Of course, limited resources are always a good excuse not to devote oneself to anything wholeheartedly. But was there some dark little fear brooding in the backs of our minds? Perhaps we were hedging our bets in an effort to protect ... what?

For those of you who have not seen the movie *Pleasantville*, I would say that it's definitely worth waiting for the video release. It's light fare, even trite at times. But it is built on a very interesting premise. And it poses some interesting questions. Our hero, David, is a cerebral, reclusive high schooler who is sadly addicted to reruns of *Pleasantville*, a fictitious 50's sitcom (imagine *Father Knows Best* with the sweetness turned all the way up to 11). Our heroine is David's sister, Jennifer, a gum-popping, mall-cruising, boy-chasing little snot. One evening David and Jennifer are magically sucked into the world of Pleasantville, plunked down in just the nicest home in town, and left to fend for themselves.

At first they attempt to blend in, because David knows every word of every *Pleasantville* script, and fears that any spontaneous, un-50's type of behavior will send the Pleasantville universe spinning off into utter chaos. But, you know kids — always gotta mess with things. Like social viruses, David and

## Dance Lines

By Greg Moore



Jennifer soon infect Pleasantville's citizens with the angst, restlessness, and obsessive behavior that we all think is normal.

Thanks to David's and Jennifer's self-righteous meddling, Pleasantville is set on an irreversible course of continual and unpredictable change. Are we supposed to feel *happy* for the naive citizens of this self-contained little world because they've been booted out of their own Garden of Eden? Star Fleet would never allow such interference. One question haunted me after seeing this movie: What, if anything, will be left of the original Pleasantville?

We have grown so accustomed to constant change and the struggle to adapt to change, we are uncomfortable with stillness. Even the devout couch potato in communion with the television is being bombarded with visual and auditory messages: go there, buy this, eat that. We live in a totally goal-oriented culture, and we are conditioned to keep at least one foot in the future at all times. Who, as a child, has not been asked "What do you want to be when you grow up?"

I'm not arguing against change or goals. But there is an exquisite pleasure to be found in going absolutely nowhere, doing something that has no specific goal. Listening to your favorite song again and again, for example. Or walking around a lake. Or dancing around a ballroom. Like the innocent citizens of Pleasantville, dragged from their timeless, womb-like existence and forced to join in the Great March of Progress, we need a break once in a while. We need to slip back, now and then, into that little world where life is blissfully predictable, where no one is quantifying our output, enhancing our productivity, or exploiting our core competencies.

Janis and I will do our best to learn the Seven Closed Positions. Not because we feel obliged to do so, but because we want to dance our very best, because we believe that digesting such knowledge will increase our enjoyment of the dance. But we are also resolved to remember how it used to be, when dancing was just fun. After all, it was that carefree, ambition-less dancing that got us onto the path to dancesport. And, no matter how far that path may take us, it is important that we remember the way home.



# Swaplines

**\*\* Elegant American gown** by Marsha Weist-Hines. Orchard crepe back satin, exquisite AB stones accented with real amethyst. Pristine condition, size 4-6. \$1000. Marilyn, 612-927-7540.

**\*\* Stunning Standard/American/Rhythm Gown-in-One** Size 8-12. Salmon colored, AB stoning throughout. Rhythm gown with separate boa lined skirt creates American style. Add optional floats for Standard style. 3 gowns for only \$800! Call Diane at 612-376-0186.

**\*\* Feminine Standard Gown.** Size 2-6. Lavender, light blue and pink. Newest one piece style. Loaded with pink AB stones all over. Beautiful matching necklace and earrings. As seen on Nostalgia TV USIXSC Standard episode. Asking \$1250. Donna at 612-651-1617.

**\*\* Winning Standard gown** worn by Michele Mason on 1998 televised Ohio Star Ball. Designs by Randall, a top designer of the pros. White gown with elaborate lavender beadwork and appliques, floats, size 4-6. Excellent condition, \$2400, call 651-771-4718.

**\*\* Call Stacie for the following ads at 467-2090.**

**Simple yet elegant American gown.** Coral-red w/minimum stoning, high neckline, full arm pieces. Size 2-6. \$575.

**Blue rhythm, knee length w/slit up to thigh for movement, unique upper back on dress.** Earrings included. Must see. Size 2-6. \$375.

**\*\* Call Andre' for the following ads at 381-1954.**

**2 attractive Theatre Arts dresses.** One short, one longer (both above the knee). Flowing, some stoning. Size 8. \$100 each.

**Elegant, beautiful, black and gold gown.** Lots of stoning on the front, some on the back. Feathers on hem. Unique design. Size 8. \$350.

**\*\* A striking magenta colored, off the shoulder, American style gown** with elegant stoning by Marcia Wiest-Hines, size 4-8, soft chiffon double skirt with stretch velvet bodice that has chiffon floats. Earrings and "Titanic"-look necklace to match. Worn in three competitions. Like new. Asking \$1000. Janis 651-481-1017.

**\*\* Call Carol Post-Stroick for the following ads at 612-926-7648.**

**Standard gown** size 4-6, loaded with 80 gross AB stones over a Coral and White gown, new style. \$800.

**Apple Green American gown,** sleeves and bodice lattice work, loaded with large AB stones. Attention getter on the floor. \$600. Size 2-6.

**Standard gown,** traditional style, feathers, floats in sunglow & yellow, size 2-6, \$400.

**\*\* Standard gown - Size 4-6.** Classic design, unusual colors! Seafoam green over sunglow orange. Feathered hem, lace bodice, and symmetrical floats. \$900. Contact Hub Nelson at 651-225-8554.

**\*\* Call Janie for the following ads at 651-232-5896 (w) or 612-537-6743 (pm).**

**Beautiful Midnight Blue Rhythm!** Sz 4-8. 1 piece. Panné stretch velvet. Moves great and very comfortable too! AB stoning along neckline, built-in dance trunks. \$200/BO.

**Elegant Red Rhythm!** Sz 6-8. Flared skirt with AB stoning on kris-kross spaghetti straps and bodice. Matching dance trunks. Asking \$150 or BO.

**\*\* For the following ads contact Tracy at 792-2322.**

**Glowing Yellow Standard Gown,** elegant neckline and distinctive stoning. Absolutely a steal at \$1000.

**Glamorous, Yet Simple American Gown.** Hard to part with. Halter style in the truest of reds with minimum stoning. \$600, you can make it yours!

**\*\* For the following ads contact Theresa at 651-704-4485.**

**Lavender two-piece rhythm - size 2-6.** Halter-style top with armbands and earrings. Plenty of rhinestones. Bottom is asymmetrical cut. Latest stretch material. \$550.

**Canary Yellow standard gown - size 4-8.** Full skirt, rhinestones throughout, sheer floats over arms. Eye-catcher on the competition floor. \$1650.

*Swaplines is a monthly feature offering members and subscribers the chance to sell their dance merchandise. Advertisements for partnerships are not published in this column. Please include your area code when submitting advertisements for Swaplines.*

# DANCE SOUP



- > Congratulations to **Gary Stroick**, who was elected Vice President of the DanceSport governing council.
- > **Ohio Star Ball** was a success for many local dance partnerships (heard by way of the grapevine). Results and pictures can be sent in for the February issue of MDT. The deadline is January 10.
- > Just a reminder: **Photos used in the newsletter** cannot be returned. We will safely return any pictures that we are unable to use (please include a stamped/self-addressed envelope).
- > Be sure to fill out the **enclosed ballot** and mail it to USABDA-MN, or bring it to the Birthday Dance on January 16. No late ballots will be counted.

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# **DANCING TIMES**

Published monthly by the members of the Minnesota Chapter of the United States Amateur Ballroom Dancers Association, providing news of ballroom dancing to members and friends.

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**Layout Assistant:** Elaine Barrett  
**Social Columnist:** Lois Donnay  
**Advertising:** Jim Baker 612-476-4843

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**CLASSIFIED ADS:** Free 3-line ad in SWAPLINES available to subscribers (dance merchandise only)

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For further info, contact: **JIM BAKER**  
**612-476-4843**

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## **EXPIRATIONS**

The expiration date of your newsletter subscription is printed on the mailing label. We're working hard to keep you up-to-date on all the events and activities in the wonderful world of ballroom dance, and we wouldn't want your subscription to lapse.

**DEADLINE FOR ALL MATERIALS:**  
**10th OF EACH MONTH**  
We mean it.

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### **COMMENTS FROM OUR READERS:**

- "I loved the [December] newsletter — world class!"
- "Could you make it easier to join USABDA or renew by printing an application each month?"
- "Thanks for the opportunity to voice opinions so frequently. I don't think a second monthly dances is going to break even. I think most people have only a certain amount of time on weekends to use for dancing."
- "Why are some dances on the same weekend as other dances? It's hard to choose which one to attend. Also, why do some dance places keep switching their weekends?"

### **EDITOR'S RESPONSE:**

- Thanks for the encouragement regarding our quest to make *MINNESOTA DANCING TIMES* the best newsletter possible. We're glad you enjoy reading and look forward to

receiving your copy each month. Please continue to give us your comments by phone or e-mail.

- The reason we do not print a renewal form in the newsletter is lack of space. In the past, most people have preferred to renew at the monthly dances. You will see a newsletter form about twice each year, and you may contact Carol Stroick for renewing both newsletter subscription and membership in USABDA.
- If you have an opinion about any issue, we are happy to hear it. Sometimes we write a "Tango With The Issues" column to get everyone thinking about it. Thanks for your input.
- The USABDA-MN dance is always on the 3rd weekend of each month. In a rare case, that could change due to reservation of hall space. Dance providers are aware of the need to keep dance availability dates on a non-competitive basis.

**MINNESOTA**

# **DANCING TIMES**

*A publication of the Minnesota Chapter of the  
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**NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE:**

**JANUARY 10**

**Don't be late.**