

MINNESOTA

DANCER

January 2016

HAPPY 25TH ANNIVERSARY USA DANCE MINNESOTA CHAPTER #2011

FIRST FULL PAGE COVER FOR MINNESOTA DANCING TIMES IN OCTOBER 1998



Official Publication of USA Dance Minnesota Chapter #2011

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DANCER

An Official Publication of
USA Dance-Minnesota Chapter #2011



USA Dance: Who Are We?

We are a nonprofit organization that promotes ballroom dancing. The USA Dance Minnesota Chapter #2011 was formed in 1991. Membership in USA Dance is open to dancers of all levels. USA Dance Minnesota Chapter #2011 sponsors monthly dances and other special dance events. Members receive discounts on admission to monthly dances, as well as other benefits.

The Minnesota Dancer is published monthly by the USA Dance Minnesota Chapter #2011, to provide information and news about ballroom dancing.

Executive Editor/Layout: Tom Crable
Assistant Editor: Leland Whitney
Advertising: Bonnie Burton
Mailing: Committee member

Contributions: Articles submitted may be edited for length, clarity, content. Photos should be high-resolution jpg, png, or pdf files. Email submissions to tcrable3s@gmail.com.

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USA CHAPTER MONTHLY DANCES

JANUARY

Saturday, January 16

Dancers Studio, Sterling Hall
415 Pascal Street N, Saint Paul

7-8 pm lesson—West Coast Swing
Instructor: Troy Lerum
8-11 pm Variety Dance Music

FEBRUARY

Saturday, February 20

Costa Rica Ballroom
816 Mainstreet, Hopkins MNI

7-8 pm lesson—Cha Cha
Instructor: Eliecer Ramirez
8-11 pm Variety Dance Music

MARCH

Saturday, March 19

Dancers Studio, Sterling Hall
415 Pascal Street N, Saint Paul

7-8 pm lesson - Foxtrot
Instructors: Neli Petkova and Nick Westlake
8-11 pm Variety Dance Music

\$ 5 Students under 25 with ID
\$10 USA Dance Members
\$15 Non-Members

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USA Dance-Minnesota Chapter #2011 Board Minutes

Tuesday, November 3rd, 2015

Submitted by Leslie Whitney

In attendance: Lee Whitney (President), Ed Soltis (Vice-President), Jane Phipps (Treasurer), Leslie Whitney (Secretary), Carol Post, Joyce Thompson, Tom Crable, Dan Fitzgerald, Karen Maldonado

Guests: Bonnie Burton, Scot Gore

Location: DanceLife Ballroom Studio, 6015 Lyndale Avenue South, Mpls., MN 55419

Call session to order:

1. **Agenda** – A motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved to accept the agenda.
2. **Scot Gore** – The board invited Scot so that we could personally thank him for promoting Project Dance and the monthly dances by posting the events on the Meetup Group's website.
3. **Confidentiality** – Meeting discussions are confidential. Chapter minutes are posted in the Minnesota Dancer.
4. **Minutes** – A motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved to accept the minutes from the October 6th board meeting.
5. **Treasurer's Report** – A motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved to accept the October's treasurer's report.
6. **Survey Results** – Bonnie distributed a handout detailing the survey results. A summary can be found in the December issue of the Minnesota Dancer.
7. **Social Dance, Special Projects and Volunteer Coordinator Reports**
 - a. **Monthly Dances**
 - November – Cinema, annual meeting, bolero
 - December – DanceLife, samba
 - January – Dancers Studio, West Coast Swing
 - b. **Project Dance** – Discussion of options to defray costs.
 - c. **K12 Coordinator Report** – The Sunday, October 25th was a success with a substantial amount of money raised for Dancing Classrooms.
 - d. **Mall of America Demo** – It was a great show! Thank you Dan and Yvonne and to those dancers who performed.
 - e. **Business Cards** – Thank you Ed for completing this project.
8. **Communications Coordinator Report**
 - a. Minnesota Dancer – Deadline for articles, advertisements, etc. is the 15th – 17th of each month.
 - b. Website, Facebook, Constant Contact – Business as usual.
9. **Membership Coordinator Report**
 - a. November 30th, 2014 – 338 members
 - b. November 30th, 2015 – 351 members
10. **Ethics Committee**
 - a. **Board meeting locations and scheduling** - Gary will check out an alternative meeting location for board meetings.
 - b. **Budgetary responsibilities** – Discussion of defraying the cost of Project Dance and Minnesota Dancer while keeping in mind the chapter's mission statement.
11. **Volunteer of the Year Nomination**– The board is nominating Bonnie Burton as Volunteer of the Year. The written nomination is due November 30th and Ed will complete the forms with input from board members.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, December 1st, 2015

6:00 p.m., DanceLife Ballroom

6015 Lyndale Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55419



Project Dance

Dancers Studio

Lesson is West Coast Swing

Sundays Jan 10, 17, 24 and 31, 2016 from 2—3 pm

Instructor—Troy Lerum



SWINGIN' IN THE SNOW

Workshops in West Coast
Swing and Night Club 2-Step
with Joy Davina!

Sunday, January 31, 2016
DanceLife Ballroom

Workshop Schedule

1:30 – 2:30 p.m. **WCS: Redirecting Your Basics**
2:30 – 2:45 p.m. **BREAK**
2:45 – 3:45 p.m. **WCS: Are You Listening?**
3:45 – 4:00 p.m. **BREAK**
4:00 – 5:00 p.m. **NC2: Rhythmic Elegance**
Later that night:
7:00 – 10:30 p.m. **Variety Dance** with DJ Caroline Olson

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VARIETY DANCE PRICING: \$7 each for Rebels
members & students w/ ID and \$11 each for guests.

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More info at tcrebels.com

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DANCER'S NIGHT OUT

USA DANCE

USA Dance – Monthly – 3rd Saturday Variety Dance, January 16, at Dancers Studio, Sterling Hall, lesson 7-8 pm and dance 8-11 pm. Lesson - West Coast Swing. Instructor: Troy Lerum.

Project Dance, Sunday, 2—3 pm, January 10, 17, 24 and 31, Dancers Studio, lesson is West Coast Swing. Instructor—Troy Lerum.

WEEKLY DANCES

Cinema Ballroom – Wednesdays, Practice Party, 8 – 9 pm.

Costa Rica Ballroom – Wednesdays, Practice Party, 9 – 9:45 pm.

Dancers Studio – Wednesdays, West Coast Swing, dance 8 - 9 pm.

Dancers Studio – Thursday, Variety Dance, dance 8- 9 pm.

DanceLife – Fridays, Variety Dance, lesson 7-8 pm and dance 8-9:30 pm.

American Classic - Fridays, Dinner and Dance Potluck Variety Dance Party, 8 - 10 pm.

BIWEEKLY DANCES

American Classic – Sunday Pizza Practice Parties, see website for dates for January, 7 – 9 pm.

Café Bailar Dance Club – Saturday Variety Party – January 9 and 23, Costa Rica Ballroom, 7:30 – 11 pm.

Cinema Ballroom – Variety Dance, January 15, lesson 7 – 8 pm and dance 8 – 11 pm.

Tapestry – Variety Dances, 1st and 3rd Sundays, January 3 and 17, lesson 6 – 7 pm and dance 7 – 9:30 pm.

Twin Cities Rebels – WCS and Variety Dance, January 3, 17 and 31 at DanceLife Ballroom, 7 – 11 pm.

OTHER DANCES

Linden Hills Dancing Club - January 16, at DanceLife Ballroom, lesson and dance from 7 - 10:30 pm.



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www.dancewithusamerica.com

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651.641.0777
www.dancersstudio.com

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612.342.0902
www.fourseasonsdance.com

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651/238-7636
Contacts: Patty & Stephen Ogborn

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Facebook.com/LaDanzaDanceClub
Contacts: Mark and Wanda Bierbrauer

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danceclub@lakesideballroom.org
www.lakesideballroom.org

LINDEN HILLS DANCING CLUB
www.lindenhillsdancingclub.org

MN WEST COAST SWING DANCE CLUB
763.442.1618
www.mnwestcoastswingdanceclub.com

REBELS SWING DANCE CLUB
952.941.0906
www.tcrebels.com

SOCIAL DANCE CLUB
952-475-0586, billcarlson@usinternet.com

STARDUST DANCE CLUB
stardustdanceclub@gmail.com

SUBURBAN-WINTERSET DANCE
CLUB
Woman's Club of Minneapolis,
410 Oak Grove Street, Minneapolis
952.894.1412
www.suburbanwinterset.com

TANGO SOCIETY OF MINNESOTA
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www.mntango.org

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612.722.2914
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CHAPTER 2011
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Lisa Vogel	651.208.0818
James Wood	651.242.2421

COMPETITION CALENDAR

Jan 8-10, 2016

Snow Ball Competition

Hosted by Donna Edelstein, Minneapolis, MN

Jan 15-17, 2016

Manhattan Amateur Classic (The MAC) – NQE 2016

Hosted by Greater New York Chapter #3004, Secaucus, NJ

Feb 20-21, 2016

Mid-Atlantic Championships—NQE 2016

Hosted by Mid-Eastern USA Dance Chapter #6001, Bethesda, MD

Apr 1-3, 2016

2016 National DanceSport Championships

USA Dance National Championships to be held in Baltimore, MD

June, 2016

NJ DanceSport Classic Summer Sizzler - NQE 2017

Hosted by Mario Battista & Wendi Davies, Hackensack, NJ

Jun 24-26, 2016

Gumbo DanceSport Championships—NQE 2017

Hosted by Gumbo LA Chapter #5031, Baton Rouge, LA

July 7-9, 2016

Twin Cities Open, Minneapolis, MN

Hosted by Scott and Amy Anderson, Minneapolis, MN

Aug 5-7, 2016

Derby City DanceSport Championships—NQE 2017

Hosted by Greater Louisville Chapter # 2021, Louisville, KY



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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Leland Whitney, President,
USA Dance Minnesota Chapter #2011

Leland and Leslie Whitney plan to compete at the USA Dance Senior IV National DanceSport Championships, April 1-3, 2016.

Welcome to the 25th Anniversary Year for our USA Dance Minnesota Chapter #2011! Come celebrate our Chapter's birthday at the January monthly dance. A special anniversary event is in the planning process to be held this fall.

Minnesota Dancer newsletter and Project Dance have been a significant burden on our finances. We used the survey results to assist in making decisions effective in 2016.

Project dance will continue with the following changes effective immediately:

- Project Dance will not be held during the months of July and December due to very low attendance.
- Project Dance will not be held on major holiday weekends due to low attendance.
- New members joining will pay a fee of \$3 per Sunday.
- To honor our commitment--new members who joined in 2015 will continue to attend free of charge until their 2016 renewal date, then will pay \$3 per Sunday.
- Non-member fee will be \$8 per Sunday.

Minnesota Dancer newsletter will go to an online only version effective March 1, 2016. Many chapters have gone to an online version or no newsletter.

The costs for printing and postage have made printing and mailing the newsletter cost prohibitive.

We believe that these changes will make the Chapter financially viable for many years to come.

Have a very good season for the new year.

Project Dance Review of 2015 and the Future

by Joyce Thompson

Project Dance will start its fifth year of providing beginners an introduction to ballroom dance. The goal was to improve quantity and quality ballroom dance in our community. I believe we are meeting our goal.

I served several months as the admission person for Project Dance during 2015. It was a rewarding experience to see new people excited to learn ballroom dance. It was rare to see an attendee leave without a smile on their face. Many were regular attendees. The attendance sheets from the chapter's monthly dances indicate there are 10-19 attendees from Project Dance each month. I invite those whom have not attended a monthly dance to come and practice your new ballroom dance skills.

There were 42 Sundays of Project Dance in the year 2015. The number of attendees varied from 10-74 per Sunday. Lessons were

provided in rumba, salsa, waltz, night club 2-step, samba, foxtrot, east coast swing, cha cha, tango, and quickstep.

There are costs associated with providing quality programs.

Therefore, Project Dance will continue with the following changes:

- Project Dance will not be held during the months of July, December, and major holiday weekends due to low attendance.
- The admission fee will be \$3 per Sunday for USA Dance

members.

- The admission fee for new members joining the chapter after January 1, 2016, will be \$3 per Sunday lesson.
- The non-member admission fee will be \$8 per Sunday lesson.
- To honor our commitment to our current members, those members who joined in 2015 will have free admission to Project Dance until the member's 2016 renewal date.

LYNNE'S DANCE NEWS

Dance events for every day of the week.

Updated daily.

<http://www.organizersonduty.com/testimonials.html>

Dance address book also on the website



USA Dance National - Great Gift Idea and Nationals News

Dear USA Dance Members,

Wondering what gift to purchase for a special person in your life or someone who has everything?

We have a suggestion that will put a smile on any dance lover's face!

The USA Dance Nationals planning team is offering gift packages for your loved one to attend the 2016 USA Dance National DanceSport Championships April 1-3, 2016, in Baltimore, Maryland.

This outstanding event is being held at the beautiful Renaissance Baltimore Harborplace Hotel.

To purchase your gift certificate click on the following link.

<http://tickets.o2cm.com/?event=usa>

Log in, select your ticket package and print your gift certificate. If you do not have an account, you will need to establish one to order your gift package.

What a great way to share the excitement of a ballroom filled with beautiful dancers!

NOTICE TO COMPETITORS: Registration for the 2016 USA Dance National DanceSport Championships will be open January 1, 2016.

We look forward to seeing you in Baltimore April 1-3, 2016.

Ann Durocher, Managing Director
For the Nationals Planning Team



Dancing in the Twin Cities IV: East Coast Swing and Lindy Hop

by Bob Anholt

I have been dancing since 2000, first folkdance and all of the country dance forms done at Tapestry. Classes with Cindy and Terry are what eventually led me away from folk dance forms and down the variety ballroom path. Cindy Gardner and Shawn Lavelle provided information for this article.

This is the fourth in a series of articles about places to dance in the Twin Cities aiming to describe the culture of local dance events: types of music, participants, size of the dance floors, etc. These articles are designed for new dancers, out of towners, or even experienced local dancers who want to try a new place. This article describes places to dance (single step) East Coast Swing, Lindy hop, Charleston, and associated dance forms. This article is a supplement to Lynne's list or the Dancer's Night out list in this magazine and others which should be consulted for date, time, location, and cost information. Lynne's list can be found at: www.organizeronduty.com/testimonials.html.

Cindy Gardner has been teaching East Coast Swing since 1979 and Lindy Hop since 1994. While teaching at Tapestry in the 1997

she met Terry Gardner who soon began taking classes and going to social dances four times a week. Early in 1998 Terry started teaching with Cindy, and in 1999 they married and incorporated as TC Swing. Their main classes and dances take place on Thursday nights starting at 7pm with a 2.5 hour intermediate sequences lesson covering East Coast Swing and Lindy Hop. Beginning classes are repeated every first Thursday. A Late Night Swing dance begins at 10pm and goes until 2am. The dances have recently moved to 301 Main Street in Minneapolis (the former Ukrainian Center) which is a larger space (4800 sq. ft.) than their former home at Social Dance Studio and has a big off-street parking lot. Between 200 and 300 young, mostly college age dancers show up for the late night dances. The experience level runs the gamut from beginners to experienced Lindy Hop-

pers. Terry Gardner is the main DJ. Between 30 and 60 attend the classes, where the age distribution runs from college students to seniors.

Cindy originally used DJ's for all of her events but was approached by Dave "Cool Breeze" Brown, the band leader of the Senders in 1994 to use live music. First Saturday dances with live music have been done ever since. Between 200 and 250 attend these dances, with ages running from college to seniors. The dance floor at 301 is sufficiently spacious that they set up tables on the perimeter and have a bar for refreshments. A lesson is included for the price of admission. Also, on some first Saturday afternoons, Cindy and Terry teach workshops in specialized aspects of East Coast Swing and Lindy Hop: lead and follow techniques, various forms of Charleston, aerals, etc. Many

dancers have also benefitted from series of classes taught by Cindy through Roseville community education at Falcon Heights Elementary School. Each October TC Swing sponsors a swing dance weekend, Sving du Nord, which brings in swing dance professionals from all over the US.

Bill and Shannon Butler have been hosting swing dances and have been teaching at Lee's Liquor Lounge on Wednesday nights for several years. At Lee's and formerly at Famous Daves in Uptown, they taught Swing, Lindy, and Charleston and some vintage dance forms like Shag and Balboa. In addition they hold a Sock Hop on the fourth Saturday of each month at Lee's. Lee's dance floor is small and crowded. In the summer of 2015 they sponsored live bands at the (larger) Eagles club in Minneapolis, and to date it has continued through the fall and early winter.

Rhythm Junction has put on Monday night dances at Four Seasons Dance Studio for about four years now. On the average 75 to 80 and sometimes as many as 100 attend these dances, many of whom are very experienced Lindy Hoppers. Rhythm Junction rotates DJ's and provides opportunities for swing dancers to become DJ's. Often they have theme nights concentrating on particular jazz sub-genres like Blues, Gypsy jazz (Django Reinhardt), New Orleans jazz as well as Big Band. Many of the dancers do Lindy Hop and most do Charles-

ton and Balboa. Blues DJ nights also bring out the Blues dancers.

Although not a Lindy Hop and swing dance form, I include Blues dancing here because it is practiced by many of the same people (but not all) who are in the Lindy Hop community. Blues dancing is a highly grounded partner dancing to slow Blues jazz. Although one can dance slow west coast swing to much of the music, blues is a particular dance form taught and practiced through an organization called Collectively Blue. They put on dances on Thursday nights at Four Seasons as well as house parties in members' homes.

Chuck Peter hosts weekly Tuesday night dances at the Dugout in Mahtomedi. Music is supplied by DJ "Cowbell" Chuck who plays a variety of East Coast Swing, Blues, Zydeco, Line Dancing and a little Country. The Dugout has a great wood floor with ample space for dancing and it usually gets 25 - 40 in attendance, mostly middle aged adults.

One other place to learn and practice swing and Lindy Hop is through Uptown Swing. They give lessons on Tuesday and

Wednesday nights and put on occasional dances with live bands, such as the September Strutter's Ball.

TC Swing's Thursday dances begin at 10pm. Those needing to be at work or school on Friday morning, can go to an earlier dance beginning at 7pm (lesson 6:15pm) at the Wabasha Caves in St. Paul. The Caves always have a live big band, but the dance space is not very large, and is crowded. The floor is split in two ballrooms arranged in an L shape with the band playing at the apex. In summer the caves are delightfully cool upon entry, but they become humid as the evening progresses.

There are several live band dances around town that swing dancers tend to go to. TC Swing.com keeps a nice calendar of these events along with TC Swing's classes and dances.

Other websites:

www.rhythm-junction.com
www.uptownswing.net
www.collectivelyblue.com
wabashastreetcaves.com/swing.html
Facebook: Dancin' @ the Dugout!

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Elizabeth Dickinson is a life/executive coach and amateur ballroom dancer.

Live, Love, Dance My Top Ten List

by Elizabeth Dickinson

This is my 36th dance column. I've loved writing these columns and hearing from readers how the dance or life insights have helped them to think about their own challenges in a new way.

However, after 3 years, it's time to move on and take some of that energy into my other writing projects-into my coaching book and into bringing my musical into the world. I may write a dance-oriented column here and there, but I won't be writing regularly for a while.

I'm still writing a weekly blog with personal/professional tips for better living. If you'd like to stay in touch and subscribe to that list, just shoot an email to Elizabeth@pursueyourpath.com

what I've learned from ballroom dance since I started in 2007.

1. Exercise that doesn't feel like a chore or a 'should' is the best form of exercise.

2. Everyone who starts to learn to dance feels like they have two left feet.

3. The ballroom dance community has some of the happiest and most gracious people. It's a pleasure to know you.

4. Learning to dance is a journey with no apparent endpoint.

5. Many of your life challenges will be mirrored in your dance challenges-and vice versa.

6. Dancing will change how you live your life.

edly democratic-people of all ages and backgrounds mingle.

8. Ballroom dance should be made available to more people.

9. The neuroscience regarding the physical, mental, emotional benefits of partner dancing is irresistible and compelling.

10. If ballroom dance hooks you, it will probably never leave your life.

May we pursue our paths, extending the joys from dancing into all areas of our lives.

Best wishes always,

Elizabeth

I'll end with "The Top Ten" of 7. Ballroom dance is unexpected-

Wanted

"DANCE HOSTS"

When: Monthly USA Dances

What: Dance with new attendees, beginner dancers and singles.

Time: 8:00 pm-9:30 pm

Qualifications: Proficient bronze level dancer or above in
Waltz, Foxtrot, Tango, Cha Cha, Rumba and E. C. Swing

Compensation: Admission free to the dance

Sign up to become a "dance host" by contacting:

Joyce Thompson:

email: contactjoycethompson@gmail.com

phone: 651-483-5456

Survey results indicated a strong request for "dance hosts". Dance Hosts will provide new attendees, beginner dancers, and singles, with an opportunity to improve their dance skills and meet other dancers.



**American
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Dance begins with A C B!

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National Ballroom Dance Week

by Suzi Blumberg

Author Suzi Blumberg is an avid social dancer and frequent contributor to Minnesota Dancer. She works in Sales for a digital forensic company. She's active in her church including dancing with a Hebrew worship dance team, gardening and walking her two bichons.

National Ballroom Dance Week began in 1989 and has become progressively more celebrated each year. Its charter is to increase awareness of ballroom dancing in the community and to bring all local dancers together to present ballroom dancing at its best to the public.

Here's a brief history of the early years of National Ballroom Dance Week.

It started in the Big Apple (New York City) in April, 1989 and members of USABDA (US Amateur Ballroom Dance Association), now known as USA Dance, partnered with studios, pros and city government to have dance performed everywhere in the city--from libraries to ferry boats, studios to public and company halls. The media loved it and relished covering it. A concept had been born.

The next year, in September,

14-21, 1990, editors of the major dance publication, Dancing USA, Dance Action International and Amateur Dancers put their heads together and proposed to the nation of having a National Ballroom Dance Week (NBDW) with amateurs, pros, studios, governments, vendors and other interested parties.

Some Chapters got creative and solicited and obtained proclamations from mayors and governors (through the efforts of then USABDA president, Peter Pover). Even President Bush got involved and provided a photo of the President and Mrs. Bush dancing. Studios across the nation hosted 'open-door' week and thousands danced.

September 13-22, 1991 took a great leap forward by extending the week to 10 days, so that all locations would have two really full anchor weekends. Gubernatorial proclamations were written and signed by nearly ev-

ery state. Media coverage was terrific! A public TV video was made and distributed nationwide. Dancing took place in rotundas, malls, studios, libraries, etc. National media picked up on NBDW and emphasized the fact that "Everyone can dance at least a waltz or a cha cha."

September 11-20, 1992, the Eastern State Expo was held in Springfield IL and over a million attended it. An 800-332-NBDW special phone number was funded by USABDA and set up to take requests for dancing information. Hundreds of calls were handled during the 10 days. Middle schools were included in a New York fundraiser, resulting in many young people being introduced to ballroom dancing.

September 10-19, 1993 an extravaganza was kicked off in the World Trade Center Atrium. The most active cities in dancing

were Boston, Richmond, Minneapolis and others.

From the early 1990s, USA Dance Minnesota has sponsored the Twin Cities NBDW and it's been a special event ever since. Jan Neugent started the tradition, then Leslie Carnie, Janice Livingston and Greg Moore and Yvonne and Dan Viehman have all been instrumental in producing the dance extravaganza over the years at the Rotunda at the Mall of America! Yvonne and her husband, Dan, have been directing dance demos for almost 20 years!

This year's event occurred on October 28, 2015 and Yvonne and Dan had one of the largest productions ever—24 dance numbers and over 100 dancers! Besides local ballroom dancers, several types of dances were presented by groups such as the Rhythm & Swing Lindy Hop formation team who also did a Shim Sham jazz number; an all ladies jazz group and an all men's jazz group both from Summit Dance Shoppe; the Sleigh Belle Dancers; a duet from Cinema Ballroom's Dustin Donelan and 11-year-old; Lauren Klein; the Rhapsody & Rhythm Team from DanceLife Ballroom; Twin Cities Performance Dance Team; MN Dance Collaborative; the "Back to the Future" Formation Team from Cinema Ballroom; as well as the Viennese Waltz Formation Team who debuted their VW routine this past February. All were fabulous, high energy

and action-packed! Local talent Tom and Linda Crable, and Lori and CJ Hurst, showcased their talents in two beautiful solo waltz routines that were magnificent!

It's a ton of hard work, but Yvonne calls it a "labor of love". She appreciates and relies upon the steady stream of dancers who make it happen!

When they're not organizing dance demos, Yvonne & Dan enjoy their two sons who are 11 and 14, so their lives are all about baseball, basketball and football! They recently went to Chesterton Academy, their son's high school and taught 9th through 12th graders East Coast Swing and the waltz, to prepare the kids for the Homecoming

Fall Ball. This was a physical education requirement and the director wanted it fulfilled by Ballroom Dance. After the ball, several 9th grade boys thanked Dan and Yvonne for teaching them to dance and another said he only sat out two dances the whole night! Their older son has also taken a Jon D. Williams Co-tillion Course that teaches etiquette, manners and ballroom dancing to fourth graders up to seniors in high school. He especially loved the dancing.

Yvonne says when the boys are grown up, and they're empty nesters, they will do more ballroom dancing and maybe even go aboard a few dancing cruises and sing the song, "Take Me On a Sea Cruise"!



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Deborah J. Nelson is the founder, President, and head designer of Satin Stitches Ltd.

Men have been left out of my monthly articles for too long, so I'm starting out the New Year with tips for male ballroom dancers. Much of this information was in a previous article, but it's worth rehashing.

Yes, generally in the ballroom world, men are seen primarily as accessories for the female dancers. However, we, as ladies, know the importance of getting those accessories right, or our entire outfit looks a little off, am I right?

In a dance partnership, generally the female will dictate the costuming. I'm not saying this is right or wrong, but it is the norm. The male generally needs to work with whatever the lady decides to wear so that, at the very least, he does not clash.

Luckily, men's tuxedos and suits are offered in basic colors such as black, dark blue and even shades of gray or brown. These colors are thought of as 'neutrals' and coordinate well with any color a lady might choose for a dress. This is an easy way to look great on the dance floor and it's much less cost-

Costume Design Tips for Male Dancers

by Deborah J. Nelson/Satin Stitches Ltd.

ly to purchase one or two great fitting suits than trying to design your own men's custom costume.

This option works great for nearly all social dancing as well as ballroom dances like the Fox Trot, Waltz etc. It gets trickier when your lady wishes to dance a Latin dance, and needs you to coordinate with her specially purchased or created Latin costume.

Going the 'neutral' route is easiest, of course. Coming up with a black shirt and trousers that you feel comfortable dancing in is a great place to start. Every man should have a black shirt and trousers that he feels and looks great in, and that he can dance in without restrictions.

Keep in mind that men have the advantage of looking great in formal apparel. Why do men always look so handsome in military uniforms and tuxedos? For starters, the long, lean look of these fashions is enhanced by the use of a single color from the top to the bottom. In addition, shoulder pads and design details draw the eyes upward to the chest, shoulders and face. To top it off, impeccable tailoring can accentuate your

height, broad shoulders and narrow hips (even if you don't have all of these features). The same concepts can be applied to costumes to create a more masculine look on male dancers. The color, cut, fit, workmanship, fabric and details all factor into creating a masculine dance costume.

Once you have registered to dance a routine where either your teacher or partner requests that you get more creative, then your troubles really begin!

First, don't buy a shirt that isn't flattering on you. If you're not sure whether or not a garment is flattering, look in a 3-way mirror and, if you look good with your discerning eye, then it most likely is flattering for your body type.

Second, trust the experts! Don't approach men's costumes the exact same way you would women's. If you are looking to have custom dance apparel created by friends or family, it's important to understand that men's clothing requires a higher level of construction technique in order to pull off a fabulous costume.

Traditional men's ballroom com-

panies typically understand “the look” of men’s costumes, so they are a great resource to have. Many talented hobby sewers have years of experience sewing women’s dance costumes, but not much experience with the construction details that are needed to create a male dance costume. It’s more difficult to tailor jackets, shirts and trousers than to sew dresses or leotards. A common mistake for these sewers is to use their girls’ patterns and fabrics for the boys, without enough adjustment, so it is frequently worth the added cost to go to a professional.

Often, men require different patterns, fabrics, and details to be attractive, flattering and appropriate. Dedicate adequate time and resources to purchasing (or creating) a costume that is specifically made for men. Remember, the traditional masculine dancer look features the appearance of stature or height, broad shoulders and narrow hips.

Next, be sure to take fabric choices into consideration. ‘Street fashions’ with traditional street fabrics

obviously keep guys looking masculine. But dance costumes generally need to use fabrics that will coordinate with the woman’s outfit, which often means working with traditional dance costume fabrics like spandex. This doesn’t always have to be a bad thing, however! Imagine, for example, your favorite Superhero: although they wear spandex, they certainly don’t appear feminine!

Besides tailored, woven fabrics, performance fabrics that typically work better for guys include thicker spandex such as ottoman, football-weight, and other heavy-weight fabrics, rather than the traditional medium-weight spandex option. Most surface-printed spandex fabrics (the popular “shiny” styles) have a thicker feel and look. Slinky-type fabrics and other soft and drape-able fabrics such as lightweight spandex should be avoided. Non-stretch, woven fabrics such as chiffon and double georgette are sheer and probably not suitable for masculine-looking men’s costumes. Geometric prints (rather than floral prints), stripes, bright colors rather

than pastels are generally more masculine as well.

Finally, pay attention to the fit of the garments. Correct fit is very important for masculine-looking costumes. Plain and simple, if a costume doesn’t fit properly, it will not look good onstage or on the dance floor. Men, like women, are not always the same size or shape. Allowing time and resources for tailoring your costume will ensure that it will look phenomenal no matter the venue!

Concluding thought: Don’t be afraid of special costuming for guys! Work with traditional men’s ballroom apparel companies, or custom-design costume creators in your area that can handle the special requirements that male dancers need and deserve, and be attentive to fabrics!



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Student Essays From

Heart of Dance Fifth Graders

About Dancing Classrooms

Ember Reichgott Junge
Co-Founder and
Development Director of
Heart of Dance.

by Ember Reichgott Junge

Want to know what Heart of Dance fifth-graders think about Dancing Classrooms? This 20-year proven program now in 30 sites around the world integrates dance steps with school curriculum. Here are a few essays written by students from the inaugural Minnesota classrooms, fall semester:

I think the first time I went to dance class I was feeling nervous a little bit. When I was dancing I was feeling excited because it was fun. I think in the next 10 weeks we will get way better. I'm excited. I want to enter the dance contest at the end because I think it will be fun and great!

--Marvin

I liked Dancing Classrooms. It was fun. I hope that we can do it again. :-) I felt happy in the

middle of class. I felt good at the end of class. I felt excited when we went in.

--Alex

At first it felt silly and weird but that was only because it was my first time dancing with a boy.

Now it is more fun and I am fine with dancing with boys because it is not like they're going to hurt you, because it is better than dancing with a shark because they will hurt you.

--Tasia

Dancing Classrooms is where you do a bunch of different partner dances like the Tango and Merengue. I like it because it gives you a chance to dance with a different gender. I was surprised we had to dance with a different gender but it was still

fun. I loved it when at the end we had to wave to the king!

--Mathias

When I first heard we had a dance class I was scared and nervous. I have never been in a dance class before. I didn't want to go.

I have a walker. It is hard for me to move around. I can't dance. I wasn't sure how I was going to do this. I didn't know if I was able to dance without my walker.

By the end of the class I wasn't nervous anymore. I really realized that I couldn't dance without my walker and it was OK.

--Mulki

First Colors of the Rainbow Team Match at Dancers Studio

by Ember Reichgott Junge

Photos by C. J. Hurst

With standing room only support from families and fans, over 110 fifth-graders representing 11 classrooms and four Twin Cities elementary schools participated in the first Colors of the Rainbow Team Match at Dancers Studio December 13. The Team Match, sponsored by University of Minnesota Ballroom Dance Club and u partner dance, was the finale of a ten-week Dancing Classrooms residency provided by Minnesota nonprofit Heart of Dance, co-founded by Andrea Mirenda and Ember Reichgott Junge. Over 250 fifth-graders participated in the residency, including each school's Culminating Event in early December at Friendship Academy of the Arts, Athlos Leadership Academy, Four Seasons A+ Elementary, and Benjamin E. Mays IB World School. At least seven Twin Cities schools are committed for spring semester. Heart of Dance is grateful to our generous supporters, volunteers, and sponsors from the ballroom dance community and beyond! To find out how you can be involved, go to www.HeartofDanceMn.org.



Heart of Dance Creative Director and MC Andrea Mirenda starts the parade of schools as Minnesota's inaugural Dancing Classrooms Colors of the Rainbow Team Match gets underway at Dancers Studio December 13.



Pairs from 11 teams start the Team Match with the Merengue before the watchful eyes of Judges Nathan Daniels, Amy Anderson and Marcy McHenry (left to right). Judges Rebecca and Eliecer Ramirez also contributed their judging expertise.



Everyone's favorite--The Swing! Judges Marcy McHenry and Eliecer Ramirez-Vargas make some tough decisions.



T-A-N-G-Oooooo! Participants prepared Merengue, Swing, Tango, Foxtrot, Walz and Rumba--all picked a "Dance by Chance!"



You can see the Respect, Elegance and Teamwork: Dancing Classrooms is far more than dance steps!



Some of the 110 fifth-grader participants demonstrate their rumba walks to the cheers of a packed house filled with parents and families.



Eleven Team Co-Captains led families and fans in the Macarena.



Colors of the Rainbow Team Match judges award each classroom team a trophy. Every participant received a medal!



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Paul Stachour works in software quality assurance for life critical systems. He is a social dancer with bronze-level competition experience. He was trained by Harry Benson in the 'Learning to be a Dance Teacher' classes, and has taught dance part-time for five years. He is also DVI-DA certified to teach American Style Waltz at the associate (bronze) level.

Lead, Follow, or Both?

Questions for Brainstorming

By Paul Stachour

I've been dancing both lead and follow for a number of years now. Other dancers sometimes ask me how I (Paul) started, why I do both roles, etc. I enjoy dancing both roles and would like to see other people write articles on this subject for the MN Dancer. The length of an article varies from a half page to 2 pages. I do suggest that you get one or more people to review and comment on your article (I will be happy to be a reviewer), before you submit the article to this magazine.

Here are some of my questions/ thoughts to get your creative juices flowing.

Why did you learn to dance lead (or follow) as well as the usual follow (or lead)?

How long have you been dancing?

When did you start learning "the other role"?

Which dance did you try "the other role" in first?

What dances are hardest to lead? Easiest? To follow? Hardest? Easiest?

Any truth to the statement that "to learn basics of a dance as a follow takes 2 classes, as a lead 5 classes"?

Does leading get easier or harder as one learns more? Has better partners?

Does following get easier or

harder as one learns more?

Does the follow get "almost all the fun?" What does that say about learning lead vs follow?

Once the class is over, and one is in a social dance setting, is it easier to apply a new pattern as a lead? Perceive it as a follow?

Is there any difference in how smoothy / slidy / grippy you'd like the dance-floor to be as a lead vs as a follow?

What do the other students say when one takes a class in the other role? How does that make you feel when they say: "Hey, [name] what are you doing? That's [whatever]"?

Is there a different "feeling"

when one is dancing as a lead than as a follow / follow than a lead? What's different? What's likeable? Uncomfortable?

When someone asks you: "Do you prefer dancing as a lead or as a follow?", what do you answer? And what do you say if they ask you why?

When doing the "non-usual" dance-role, do you prefer dancing with someone of the other gender? Your own gender? Does it make a difference?

What is hard as a follow that is easy as a lead? Or other way around?

What are the perceptions as to the easy/hard tasks each one does? Are those appropriate?

I was taking a group-class, and it was taught in an ambidance-trous manner. Everyone was required to learn and dance both roles. I'd never danced the other role before. My reaction to that

class was [whatever].

I was at a West Coast Swing dance, and several times saw several guys dancing together. They seemed to be having a lot of fun, and dancing differently than they did when they danced with a gal. That piqued my curiosity, and [whatever] ...

I saw other ladies leading, and so I felt that it was something that was acceptable in the community where I danced. I decided "If they can do it, so can I, and so "

I began by ?? just trying it a few nights ?? taking some beginning group lessons as a lead instead of non-beginner group lessons as a follow ?? taking a specific both-lead-and-follow-class ?? taking a following-for-leaders or leading-for-followers class.

?? I did/did-not plan/envision/consider that I might/not-even-see-possibility of being a dance-teacher myself. I

now teach ????

The first dance I learned to lead was ? My best dance as a leader is ?? I feel comfortable leading WCS, NC2Step, Rumba, ... ?? The next dance I'm planning to learn the leader's part for is ???

Are there places / clubs where same-sex and reverse-role dancing is clearly OK? Highly frowned upon? Where would you recommend that people new to reverse-role dancing go?

When you are taking a lesson and are in the "non-traditional-role" and the teacher refers to all of the people in that role as "men" or "ladies" (but you are of the other gender), how does that make you feel?

I hope these questions start you thinking about your dancing and the role of leading and following. I can't wait to see what other people write on this subject.



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