

MINNESOTA

# Dancin' Times



Published monthly for members of the United States  
Amateur Ballroom Dancers Association—Minnesota Chapter

March 1998

## DANCERS NITE OUT

**Medina Ballroom** (Thursdays, 8pm) 478-6661  
**Shakopee Ballroom** (3/6, 3/20, 8:30 pm) 445-0412  
**Wabasha Street Caves** (Thursdays) 224-1191  
**MN West Coast Swing Club** (3/13, 3/27) 731-9768  
**Rebels Swing Dance Club** 941-0906

**Sat 3/7** Swedish Pea Soup Dance, Twin Cities Ballroom,  
Corner of Walnut and W. 7th St. in St Paul. Group  
Class 8 pm. Dance 9-11:30. \$10. 523-0364

**Fri 3/13** Macalester "Spring is Coming!" Dance, 7:30-11:30  
pm. Macalester College Cochran Lounge, Student  
Union, Corner of Snelling and Grand Ave. in St.  
Paul, \$5

**Fri 3/13** Lucky Dancer Party, On Your Toes School of  
Dance, 5023 Excelsior Blvd. Foxtrot Lesson at 8,  
8 - 11:30 pm. \$10. 928-7803

**Sat 3/14** Dancesport Showcase, Dancesport Ball- room,  
Knollwood Mall, St Louis Park. Dance 8pm.  
Showcase @ 9:30 pm. \$15. 938-0048

**Sat 3/21** USABDA Dance, See info this page.

**Sat 3/21** Dancers Studio Showcase, 5 - 9 pm; \$17 at door,  
\$15 in advance, 641-0777. Macalester College,  
Cochran Lounge

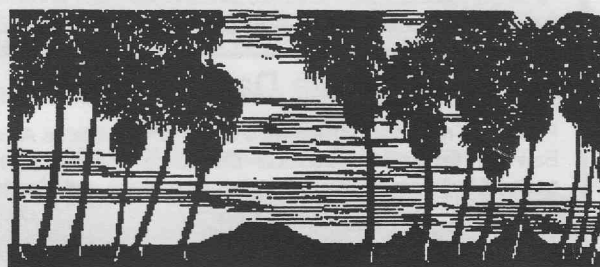
**Fri 3/27** Star of the North welcome dance, Twin City  
Ballroom, \$5, 7:30 - 11:00 pm.

**Sat 3/28** Star of the North Competition Social Dance, 8:00 -  
12:00 pm First Trust Center, St. Paul \$7, free to  
competitors.

**Fri 4/3** Joint USABDA/Macalester Dance, Lesson 7:30,  
Dance 8:30 - 11:30, Macalester College Cochran  
Lounge, Student Union, Corner of Snelling and  
Grand Ave. in St. Paul. Students \$4, USABDA  
member \$6, others \$8, lesson \$2.

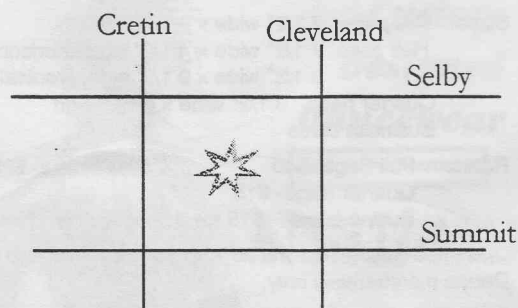
USABDA-MN Presents:

## A Winter Getaway Dance



### St Thomas University

3rd Floor Lounge - Murray Herrick Campus Center  
Middle of the Block  
St. Paul



\$2 for group class. - Smooth taught by David  
Aanestad.

\$6 for members

\$8 for non-members \$4 for students w/ID

Saturday, March 21

Group class 7:30 - 8:30 PM

Dance 8:30 - 11:30 PM

**USABDA HOTLINE**  
**(612) 483-5467**

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

## What Is USABDA? Who Are We?

USABDA stands for the **United States Amateur Ballroom Dancers Association**, a non-profit organization formed to preserve and promote ballroom dancing not only as an art but as a healthy sport. Minnesota's chapter was started in 1991.

Membership in USABDA is open to ballroom dancers of all levels. There are membership categories for all dancers: Social, Competitive, Junior (17 and under), College students and Associates (professional/instructors).

USABDA sponsors a monthly dance and other special dance events. Membership includes both national and local dues. Membership entitles you to discounts on our monthly dances and a great network for meeting other dancers. You also have opportunity to purchase this newsletter.

You'll have fun dancing and meet many new friends! For more information Call the USABDA Hotline number.

**(612) 483-5467**

## Minnesota Dancin' Times

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

### SUBSCRIPTION RATES

\$15 per year

Make checks payable to **USABDA-MN** and send to:  
Joyce Thompson, P.O. Box 13873, St. Paul, 55113

### ADVERTISING

**Display Ads:** To advertise your professional service or event, submit camera-ready artwork.

Sizes: Full page 7 1/2" wide x 9 1/2" high  
Half page 7 1/2" wide x 4 1/2" high (horizontal)  
3 1/2" wide x 9 1/2" high (vertical)  
Quarter page 3 1/2" wide x 4 1/2" high  
Business cards

Rates: Full Page- \$40                      Half Page- \$25  
Quarter Page- \$15  
Business card- \$15 for 3 consecutive months.

**Classified Ads:** Free 3-line ad in *Swaplines* available to members. Dance merchandise only.

**Payment:** Payment must accompany ad.  
Please make checks payable to **USABDA-MN**.

### DEADLINE

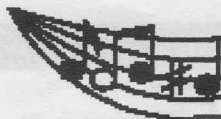
**All materials due the 10th of each month.**

All questions regarding the newsletter should be directed to:

Editor-in-chief: Janis Livingston (612)481-1017  
Copy Editor: Greg Moore  
Newsletter Layout: Julie Chase  
Newsletter Ads: Jim Baker (612) 476-4843



Send address changes to Jim Baker at address on back of this newsletter. Please notify National USABDA also.



## Notes From the Board

by *Melanie Helvig*  
USABDA Chapter Secretary

Yvonne Viehman filled in as secretary for vacationing Melanie Helvig.

- The USABDA-MN Board met on 2/3/98 and 24 people attended. President, Ellen Ardery, ran the meeting and outlined our goals and objectives for 1998:

- \* financial stability
- \* structure (mtgs. will only go 1 1/2 hours)
- \* membership development
- \* USABDA development (i.e. involvement in promoting activities such as Star of the North Games)

- The Executive Committee of the USABDA Board will meet on the last Monday of the month and the full board will meet on the first Tuesday of the next month.

- The January Birthday Dance was well attended by 142 people at the Dance Shoppe in Plymouth on January 24, 1998.

- Dance admission prices will be raised in conjunction with our goal of financial stability and will go into effect in May, 1998. New rates: Non-members \$10; Members \$7; Students: \$5 and the lesson will be a charge of \$3 above this base figure.

- The Star of the North DanceSport Competition will be Saturday, March 28 at the First Trust Center in St. Paul. Come one and all - lots of entries are needed to make it a hit! Lots of volunteers are needed too!

- The Tea Dance will be on Sunday, April 26, 1998 - time of the brunch is yet to be determined.

- Wade Warford will be the committee chair for the Grand Ball.

Next USABDA Board mtg: March 3, 1998 @ 7:30 p.m.  
Laird Plastics  
7150 Boone Ave. N.  
Brooklyn Park phone: 535-2118

## Competitor's Column

*Includes regional and USABDA events*

### Star of the North Dancesport Competition

March 28. First Trust Center, St. Paul. See Page 10 for more information.

### Heartland Classic (North Central Regional Amateur DanceSport Championships)

April 12-13. Indianapolis, IN. Contact Heartland USABDA Chapter - (317)776-2070 or blankbob@indy.net

### Wisconsin State Ballroom Dance Championships

April 24-27. Milwaukee, WI. Contact Dan Messenger for more information - (414)548-8882 or (414) 367-1206

### Minnesota Open

May 29-31. Radisson Hotel, St. Paul. See Page 8 for more information. For info - Bill or Arlene Kroll - 561-5407 or Billkro@aol.com

### The Twin Cities Open

July 10-12. Minneapolis Convention Center/Target Center, Minneapolis. For info - Scott or Amy Anderson - 431-3380

\*\*\*for a more complete list, see "Amateur Dancers", the national publication for the U.S. Amateur Ballroom Dancers Association.

## DANCE LINES

by Greg Moore

### THE TANGO LESSON

*I wanted to show how at root, social dancing is a philosophical inquiry into the nature of the eternal other --- without words, but with all the accuracy of intent.*  
--- Sally Potter

In her 1997 film Sally Potter, up & coming English director, recently hooked on Argentine tango, plays Sally Potter, up & coming English director, who gets hooked on Argentine tango. Pablo Veron, Argentine dancer and El Teatro star, plays Pablo Veron, Argentine dancer and El Teatro star. Some might think this is one long, over-priced, self-indulgent home movie. Then again, many of the movies we all know and love are basically autobiographical. We can forgive such narcissism when the story is meaty and the characters are vivid. No such luck here.

The story comes out of nowhere, staggers along for awhile, then dies in its sleep, as if the camera just ran out of film. Sally wanders into a Paris theatre where she watches Pablo and his partner perform. She is enchanted and asks him for lessons. He agrees, adding that he's always wanted to be in the movies. In no time at all she's dancing like a pro and he asks her to be his new partner -- we're never told what happened to his original partner. Sally and Pablo seem to fall in love (this movie's PG rating is well-deserved) and soon discover that mixing work and romance can be tricky. Things get a bit messier when she tries to turn him into an actor. And so this movie goes, lurching from one lifeless vignette to another, without any of the backstory or character development that might have made it plausible. Potter dreamed up an interesting premise, but evidently decided to leave it in broad, sketchy form.

As for characters, Sally and Pablo are just about the only items on the menu. And all we get from them are preachy lines and ambiguous expressions. Even their blow-out, telephone-throwing fight sounds more like a high school debate. The few interesting people in this movie, such as Pablo's saucy little girlfriend/partner and Sally's droopy-faced builder, are brought in just long enough to tantalize us and then snatched away.

SO --- if you absolutely insist on a solid storyline, rich characterization, and impeccable acting, save your money.



If, on the other hand, you can be turned on by expert dancing, gorgeous locations, and outstanding camera work, you're in for a big treat.

At one point, Sally announces to Pablo that she wants to make a movie about tango. Potter has done precisely that. Like a reporter for National Geographic, she presents us with an exquisite travelog. She examines not only the art of Argentine tango --- the hooks, swivels, drags, kicks, and lunges --- but, just as importantly, the soul and moods of the tango world: the

grubby little studios where men dance with each other, sharing and practicing their moves; the night clubs and bars where couples slither dreamily around the floor, cheeks pressed together, eyes closed, lips pursed; the sultry, indolent grace of social tango vs. the flashy thrust and parry of El Teatro. Even in black and white, Potter glorifies this world, using authentic locations --- the promenade by the Seine, the dockyards of Buenos Aires, an abandoned ballroom --- as heroic stages for Veron's masterful choreography. It is all a feast for the eyes.

The "eternal other" mentioned in the quote above refers to the Old Testament story of Jacob's battle with a mysterious stranger. They grapple day and night, until Jacob realizes he cannot win because the stranger is an angel. Perhaps Potter sees social dance as a metaphor for the ageless paradox that drives every romantic human entanglement: We can't live with 'em, and we can't live without 'em. Maybe the dance floor is a playground where the genders can *act as if* they understand each other, where the infinite complexities of the yin and yang are reduced to a simple formula that our tired little brains can handle.

Sally and Pablo struggle to understand each other. Their working relationship is tense and angry. But when they hit the dance floor they relate just fine. So, if you're struggling to understand this movie, you're trying too hard. Just sit back, relax, and enjoy the ride. Let yourself be seduced by the smoky, brooding charm of the tango.

**(the movie is currently not in any Twin Cities Theaters)**



## JACK AND JILL COMPETITION

As seen by the faces in these pictures it was a huge success! It was wonderful to see people out there who usually don't compete.

Judges: Smooth -- Gary Stroick and Carol Post Stroick; Rhythm -- Nels Petersen and Theresa Kimler; Standard -- Hub Nelson and Celia Mullen. Scrutineer -- Gary Stroick. Photographer -- Don Ardery. Mistress of Ceremonies -- Ellen Ardery.

Participants: Wade Warford, Susan Zeller, Steve Vespested, Kelly Roering, Don Ardery, Shari Akemann, Dan Viehman, Yvonne Viehman, Andre Denny, Michael Neitzel, Sheila O'Reily, Kelly L., J. R. Mullen, Peter Radford, Katy Selberg, Gordy Davis, Linda Davis, Greg Moore, Janis Livingston, Tom Sheehan, Michelle Vandesteeg, Mike Youngdahl, Vickie Kitts, Mark Tepley, Karen Kettler, Melanie Helvig, Hub Nelson, Celia Mullen, Sanae Storey, Nels Petersen, David Schmit, Theresa Kimler, Monica Mohn, Mike Schaeffer, Uwe Kortshagen, Dagmar Kortshagen, Mats Roing, Diane Grover, Gary Stroick, Carol Post Stroick, Mike Zuck, Renee Luedtke, Becky Roering, Ha Twong, Elizabeth Smith, Scott Koefod, Andy Norberg, Janie Sorheim, Kent Carlson, Charlotte Dunne.

(BTW: Much to their surprise... the judges were entered into the events they were not judging. Thanks judges.)

Thanks go to Ellen Ardery for organizing the 7th Annual Birthday Dance celebration, to Carol Stroick for the medals, and to Carol Stroick and Melanie Helvig for the decorations. Don Ardery, Gary Stroick, and Julie Chase manned the check-in desk. Pete Maki and Joyce Thompson

provided the excellent quality music. Hub Nelson helped corral the dancers for pictures. And many thanks to everyone who helped set-up and take down chairs.

Jay Larson and Julie Jacobson, nine-dance champions of the Ohio Star Ball, treated us to a vision of lovely dancing with their Tango and Waltz showcase; not to mention a great lesson in the Rumba to start the evening off. Thank you for that special treat, Jay and Julie!

See pages 5 and 17 for more pictures of the placings.



West Coast Swing

*We're returning to a typical afternoon*

## Tea Dance

*at the elegant  
Lafayette Club  
Minnetonka Beach, Minnesota*

**Sunday April 26, 1998**

**12:00 Noon to 4:30 pm**

Professional Showcase during dance

**TICKETS -- \$25.00**

**\$15.00 - students with I.D.**

**Advance ticket sales only**



For information, call Karen Kettler 612.724.0856

### Tea Dance Menu

Food available throughout dance

Hors d'oeuvres

Finger Tea Sandwiches

Fruits, Vegetables

Desserts

Cash bar available



Sponsored by





Bronze Waltz - Smooth



Silver Tango - Smooth



Gold VienneseWaltz - Smooth



Open Foxtrot - Smooth



Bronze Waltz - Standard



Silver Foxtrot - Standard



## The Presidents Corner

by Ellen Ardery

I wish to express two thank yous. The first to all of you for your vote of confidence. I will work hard to earn your trust. Second, to Jim Baker for his hard work and good leadership the past two years. He has brought the organization a long way and has generously offered to work closely with me as we move forward to the next two years.

Three new members were voted to the board: Julie Chase, Don Ardery, and Wes Barris. I have appointed Gary Stroick to fulfill my term as Vice President. The full board roster will appear in the next issue.

It is our responsibility as elected board members to vote for the good of the full membership not on personal views. Please help us do this by expressing your ideas for new activities, improvement of present ones and new sources of income. You can do this by talking to board members or by coming to a meeting and taking part in the discussion before a vote is taken. You may also call me to be added to the agenda. You will be heard!

In polling the officers, financial stability is the number one concern. Our 1998 budget projects a deficit. To meet our increasing expenses we will be raising admission to the monthly dances by \$1 for students and members, \$2 for non-members (to encourage people to join); the price of the lesson will increase \$1 for everyone. This decision will be effective May 1998.

There will be more about goals and board structure in the next issue of *Dancin' Times*.

The full board meets the first Tuesday of each month. The executive board, consisting of officers, meets the Monday the week before the full board meeting. Please call with questions or suggestions. I have a long voice mail. Feel free to use it. Be sure to leave your name and phone number.


### Paid Advertisement



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## DANCE NOTES

Look for USABDA-MN t-shirts and jackets soon to be on sale. Proceeds will help fund Star of the North DanceSport Competition.

\*\*\*Star of the North Participants: When you send in your registration please sign up for all events you may consider doing. Even if you drop an event later, it is easier for us to order too many medals than not have enough, so please sign up for all possibilities as soon as you can. Let's also support our vendors for Star of the North. Visit the booths and vendor area. We will have Lisa Soldo doing hair and makeup, dancewear and jewelry; Ron Morris, a chair massage therapist; Betty Ernst selling creative dance accessories, and Debbie Filler selling ballroom shoes.

\*\*\*A follow up note on the New Year's Eve "A Capital New Year" dance demonstration at Landmark Center - USABDA received a \$300 donation!

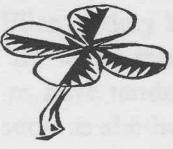
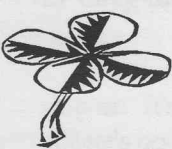
\*\*\*Keep your calendar open for the Tea Dance which is scheduled for April 26. Watch the newsletter for further information.

\*\*\*Rumor has it, there is a singer at Mancini's, in St. Paul, that sounds very much like Sinatra. You can dance Monday nights from 8-12 in the lavish and roomy surroundings of a Las Vegas "lounge" atmosphere. No Cover. 224-7345

\*\*\*Welcome to our new members: Michelle and Wayne Sharp, Kate Dahl, and Ed Stanek. We are happy to have you join our USABDA-MN family of dancers!

\*\*\*The 1997 Ohio Star Ball is scheduled to be broadcast on Wednesday, May 6, on PBS.





# ST. PATRICK'S DAY

Friday, March 13th 8 - 11:30p.m.

---

**Foxtrot lesson from 8-9p.m. with Cindy!!**

ENTERTAINMENT provided by On Your Toes staff & students  
(you never know what you'll see!)

Be the first to dance a "waltz" with Ms. Luck  
and Mr. Luck and receive a "POT OF GOLD" special gift!

## "LUCKY DANCER" PARTY!

*Come experience the BEST PARTIES in town!*

Admission:  
\$10.00 / Free for VIPer's  
call 928-7803 for more information

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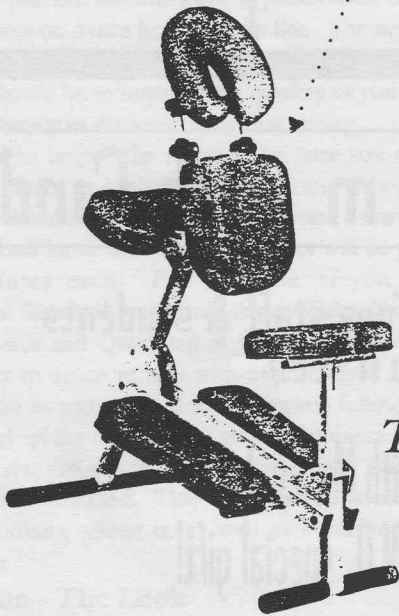
ON YOUR TOES SCHOOL OF DANCE  
Miracle Mile Shopping Mall  
5023 Excelsior Blvd  
St. Louis Park, MN 55416



## **Olympic Athletes Know The Value of Massage:**

*To perform at their BEST they need to be  
relaxed and energized.*

**ON MARCH 28th, CHAIR MASSAGE COMES TO YOU:**



•To help you center and ground yourself

•To revitalize you after a stressful week

•To remind you to breathe

•To interrupt stage fright

*Truly helps your body feel better fast!*

**THIS 5 - 15 MINUTE TREATMENT**

•Is applied through clothing

•While sitting fully supported in a state of the art  
massage chair.

•Is tailored to your needs: neck, shoulder, back, arms  
and FEET, or as you wish.

**Ron Morris**  
massage

*Give yourself a gift that will improve your performance !*

## Dance Demos

by Yvonne Viehman

### On Atruim Amphitheater

On January 15, 1998, we returned to the Edinborough Park Plaza Atrium Amphitheater for a 45-minute show for the residents and patrons. The group of USABDA dancers included: Shari Akemann & David Schmit & Steve Vestpested; Marie Casey & Wade Warford; Lisa Hamilton & Mike Youngdahl; and Yvonne & Dan Viehman. Many thanks to all of you for being a part of the fun! USABDA received a \$75 donation as well.

### Let's Twist Again!!

What a night to remember! Saturday, January 17 will be etched in our minds for a long time to come! The Minnesota Children's Cancer Research program had a huge fundraiser at the Minneapolis Convention Center. The theme for the evening was the 50's and so the hall was filled with classic cars, actual LP records for dinner placemats, lots of greased-back hair and poodle skirts galore! We were in charge of getting people in the mood to dance the night away as we danced for an hour-and-a-half to the tunes of Steve Miller and the Jack Knifes. They were an excellent 50's band and got everyone rockin'. There were approximately 1400 people who attended and famous bands played later in the night including The Platters and Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons. The highlight performer was Chubby Checker as he did a 45-minute medley of great tunes and his energy electrified the crowd!

Thanks to Carol Post-Stroick's urgings we made sure we were in the front row when Chubby came out. As Chubby was shaking hands with people during the first number, he actually reached out and pulled Carol up on stage! She sprung up like a rocket and was beaming at this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity!! What a thrill for Carol and for us to see her dancing with Chubby Checker!!

The USABDA diehard dancers included: Linda & Gordy Davis, Melanie Helvig & Mike Youngdahl, Carol Post-Stroick, Karen Kettler & Mark Tepley, and Dan & Yvonne Viehman. Many thanks to Linda Dobson of Jimmy Allen Event Management for inviting us to partake in the festivities.

### Upcoming Dance Demonstrations

- 03/01 **Minnesota Ballroom Operators Association Free Dance**  
- Demo @ 6:45 pm Mankato, Minnesota @ Kato Ballroom.
- 03/17 **Knollwood Place Apartments**, 3630 Phillips Parkway, (36th St. & Highway 169) St. Louis Park (call 933-1833 for directions); 7:00-8:00 pm; 3 smooth & 4 rhythm couples needed; please arrive at 6:30 pm.
- 3/31 **Knollwood Place Apts**, 3630 Phillips Parkway, St. Louis Park. Call 933-1833 for directions.
- 04/14 **University of St. Thomas**, Murray-Herrick Student Union - 3rd floor lounge, St. Paul Campus; 9:00pm; smooth and rhythm couples needed.
- 04/27 **Macalaster College**, Cochran Lounge, corner of Snelling and Grand in St. Paul: 8:00 - 8:30 pm; smooth and rhythm couples needed - a good opportunity to practice performing before Minnesota Open and Twin Cities Open!

*Please call Yvonne Viehman at 553-1202 and identify which demo, which dances and with whom you'd like to dance*

## Keep On Dancin'!



The Minnesota Amateur Sports Commission  
and the  
United States Amateur Ballroom Dancers Association  
Minnesota Chapter

invite you to participate in the



*DanceSport Events*  
of the  
*'Star of the North'*  
*Winter Sports Festival*

to be held in

*St. Paul, Minnesota*

on

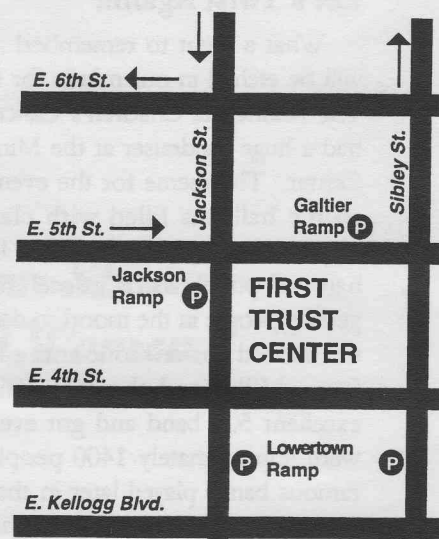
*March 28, 1998*

at

*The Great Hall*

*The First Trust Center*

*5th & Jackson ( Across the Street from Galtier Plaza )*



*Competitive events for Juniors, Collegiate, Adults and Seniors*  
*General Dancing*

*Public Attendance and Participation Invited*

*For more information call: 1-612-228-1557*

*Or contact us via our website at <http://www.arc.umn.edu/usabda/>*



# WEST COAST SWING

## Announcing a New Group Class at DANCESPORT

Inside Knollwood Mall (Hwy. 7, just east of Hwy. 169)

Taught by ERIC REMSEN

### ☆☆☆☆ Drop-in and Tune-up ☆☆☆☆

(You do not need a partner in order to participate.)

Mondays during March from 8:00 – 9:00 p.m.

This is a special class for those who already have experience in West Coast Swing. You will learn new patterns and variations while developing an authentic and personal look and style. This is not a progressive course. Each individual session will be tailored to the ability and needs of the participants.

Cost is \$10.00 per person per session.

---

Nationally-acclaimed instructor and performer

## JEANNIE TUCKER

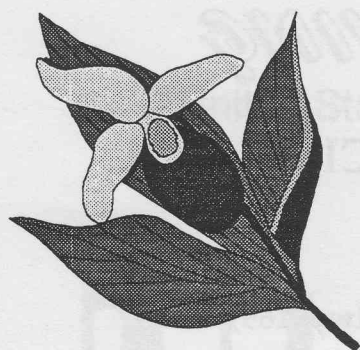
Will be returning to the Twin Cities the weekends of March 27-30 and April 24-26.

She will be teaching a three-hour group class in West Coast Swing at Rodeo night-club in Cottage Grove on Sunday, March 29th from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. The cost is \$30.00 per person in advance, and \$40.00 per person at the door. Registration forms are available at DanceSport.

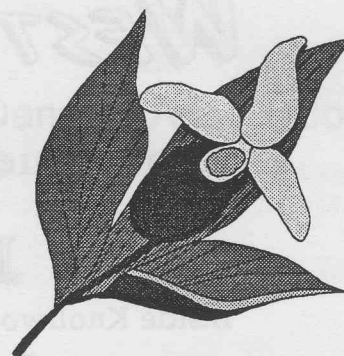
She will also be available for private lessons the weekend of April 24-26.

Jeannie is one of the foremost technicians and stylists in the swing dance world today. She has coached many of the top competitors in the country, and her teaching always receives rave reviews. She never fails to entertain and enlighten her students, so be sure to mark these dates on your calendar.

Call Eric Remsen at 724-3156 for further information.



# Contact Tracy



**For More Information or to  
Make An Appointment**

at (612) 641-0777  
or (612) 792-2322

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## Into Your Knees

by Greg Moore

Knees work hard. They lift us, carry us, turn us, and stop us. It's no wonder they're usually the first joint in any athlete's body to burn out. In March 1996, while preparing for the Wisconsin State Open, Ellen Neuman's right knee began to complain. Her coach observed some swelling around the joint and advised rest. Instead, Ellen strapped on a knee brace, loaded up with Advil, and headed off to Milwaukee, where she took second place in the pro-am American Smooth division.

After Milwaukee she took her sore knee to three more comps. By the end of that summer the pain and swelling had become intolerable. A doctor diagnosed inflammation in the joint and injected cortisone. The knee got better. By January, however, the pain and swelling were back. And now the left knee was hurting. Ellen's first impulse was to use cortisone in both knees, but then she heard that too much cortisone can damage the joint. So she consulted a partnership of three orthopedic specialists. The first told her the condition was treatable but not curable. The second told her surgery might help, but wouldn't forecast any big improvement. The third recommended that she give up dancing. She was beginning to lose hope.

That summer her friend, Bernie Osborn, referred her to the surgeon who had successfully treated Bernie's knee problem. He x-rayed Ellen's knees from various angles, studied the films carefully, and asked her a simple question: "If I fixed this problem, would life be good for you?"

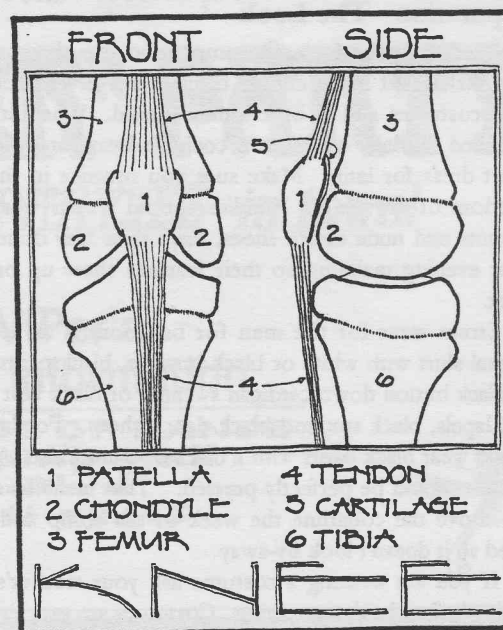
The problem was Ellen's kneecaps. Normally, when the knee is bent, the thigh muscles keep the kneecap, or patella, centered between the femoral condyles, the two large, knuckle-like projections that form the joint at the bottom of the thigh bone. Ellen's kneecaps were being pulled off-center, so that one side of each kneecap was rubbing against a condyle. This friction had worn down the cartilage cushion on the underside of each kneecap, causing inflammation. In fact, the cartilage on the bad side of the right kneecap had completely eroded away --- bone was grinding on bone.

This condition is called *chondromalacia patella*, or runner's knee. It is common among athletes whose sports require constant moving and changing of direction. Dancers are prime candidates. Medication, physical therapy, and rest can help. But, in Ellen's case, the surgeon recommended a procedure called tendon release, in which the tendon attaching the thigh muscle to the damaged side of the kneecap is severed, allowing the kneecap to be pulled back to its normal centered position.

At that time Ellen was preparing for two very special events. In November she was to dance at Ohio Star. Six weeks after that she would become Ellen Ardery by marrying Don Ardery. Surgery in the fall would mean missing Ohio Star, so she arranged to have tendon release performed on both knees as soon as she had returned from Columbus. She and Don decided to be married on schedule, but they postponed their reception to give Ellen several weeks of healing time.

On Friday, December 5 Ellen was wheeled into the operating room. Carol Post-Stroick sat with a very fidgety Don in the waiting room entertaining and distracting him with lighthearted chit-chat. An hour later Ellen was in the recovery room. Two hours later she walked out of the hospital, no wheelchair, no crutches. Her knee pain after surgery was less than it was before surgery. That Sunday, despite doctor's orders to abstain from dancing for two weeks, she asked Don for a teensy dose of waltz in their dining room: "I told him I wouldn't go deep into my knees --- I just needed to know I could still dance." After performing a modest develope, she declared the operation a success. A month later she and Don started practicing regularly. On January 31 they performed a tango and a foxtrot routine at their belated wedding reception. In time Ellen expects a 90 % recovery in the right knee, and 100% in the left.

Ellen's advice to anyone with knee problems: Don't despair and don't wait. "Get yourself to a surgeon who specializes in sports medicine and establish a baseline for yourself --- find out exactly what the problem is and what you can do about it." And the next time you go into that lovely oversway, thank your knees.





## ADVICE FROM THE PROS by Donna Edelstein

### Preparing For Your First Competition

An amateur couple preparing to compete for the first time should realize that dancing is a process. You may never feel quite ready to take the first step out on the floor in front of an audience and judges - but we all feel that way in the beginning. The important thing is getting a start.

### Preparation - Dancing

At least one month before the competition make sure you know all your choreography - all the figures, timing, and alignments. If you need to, put your routines on videotape with your teacher dancing both man's and lady's part and counting the timing so you have a reference.

Have a set practice schedule and don't cancel unless you are ill. Practicing two to three times a week for an hour each time would be a minimum. Plan on taking at least one lesson per week for each style you dance i.e., standard, latin etc.

At each practice session **have a plan**. One day you might decide to focus on dance hold and top line. The next session you might concentrate on lowering action or accuracy of footwork. Your goal should be to improve the **quality** of your dancing, and your **consistency** in demonstrating that quality.

Two weeks before the comp make sure you start to dance rounds to music at each practice session so you'll build up stamina for the competition. Rounds means dancing each dance you are entered in, in the order the dances will be performed for 1-1/2 minutes each. For example, if you are dancing International Standard you would dance Waltz, Tango, Viennese Waltz, Fox-trot and Quickstep in that order, back to back with no rest. Try to dance rounds with other couples on the floor at the same time so you get used to leading and following in traffic.

The week of the competition you might dance a round, take a ten minute rest and dance another round, take a ten minute rest, and dance a third round. This will help you know your material without thinking about it, as well as condition you for the competition.

### Preparation - The Look

Read the rules for each competition regarding costuming as they differ. At some comps bronze and silver dancers do not wear costumes and at others they should. When street wear is specified the lady can wear a cocktail dress for ballroom and a short dress for latin. Make sure you practice in the outfit for freedom of movement. Ladies should always wear nylons or fishnets and nude dance shoes, have their hair done neatly and wear evening make-up so their features show up on the dance floor.

Street wear for the man for ballroom is an ironed white formal shirt with white or black bow tie, black pants and jacket, or black button down cardigan sweater, or black vest with a back and lapels, black sox and black dance shoes. For latin the man would wear black pants with a black or white shirt. All the man's clothes should be perfectly pressed. The man's hair should be cut above the collarline the week of the comp and sprayed or jelled so it doesn't look fly-away.

If you are wearing a costume ask your teacher's or coach's advice before buying anything. Costumes are very expensive and go out of style. If you are just beginning to compete it's most

economical to purchase used costumes. The USABDA newsletter always runs used costume ads for men and women.

### What to Expect at the Competition

Most competitions will allow you to practice on the floor before the event starts. Ask your teacher to check on practice times for you. Practice on the floor in the shoes you will be wearing to compete in. Go through each of your routines start to finish. Don't be alarmed if they feel different than they do in the studio, if your partner feels tense or is agitated, or if you are convinced you've suddenly forgotten every step you knew the day before. You'll get over it all.

**Focus on relaxing**, getting along with your partner, and dancing what you've practiced in the studio.

Get a program from your teacher or the organizer. Look up your heat number and figure out when you dance. Pick up the number for the man's back along with four safety pins. Find the changing room. Change into your competition clothes, use the bathroom, and **be ready to dance one-half hour before your scheduled time** in the program. Look for the "On-deck" area. Every comp has a corner that all couples enter and exit from in order of your assigned number. About three heats before your heat make your way over to the "on-deck area" so you'll be ready to be lined up.

Check your breathing. If it is rushed slow it down, and relax as much as possible. Listen to the music and prepare to enjoy yourself.

### What the Judges Look For

Judges are dancers and love to dance themselves. They enjoy seeing you comfortable dancing, expressing joy and pleasure on the floor. Their initial impression is quick. Are you well groomed and appropriately dressed? Do you exude an air of confidence?

The dance element judges look for first and foremost is timing. If you are off-time you will automatically be placed last. What ever else you do or don't do - stay on time. If you need to stop and re-start, go ahead.

Next the judge is looking for good vertical **posture**, clean **dance hold**, and correct **footwork**. Finally, the judge looks at your **interpretation of each dance**. If the music were turned off would it be obvious what dance you are dancing?

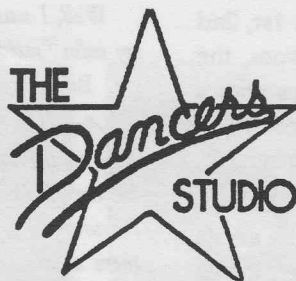
Now you might be out on the dance floor doing a wonderful job, but another couple or two might also be doing a wonderful job. What makes one place first, another, second, and another third?

Sometimes when the couples are very evenly matched it's just personal preference. One judge may prefer the couple who seems to move with less effort, or the couple with the best grooming, or the couple with a better topline or the couple with greater movement. While we all strive for a good result, ultimately dancing is not about winning. It's about becoming the finest dance couple you can be, on a consistent basis. If you work towards that objective you will enjoy many successes.

*Donna Edelstein teaches ballroom and latin dance at DanceSport in Knollwood Mall. She is a Professional Standard competitor, most recently winning the Rising Star Standard and placing third in the Open at the Memphis Open with her partner Paul Botes. Donna will also be one of the judges for The Star Of The North Games this March.*

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## Tango with the Issues

"Jill meets Jack(s) at the Birthday Dance"

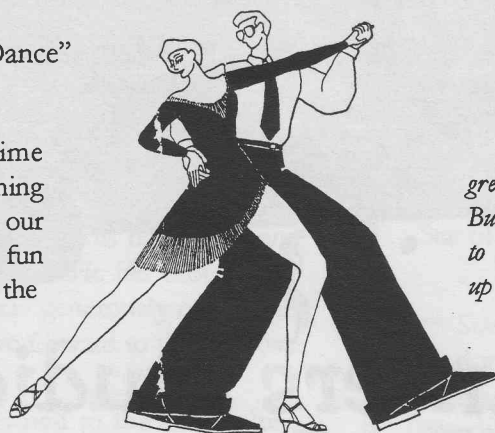
by Janis Livingston

No snow or frigid cold this time around. El Nino wasn't the only thing warming up our Minnesota nights --- our ballroom dancers were out having fun and keeping the temperature rising at the Dance Shoppe. TWO ballrooms were in use as USABDA-MN celebrated it's 7th birthday. This year, along with yummy food and great dance tunes, a fun "mini-comp" put some adventurous participants to the test.

The anniversary dance organizers were all set to try something new. Putting people together in random fashion, volunteers were paired to dance in a mock "mini-comp" with the incentive of receiving a medal for 1st, 2nd or 3rd. Of course, for the more competitive types, the incentive was to see if they could wow the judges with a performance completely made on spur of the moment; others just wanted to have fun. Either way, consensus was it should be a blast!

Ellen, our new USABDA President, emceed the event, and explained to the gathered crowd: There were to be three styles: American smooth, International standard, and rhythm; four levels: bronze, silver, gold and advanced, and a certain dance assigned to each level e.g. American smooth, silver level, danced the tango. Judging was to be based on entertainment value, partnering, and, if there was a tie, technique. Dancers had registered ahead of time through the Dancin' Times and a fun-loving crew of about six "Jacks" and six "Jills" were set to vie for the medals in each event. The suspense was exciting as the time approached.

*Amidst the crowd somewhere was MY "Jack(s)". Who would he/they be? I had practiced and warmed up with my dance partner, Greg, getting set, I thought, to follow. But, you really can't get too ready... "what if I'd never danced with this 'Jack' before," I thought. "Am I up to this task? Did I sign up for the right dance, the right level, the right style? Am I crazy to do this in full view of all these really great dancers? What if I really mess up and my "Jack" is disappointed?" My mind was considering all the possibilities... I was reminding myself this WAS going to be FUN! "Oh!... there's my name..." I go out to meet my "Jack." I nervously completed that first dance --- a Tango --- I felt a sense of relief. Afterall, that was my first competition experience even if it was "just for fun." I'd survived! My partner was politely smiling. I must have done a reasonable job of following.*



*After two more events, I realize this WAS great FUN and was sorry it was all over. But... then... later in the evening, the awards are to be announced... "Gee, now I have to stand up in front of everyone with my 'Jacks' and accept the judges placements. Ahh... what if I blew it?" I was suddenly becoming very competitive. My mind was working quickly. If my name wasn't mentioned during the first couples that meant I had placed higher. I kept my mental fingers crossed and hoped for a high placement. "What's going on with me?" I think guiltily. "This was supposed to be just for fun and now I want a medal!"*

*Well, I wasn't disappointed and I learned something: Beneath my calm "social dance" exterior lies a "competitor" waiting to get out! Bring on that Star of the North! (Are you ready Greg?)*

*And let's not forget the spectators. The audience was great! They supported each event with whistles, cheers and applause, calling out everyone's name as they danced by. It felt great to be so warmly encouraged! I especially enjoyed watching the advanced dancers out there doin' their stuff without their well-known partners. The quick-step was a real hoot. Ice packs anyone?*

Now apart from my little vignette, there are some issues we should explore. Yes, it's time for you readers to respond. The USABDA board has decided to do this again next year. And we want your input. Do you think the audience had as much fun as the participants? Would you like to participate next year? Did this take up too much dance time for everyone else? What improvements in the process or running of the mini-comp would you like to see? Your ideas are important so send or call in your comments to Janis Livingston and we will publish in the next Dancin' Times. (See last page.)

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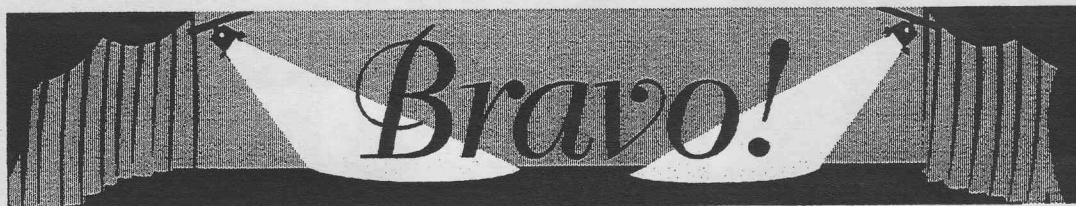
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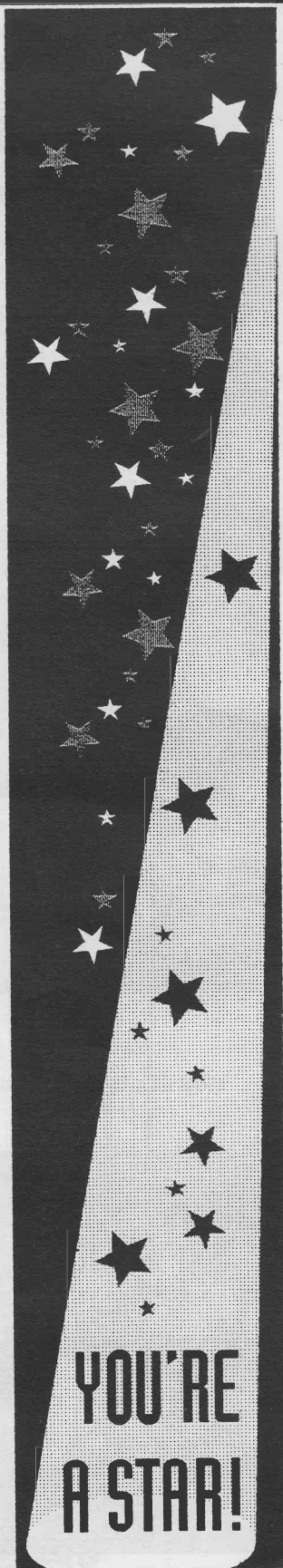
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by Greg Moore



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by Donna Edelstein



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