

MINNESOTA

DANCING TIMES

A publication of the Minnesota Chapter 2011 of USA Dance

May 2012



Again...

Inside this month's issue...

Nationals Results, Tales from Eau Claire's Viennese Ball, Costume Tips, and more!

Join us for the USA Dance

May Monthly Dance

Saturday, May 19th

7-8 pm Cha Cha Lesson

Instructor: Shane Meuwissen

8-11 pm Variety Dance

Music DJ: Shane Meuwissen

\$7 USADance members ■ \$10 non-members

(Become a USA Dance-MN member tonight and get in free!)

Hotline: (651) 483-5467

Email: info@usadance-mn.org

Web: www.usadance-mn.org

Retro Ballroom

5810 West 36th Street

St. Louis Park, MN 55416

USA Dance MN HOTLINE

(651) 483-5467

www.usadance-mn.org

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

Dancers' Night Out

Fri 5/4 - Cinema Ballroom Variety Dance; 1560 St. Clair Ave, St. Paul; lesson at 7, dance at 8; call 651-699-5910 or visit www.cinemaballroom.com

Sun 5/6 - Tea Dance and Brunch; Lafayette Country Club 2800 Northview Road, Minnetonka Beach; 11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.; more info at <http://is.gd/teadance>

Sun 5/6 - Lakeside Dance Club: Julie Lee's White Rose Band; Lakeside Ballroom, 180 South Lakeshore Drive, Glenwood; Country, Big Band, '50s music; \$20 per couple, season pass available; call 320-634-0307 or visit www.lakesideballroom.org

Mon 5/7 - Rhythm Junction Monday Night Swing Dance; Four Seasons Dance Studio, 1637 Hennepin Ave S, Mpls; Admission \$5; call 612-342-0902 or visit www.4seasonsdance.com

Sat 5/12 - Medina Ballroom: The Delcounts; 500 Hwy 55, Medina; '50s - '60s Rock 'n Roll; lesson at 7; \$12; call 763-478-6661 or visit www.medinaentertainment.com

Sat 5/12 - Aqua Gliders Dance; 7540 Penn Ave S, Richfield; West Coast swing lesson at 7:30; \$25 per couple (non-members); call 612-869-3062

Sat 5/12 - Café Bailar Dance; Tropical Ballroom, 1750 Weir Drive, Woodbury; Ballroom and Latin variety; lesson at 7:30; \$10 or \$8 for Café Bailar members, call 651-414-0644 or visit www.tropicalballroom.com

Sat 5/12 - Tango Society of Minnesota Milonga; Tapestry Folkdance Center, 3748 Minnehaha Ave S, Minneapolis; lesson at 8:30, dance 9:30 - 1 a.m.; \$12 (\$8 members); email Julia at robin003@umn.edu or visit www.mntango.org

Mon 5/14 - Rhythm Junction Monday Night Swing Dance; Four Seasons Dance Studio, 1637 Hennepin Ave S, Mpls; \$5 admission; call 612-342-0902 or visit www.4seasonsdance.com

Fri 5/18 - Medina Ballroom: White Sidewalls; 500 Hwy 55, Medina; Doo Wop, Rock-a-Billy, and Rock 'n Roll; lesson at 7; \$12; call 763-478-6661 or visit www.medinaentertainment.com

Fri 5/18 - Cinema Ballroom Variety Dance; 1560 St. Clair Ave, St. Paul; lesson at 7; call 651-699-5910 or visit www.cinemaballroom.com

Sat 5/19 - Tropical Ballroom Practice Party; 1750 Weir Drive, Woodbury; Dance 7-9; \$10; call 651-414-0644 or visit www.tropicalballroom.com

Sat 5/19 - Linden Hills Dancing Club; Lake Harriet United Methodist Church, 4901 Chowen Ave S, Mpls; Ballroom variety; lesson at 6:30, dinner at 7:30; \$35 per couple, advanced reservations required; call 952 412 7230 or visit www.lindenhillsdancingclub.org

Sat 5/19 - Medina Ballroom: City Lights; 500 Hwy 55, Medina; '50s - '70s music; lesson at 7; \$12; call 763-478-6661 or visit www.medinaentertainment.com

Mon 5/21 - Rhythm Junction Monday Night Swing Dance; Four Seasons Dance Studio, 1637 Hennepin Ave S, Mpls; \$5 admission; call 612-342-0902 or visit www.4seasonsdance.com

Fri 5/25 - Cinema Ballroom: Salsa Fusion; 1560 St. Clair Ave, St. Paul; lesson at 7; call 651-699-5910 or visit www.cinemaballroom.com

Sat 5/26 - Medina Ballroom: Rockin' Hollywoods; 500 Hwy 55, Medina; '50s - '80s music; lesson at 7; \$12; call 763-478-6661 or visit www.medinaentertainment.com

Mon 5/28 - Rhythm Junction Monday Night Swing Dance; Four Seasons Dance Studio, 1637 Hennepin Ave S, Mpls; admission \$5; call 612-342-0902 or visit www.4seasonsdance.com

American Classic Ballroom.....(952) 934-0900
www.americanclassicrockandroll.com, 550 Market St., Chanhassen, MN 55317 (494 west to Hwy 5, right on Market Blvd, right on Market St.)

Arthur Murray Dance Studio.....(651) 227-3200
534 Selby Avenue, St. Paul, MN. Salsa for beginners and advanced on Wednesday 8:15 pm/\$15. Date Night variety class for beginners on Friday 6:45 pm/\$25/couple.

USA Dance – MN Chapter #2011 Board Minutes

Tuesday, April 3, 2012

Submitted by Jane Phipps

In attendance: Sue Zeller (President), Jane Phipps (Treasurer), Zhuojing Liu, Mike Jones, Corissa Rannum, Andy Trawick, Dede Ouren, Katie Menk

Location: Quixotic Coffee, 769 Cleveland Ave South, St. Paul

Call to Order: Quorum established. Agenda approved. March minutes were approved with small correction to cost of flyers and advertising for the Free Sunday Dance Lessons.

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS:

Treasurer's Report

- A detailed treasurer's report was distributed.

World Class Dance Floor

- A meeting was held with Scott Anderson regarding the transfer of the dance floor. The ownership of the floor will be transferred to Megamarc, leaving the original agreement of "USA Dance receives three (3) free uses per year."

April Spring Formal at U of M

- Katie Menk from the University of Minnesota Ballroom Dance Club gave an update on the April spring formal dance being held at the U of M on April 21st. There will be validated parking

for the parking ramps. The cost for admission is \$12 for members and \$15 for non-members. The dance is formal with an Old Hollywood theme. There will be a free dance lesson before the dance begins. It was agreed that USA Dance would pay the instructor for the dance lesson.

Tea Dance

- Dede Ouren provided an update on the Tea Dance being held on May 6th. So far there have been 41 reservations. DeDe submitted the budget for the Tea Dance. It appears that the projected revenue and costs are on target. The brunch will be held from 11:00 - 12:30 and the dance will be from 1:00 - 4:00. Thank you, Dede and all the committee members, for organizing this event.

Project Dance Minnesota

- Corissa presented the results for the March free Sunday dance lessons that were held at Dancers Studio. Attendance for the weeks were as follows: week 1 - 28, week 2 - 26, week 3 - 26, and week 4 - 27. The April free Sunday dance lessons will be held at Tropical Ballroom, and the lessons will be on waltz. May will be at Social Dance Studio, and the lessons will be for East Coast swing.

Monthly Dance Locations and Music Equipment Needs

- Zhuojing presented the schedule for the rest of the year for the monthly dances.
- Andy Trawick submitted a request for additional speakers for the sound system. The Board approved \$1,500 to purchase the items needed to improve the quality of the sound.

Dance Performances with the Viking Cheerleaders

- Mike, Chris Trask, and Yvonne Viehman are still exploring this idea and will report more on this later.

2012 Star of the North Results & 2013 Plans

Jessica was not able to attend the meeting so this has been tabled until the next meeting.

Next Meeting:

May 1st, 6:00 p.m.

Quixotic Coffee

769 Cleveland Ave South, St. Paul ■

USA Dance: Who Are We?

We are a nonprofit organization formed to preserve and promote ballroom dancing, both as an art and a healthful sport. The Minnesota chapter, USA Dance MN, was formed in 1991.

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

USA Dance 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 meeting many new friends. For more information, call the USA Dance MN HOTLINE: 651-483-5467.

The Minnesota Dancing Times is published monthly by the members of the Minnesota Chapter of USA Dance, providing information and news of ballroom dancing to members and friends.

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Contributions: Articles submitted may be edited for length, clarity, and content. Photos should be high-resolution jpg, png, or pdf files. Email submissions to: newsletter@usadance-mn.org.

Subscriptions: \$22/year. Make checks payable to USA Dance MN and send to Theresa Kimler, 7050 49th St. N, St. Paul, MN 55128 ■

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**Another
winner of
the *Dancing
Times* photo
competition!**

**Check it out on
page 10**

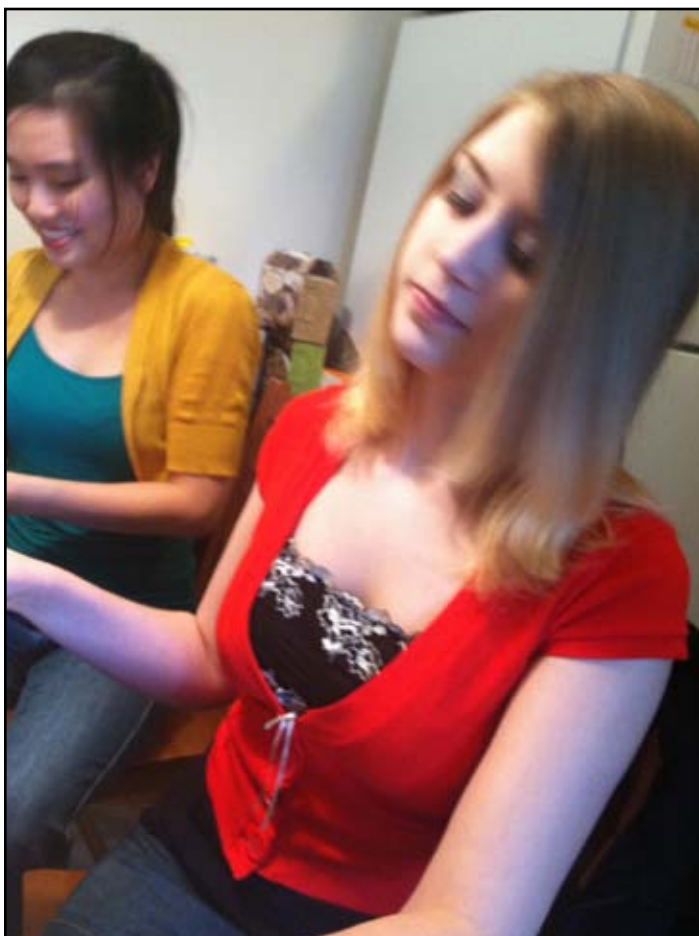
Advertising

DISPLAY ADS: To advertise your event or professional service, submit a digital file (300 dpi pdf or jpeg format ONLY) or camera-ready artwork to Suzi Blumberg (email: suzi.b@usfamily.net phone: 612-869-4416) along with payment to USA Dance MN. Advertising for charge cards, insurance, or travel cannot be accepted. Payment to accompany ad.

Full page 7.5" wide x 10" high \$130
Half page 7.5" wide x 4.75" high \$80
OR 3.5" wide x 9.5" high
Qtr. page 3.5" wide x 4.75" high \$60
Business Card 3 consecutive months \$50

SWAPLINE ADS: Free 3-line ad in Swaplines available to subscribers (dance merchandise only). Send to: newsletter@usadance-mn.org

**DEADLINE FOR ALL MATERIALS:
10th OF EACH MONTH**



From the Editor

by Mary Beth Beckman

like beeswax), and my super-adorable nieces being happy and adventurous and likely getting sick from candy.

Later in the month, I had a lunch date at Everest on Grand (the chicken chhoila is pretty much the most delicious thing ever) with an old dorm-mate from my St. Thomas days. This resulted in giggle fits inspired by memories of studying, and if studying is that exciting, you know you did something right.

I also spent an evening with a bunch of attractive Minnesota dancers making pizza and playing Bananagrams. Pete Westlake made the mozzarella, Nic Westlake made the dough, Sehyun Oh provided the equipment and chopped vegetables, and I was the spelling consultant. Perhaps not the most equitable arrangement, but I contend that spelling is important. (I would.) This month's photo features Dr. Oh, whose PhD is still new enough for the title to be exciting to those around her.

In this, the May issue of the *Dancing Times*, you'll find some tales from Nationals, photos from the spring formal hosted by USA Dance Minnesota and the University of Minnesota Ballroom Dance Club, tales from Eau Claire's 38th Viennese Ball, some great advice from our monthly columnists, and a hard-hitting Ask Dr. Dance no competitive dancer should miss.

I'm excited to see next month's submissions start to roll in. If you've never written for the *Dancing Times* before, I'd encourage you to give it a shot. Excited dancers fuel this publication.

Here's hoping May is sunny and nice-smelling!

To solicit Mary Beth's editing services, ask questions about the newsletter, or submit content, contact her at newsletter@usadance-mn.org. ■

April has ended, and as per Minnesota standard, I feel I should start by talking about the weather. The weather was all over the place and utterly crazy, and ain't that just like Minnesota? There. Now that that's out of the way . . .

April had a holiday in it rife with good, clean family fun. Also featuring prominently: a cutthroat Easter egg hunt wherein my uncle trounced everyone, Ukrainian egg-dyeing a.k.a. pyansky (and no, none of us is Ukrainian; we just

The *Dancing Times* Says Goodbye to Designer Janie Nordberg

By Mary Beth Beckman

Janie Nordberg has been on the volunteer staff of the *Dancing Times* for fifteen years, donating countless hours to laying out the newsletter. Much of the look and feel of every issue is a part of Janie's legacy, the way her vision has guided this publication over the years. Very few people ever exhibit the spirit of volunteerism that Janie has, and for that, she is greatly admired.

April's issue was Janie's final contribution as a part of our volunteer staff. She has been presented with some new and

exciting opportunities to stretch her legs and explore where her talents can take her. All of us here at the *Dancing Times* are grateful for all of the excellent work she's done over the years, and we wish her the best of luck in all future endeavors.

Thank you, Janie, for your contribution to this publication. Please know that we'll always save a page for photos and stories from your dancing life. ■



The President's Corner

Passion, Music, and Dance

All of us that have a passion for dance know that the music makes all the difference in the world. The experience we have at any dance event, whether it is a monthly dance, special dance event, competition, or dance demo, depends on the music and the people there.

At a dance competition, it is the music that drives the dancers to step, turn, stretch, lift, and express all that is within them. No matter which style of dance we are watching, the music brings the dance to life. It is the music that seems to touch us emotionally and bring enjoyment to all of us, whether we are dancing or watching.

At the April monthly dance, a University of Minnesota Student played the music that set the background for the theme of this spring formal, "A Night with the Stars." Old and new dance music stars alike were represented in the music selections of the evening. We enjoy hosting this dance with the University of Minnesota Ballroom Dance Club. These students are getting great dance instruction, and it is a pleasure to dance with them. We are fortunate to have Corissa Ranum on the USA Dance Minnesota board. She brings great energy, enthusiasm, and effort to the board.

The first Sunday in May is the Tea Dance, an event we all look forward to. The venue is excellent, and we are fortunate to have Dede Ouren, chair of the Tea Dance committee, making sure all the details are just right to ensure a great event. Shane Meuwissen will be playing music for this special event. Shane has a talent for arranging very passionate dance music, which will fill this beautiful dance space as we fill the room with dance.

At Star of the North, our yearly amateur dance competition, we had great music for two long days, an incredible undertaking that was well met by Chris Kempainen. It is a challenge to play for a competition, as the tempo and length of the music played is critical.

After DJ Pete Maki passed away late last year, Andy Trawick and Shane Meuwissen quickly stepped up to help USA Dance Minnesota with music. We miss Pete and Joyce playing their treasure of music but are fortunate to have these music-makers step in. Andy and Shane have been playing music at our monthly dances for quite some time.

It's what we don't see that makes our music experience so great. Countless hours are spent arranging the music to be played by our DJs. I can't even imagine what this really entails. So at the event or dance, it appears simple to be playing the music, when in reality, the hard work was done for many hours before the event.

Thank you to Shane Meuwissen, Andy Trawick, Chris Kempainen, and the University of Minnesota Ballroom Dance Club student for making sure we have passionate music to dance to. Your dedication to making sure we have the best music makes all the difference in the world to our dance experience.

Happy dancing!

Sue Zeller ■



Elizabeth Dickinson is a dancer and life coach in the Twin Cities. She can be reached at <http://elizabethdickinson1.wordpress.com>

The Dancing Life

Blowing Through Steps, Blowing Through Life

By Elizabeth Dickinson

It's always a surprise to me when I blow through a step.

Take the open left turn. First step's fine. Or at least I think it is.

"No," said my teacher. "You need to really land on it, *then* thrust up to the next step. You've blended it all together."

How can this be?

Open lefts have been sticky lately. As you know, the last couple of columns have been about balance. I've been pretty obsessed with balance. The next place balance reared its head was on the open lefts.

What I was thinking was, "How the heck do I maintain my balance on the second and third steps of the open left turn?"

In fact, *all* I could think about as I started the first step of open left turn was, "How do I get there?" and "How do I stay there?"

"How do I get there?" and "How do I stay there?" are common themes in coaching. Clients have a goal, and because we're all human, the minute we get there, we want to either know how to stay there or how to get on to the next goal.

But sometimes those are the wrong questions.

I took a course called "The Writing Habit" at the Loft a couple of years ago taught by Roseanne Bane (I really recommend it if you're trying to establish a regular writing habit). One of the things she shared was the process of creativity. She said oftentimes when people feel stuck at one step of the creative process, it's because they didn't completely finish the previous step. If you don't fully complete the previous step for whatever reason, it's really hard to make the next step successful.

I've been making the connection to dance. I'm often so worried about a piece of a step that I stop paying attention to the setup for the step, which is the foundation for success.

I call it "going unconscious" or "blowing through the step."

Are there any areas in your life where you're stuck? Are you so focused on a particular outcome that you've forgotten to give yourself a foundation for success?

I've found over and over again in coaching (and in my own life) that my clients and I don't always have to know how to achieve the ultimate goal all at once. And sometimes it doesn't serve me (or them) to know all the steps ahead of time to achieve the goal. In fact, it can be downright unproductive and unnecessarily intimidating.

All I have to do is identify the one thing I *can* do next and take that one obvious step. One step at a time.

And you know, when I really land on that first step of the open left and am conscious about it as an entirely separate step (giving it the respect it deserves), I am suddenly a little more balanced.

What a concept. ■



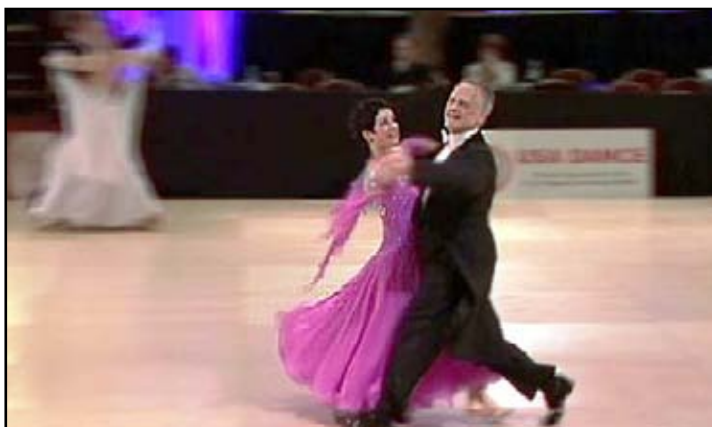
The LaTourelles at Nationals

By Anne LaTourelle

The last time Tom and I headed to Nationals was in 2007. We were sidelined after the Southeast Regional that year as I struggled with back issues. After spending a couple years going to college full-time while working full-time, we decided we wanted to go to Nationals one more time. We headed off to three regionals (Gumbo, Carolina Fall Classic, and Chicago), went through multiple versions of choreography, and finally were thrilled to head to Baltimore.

Our goal was to make the podium in Senior II Championship Smooth, and we achieved it by placing 3rd in a competitive field of 11 couples. Senior I Championship Smooth was a straight final, and we placed 4th. Finally, on Sunday afternoon, we danced Senior II Pre-Champ Smooth and placed 2nd in a field of 12 competitors.

We enjoyed the Baltimore venue and had a great time seeing friends and cheering on the other talented Minnesota couples! Special thanks to our team of coaches this year, Donna Edelstein, Nathan Daniels, and Jay Larson. A shout-out to Michelle Officer, who gave us some great, immediately implementable 11th-hour suggestions. It was wonderful to see you in Baltimore, and we appreciate your taking the time to watch our heats and cheer us on! ■



The Whitneys Go to Nationals

By Leland Whitney

Leslie and I drove to Baltimore to compete at the 2012 USA Dance National DanceSport Championships. The weather was perfect for driving. The hours in the car help us to emotionally and mentally focus on the competition and each other. We took four days to get home (lots of antiquing for Leslie, and lots of napping for me)!

We competed in 12 events, placing in 9:

- Senior II Novice Standard - Quarterfinal - 6th place
- Senior III Gold Standard - Semifinal - 1st place
- Senior III Novice Standard - Final - 1st place
- Senior II Gold Rhythm - Final - 1st place
- Senior II Novice Rhythm - Final - 1st place
- Senior III Gold Rhythm - Final - 1st place
- Senior III Novice Rhythm - Final - 1st place
- Senior III Championship Smooth - Semifinal - 6th place
- Senior III PreChamp Smooth - Semifinal - 2nd place ■



Deborah J. Nelson is the founder, president, and head designer of Satin Stitches Ltd. See more costuming tips at www.satinstitches.com.

Look Your Best

Great Colors and Textures for Your Ballroom Costumes and Gowns

By Deborah J. Nelson

Are there perfect colors for your ballroom costumes and gowns? And what is a texture?

There is a philosophy of color, and there are color wheels. Over the years, there have been companies based on working with your color palette. What does this all mean, and how should it affect what color you choose for your next ballroom costume?

Color is an incredible thing that can create a mood for your dance performance. Colors have meanings. There is a psychology to color. Did you know that years ago, red was a much stronger color and was assigned to boys, while blue was considered a more feminine color? This has reversed in today's color world. This is just one example of how colors take on meaning.

I learned a tremendous amount about the history of our relationship to color, how color influences our moods, and how we feel in the presence of various colors when I researched the subject years ago at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design, where I graduated with a BFA in fashion design.

Of course, there are fashionable colors every season, but where do these colors come from? In design class, we learn that there are Pantone colors, the official colors for everything. Pantone is a company that documents colors. All companies working with colors refer to these Pantone colors, and new colors are featured every year or season.

In performance, colors evoke feelings. There are sad colors, happy colors, and soothing colors. There are bright colors and subtle colors. How do you pick what colors you should use on a costume? If you're serious about learning more about colors, pick up an artist's color wheel from an art supply store. These wheels can really come in handy with learning more about color.

Your colors should reflect the mood of your performance. Most importantly, colors should not fight your mood. If you were trying to evoke a happy, light, and airy feel in your dance routine, heavy, dark colors should not be used. If you were presenting an edgy, sharp performance, pastels such as pink and aqua would be your last choices.

After eliminating the definitely inappropriate colors, consider other issues, such as your coloring. This is where your color palette comes in. Certain colors flatter different skin tones and hair colors. If you are considering dying your hair, keep this in mind. What generally looks good on a brunette may not look as good on a blond or redhead. Are you a summer or a winter? Hopefully, in your street apparel, you've become aware of what colors flatter your coloring the best. Keep these colors in mind when choosing your next dance costume color.

What makes a flattering color? Here are some basic color concepts. Dark colors make you look smaller, and light colors make you look bigger. Shiny colors make you look bigger, while matte colors make you look smaller. Bright colors, also referred to as jewel tones, are known as stage colors. The reason? They always look great onstage! Jewel colors include the colors of rubies, sapphires, and emeralds. Pastel colors tend to wash out, while colors with some intensity to them do not. But a good rule to follow is to not always follow the rules. The style and fit of a costume

can counteract any perception that the colors make you look bigger, so don't rule out colors simply because you think they will make you look big.

Using different shades of the same color is referred to as a monochromatic color scheme. If you're looking to coordinate two colors, remember to refer to your color wheel. Then the trick is to find fabrics that match the color combinations that you see (and like) on your wheel.

A very important rule to follow is to keep all your colors at the same intensity. Hue is another name for color. A tint is a lighter shade of a color, or the color plus white. A color tone is the color plus gray. A shade is the color plus black. Be very careful in mixing a tint with a tone or a shade. Not to say that it can't be done well, but generally, the results don't work.

Besides color, texture is important in choosing your fabrics. Textures include the shiny and matte, along with prints and various finishes such as holograms, glitters, velvets, and so on. Adding embellishments like rhinestones also creates a texture. You also need to be careful with mixing your textures. There are no particular rules here. It has a lot

to do with your artistic sensibilities. When it looks right, it probably is right.

Colors are incredible and never dull. Experiment with unique combinations, but take a discerning look with good lighting to see if you are really getting the look you are going for. And always be aware of how different colors may look from performance distance versus up close.

One last issue with colors: if you're part of a group where everyone is in matching costumes, someone is tasked with the color decision. Even if the color isn't your favorite or you perceive it not to be your best color, smile and put on your best face (with makeup, hair, and jewelry, of course) and realize you are part of a whole.

If you're costuming yourself for a solo, your instructor can provide suggestions, but don't invest in a costume with a color that you truly dislike. It's just not fair to yourself. Yes, keep an open mind, and consider colors that you may not gravitate towards, but if there's a particular color you really don't like, for whatever reason, avoid it. Spend your money on costumes that you will love! ■



Nels Petersen demonstrates the "no-hands" post-competition pizza-eating technique to fellow Minnesota teammates at USA Dance Nationals. The rest of the MN crew resorts to the traditional technique with enthusiasm.



Congratulations to **Corinne Standish**, winner of April's photo competition!

Email you best photo of the May monthly dance to newsletter@usadance-mn.org by May 25th for your chance to win free admission to the June dance.



The Second Largest Viennese Ball in the World

By Chris Trask

On April 14th, a warm sunny Saturday afternoon, my friend Jeannie and I arrived at our hotel in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. We had all afternoon to make up our minds about which dresses we would wear, how to do our hair, and what jewelry we were to wear for the 38th annual Viennese Ball, the largest in the world outside of Vienna. Yes, our men couldn't make it, but that didn't stop us from attending the ball.

At 6:30 we arrived at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire and were greeted by the mellow, relaxing sound of harps and the friendly, welcoming smiles from Eau Claire students. A charming young man dressed in his tux informed me that in 1986, an exchange program with Austria's University of Graz was established with scholarship funds generated by the ball. The ball continues to provide scholarships to students. University staff, students, and volunteers from the community turn the university into a magnificent European paradise.

As we walked down the hall, there was a room where you could buy lovely elegant corsages, European handblown glass items, semiprecious stones, and beautiful Viennese fans. Every now and then, we would see a living statue created by a mime artist. "Look at all the different colors and styles of dresses." Jeannie commented at one point in the evening. "I believe I've seen every color of the rainbow here tonight."

There were plenty of Viennese eateries, which included such items such as delicious pork schnitzel with apple brandy gingersnap sauce, fresh green beans with tomato coulis, grilled root vegetable pancakes, sautéed spaetzle, and grilled spicy brats with kraut. The Maria Theresa Room was a favorite of everyone, since it

featured a create-your-own-mouth-watering-dessert bar with Sachertorte, assorted cheesecake, and high-quality Viennese-style coffee.

The music was performed by the university's symphony orchestra, jazz ensemble, women's chorus, and the Singing Statesmen. I was impressed to see a handout at each table outlining the Viennese Ball dance floor etiquette directions. One of my favorite Viennese songs to dance to was Cinderella's "Waltz for a Ball" by Richard Rodgers and "The Blue Danube" by Johann Strauss, Jr. My favorite from the jazz group was "In the Mood" by Joe Garland. Jeannie and I also danced to polka music, which was in a separate room decorated with elaborate German flair.

The clock struck midnight, and our gowns did not turn to rags. Instead we were offered a midnight breakfast. Our feet were getting swollen, but we both found a dance partner and danced a few more waltzes. We were some of the last to leave our table and find a pair of shoes. (Cinderella!) We took the shoes with us and proceeded to look for our car. Yes, we both had a senior moment and forgot where we parked my car.

A fine young man in a tux came to our rescue. We found out that he had graduated from Eau Claire a year ago, had been a radio announcer throughout his college years, and was also in the choir. We went to a parking lot and still didn't find the car. A student friend of his pulled up in her carriage and buoyantly offered us a ride. In a royal moment of excited introductions, compliments, and exchanges of thank yous, Jeannie saved my ball gown from dust when it flowed out the door and into the street. It added to the magic of the moment as we shared laughter with our brand-new friends. As it happens, our lady escort was one of the students who received a scholarship from the ball.

The generosity and kindness we received from the students of Eau Claire was quite memorable. We won't forget the royal treatment we received at the second largest Viennese Ball in the world. ■

Danceland

Chapter 16

By Lester Martin

"Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to the open pro/am session of the Tri State Open DanceSport Championship!"

The afternoon announcer had been replaced by a guy in a dinner jacket who obviously spent lots of time fussing with his hair.

"We have a very exciting line-up of dancers this evening, and I just know they're going to put on a fabulous show for you!" He introduced the seven judges as they took their places around the floor, throwing in a little plug for each of their studios. Then he told a couple of lame jokes, which bombed, and finally got down to business.

"Our first event this evening is Senior 1 American Smooth. We have eight couples. This is a final, and the judges are asked to rank all eight couples." Instead of calling out numbers, as was the procedure in the syllabus events, he introduced couples by name. As the couples took the floor, they were greeted by thunderous applause and cheers. Brian and Melanie were third in line. Brian led her to the center of the floor, flashing a confident smile out to the crowd, released her hand, and took his place about ten feet away. They locked eyes and I could almost see the brain waves passing between them.

Melanie wore a long-sleeved gown of shiny canary yellow Lycra that showed off her trim figure. The only decoration was a diagonal splash of hot-rod red from her left shoulder to her left toes. The dorsal aspect was daringly open, revealing most of a creamy smooth, lightly tanned back.

"What a gorgeous gown," Jessica said to Roger. "Is that from Italy?"

"Nope," Roger chuckled. "Hollywood."

Rachel Walker and her coach, Henry Bollingbroke, were at the end of the line.

"Dead last, as always," Roger commented flatly. "Rachel doesn't turn in her entry form until she gets here."

She was taller and a bit fleshier than Melanie, but she carried herself with a ballerina's strength and poise. She had the aquiline nose and high forehead of an aristocrat and raven black hair piled neatly on the crown of her head and



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sparkling with silvery stones. Her gown was a complicated affair consisting of a royal blue velvet bodice encrusted with more stones and multiple blue and white chiffon skirts that billowed and trailed gently as she walked.

Her coach was shorter and older than Brian. Except for the tail suit, he reminded me of a chemistry professor I had in college. Roger leaned toward me. "Henry and Mrs. Bollingbroke were ranked twenty-sixth worldwide when they were in their prime. They came here from Liverpool about ten years ago."

"Your first dance," the MC announced when everyone had found a suitable spot on the floor, "is the waltz. Music, please."

The piece chosen for the waltz had a long intro with a dramatic crescendo. Everyone stood like perfect statues, waiting and listening, except Brian and Melanie. Their arms lifted and their bodies expanded slowly like two majestic birds about to take flight. Then they began to circle each other,

gradually building up energy between them as they spiraled closer and closer together. With the first measure of three-quarter time music, they were off and running while everyone else was still counting beats.

I had never seen their waltz routine and could not imagine how they had managed to rehearse it in a space as small as the Happy Feet studio. It wasn't just a dance—more like an air show, really. They floated along, threading their way effortlessly among the other couples into the corners and out again, shadowing and mirroring each other as if there was a shared center of gravity between them and they were riding the currents of its force. By the time they had zoomed through a couple of laps and the music began to fade, I realized I hadn't paid any attention to the other couples, including Henry and Rachel.

"Wow!" I said. "Did your Italian coaches come up with that routine?"

"No," Roger replied. "That's Brian's choreography, with some help from Max Pevzner. Brian and Melanie

visit Max's studio in Brooklyn once a month. Giorgio and Rosa in Milan worked on Melanie's characterization."

"Her what?"

"Characterization. Each dance has its own story that gives it a personality. Melanie's background is ballet, so her technique is impeccable, but she needed to learn how to interact with her partner in a way that tells the story."

Jessica and I exchanged puzzled looks.

Roger smiled. "In other words, she has to make it sizzle."

The couples had regrouped, and the music was starting up for the second dance: tango. I had never watched a tango, but I'd read something somewhere about its origin in the red-light district of Buenos Aires. Plenty of sizzle potential right there.

This time I focused first on Henry and Rachel. If I had to choose one word to describe their dancing, it would be *confident*. Henry had a talent for

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avoiding traffic jams and maneuvering Rachel into open spaces where she could show her stuff, which included kicks, spins, and drags. She was the shining star, and Henry was the masterful director. Together they were brilliant, and it was easy to see how Rachel had come to dominate this event.

But Brian and Melanie had the sizzle. Where Rachel and Henry displayed superior technical skill, Brian and Melanie turned up the heat. For the waltz, they might have been Prince Charming and Cinderella at the ball. For the tango, they were Alpha Male and Devil Woman, locked in a steamy contest of wills. He pursued; she evaded. He commanded; she scorned. He postured; she seduced. Once in a while, exhausted from the struggle, they would melt into each other's arms and enjoy a few seconds of Argentine social dancing. Then she would break away, and the battle for supremacy would begin again. Marvelous.

For foxtrot, Henry and Rachel transformed into Fred and Ginger. They were elegance and delicacy personified, skipping and dashing along, their feet barely touching the floor. Once again, Henry was the incomparable pilot, navigating them away from the crowded areas so that Rachel always had a generous stage. Brian and Melanie, on the other hand, were saucy and playful, staying close to the edge of the floor where Melanie could flirt with the guys sitting at the front tables.

At this point, I was beginning to understand the strategy that Brian and Melanie had worked out. Although they were both fabulous dancers, they could not surpass Henry and Rachel in terms of technical competence. So they went for originality and showmanship. It was the inevitable confrontation between the old world and the new, between east and west, between classical and modern.

As the Viennese waltz began, Brian and Melanie lit their afterburners and

blasted off. Their routine looked pretty wild in the Happy Feet studio. On a competition floor it looked positively dangerous. While Henry and Rachel demonstrated total control at all times, Brian and Melanie were one inch from out of control at all times. Even some of the other couples were staying out of their way. I breathed a sigh of relief when the music faded and everyone was still standing. In fact, people in the audience were standing and cheering wildly.

As the couples left the floor, Roger got up. "Well, time to go debrief our stars!" he said and hurried off after Brian and Melanie.

"Oh, my goodness," Jessica said. "I got tired just watching them!"

"Amazing," I replied. "Just amazing."

"Well, well, well," a man behind us said. "Look who came to cheer us on!" We turned just as Todd and Melinda plopped themselves down at our table.

"How nice to see you both!" Melinda said with a big grin. "I hope you're enjoying the show."

"How did you get a front-row table?" Todd asked. "These usually sell out months in advance."

"It's Roger's table," Jessica answered. "He's been educating us on competitive ballroom."

Todd nodded slowly. "No one knows more about that subject than Roger Sinclair."

"Sinclair?" I asked. "Roger Sinclair? Of Sinclair Logistics? The big government contractor?"

"The very same."

"Small world," I said. "My company bid on the construction contract for their new research facility. Didn't get it, though. The lowest bid was just under three hundred million. Now I understand how they can afford lessons in Italy and gowns from Hollywood."

"Don't be fooled by the money," Melinda said. "Melanie is lucky to have a husband like Roger. He worships her and he's a great manager. But Melanie started dancing as soon as she was out of diapers. *That's* why she's a star. That, plus thirty hours of practice every week. Roger and Brian are always trying to get her to take some time off, but she won't listen. If she stopped dancing, she'd probably go nuts."

"Sounds like she and Kristina have something in common," Jessica observed. "By the way, you guys looked fabulous in the rhythm event! We were betting on you for every dance."

Todd broke out laughing. "So where did they place us, honey? Do you remember?"

Melinda touched her chin and looked upward. "Hmm ... I think it was ninth."

My jaw dropped. "You were *miles* ahead of those punks!"

"We always dance in the younger categories," Todd replied with a dismissive wave. "It's a good warm-up."

"And it's good for some laughs," Melinda added. "We'll do better tomorrow in the senior division."

"So what did you think of Brian and Melanie tonight?" Jessica asked.

Todd and Melinda looked at each other and slowly shook their heads.

"This was their best performance ever," Melinda said, "but Rachel has been on top for many years. Melanie is still considered a newcomer."

"And besides," Todd added, "this is just a local competition. Nationals is three months away. That gives Brian time to make some upgrades."

None of this was making any sense to me. Or to Jessica, judging from the frown on her face. Why did these people invest so much time, effort, and money on a sport that was so ... unsporting? ■

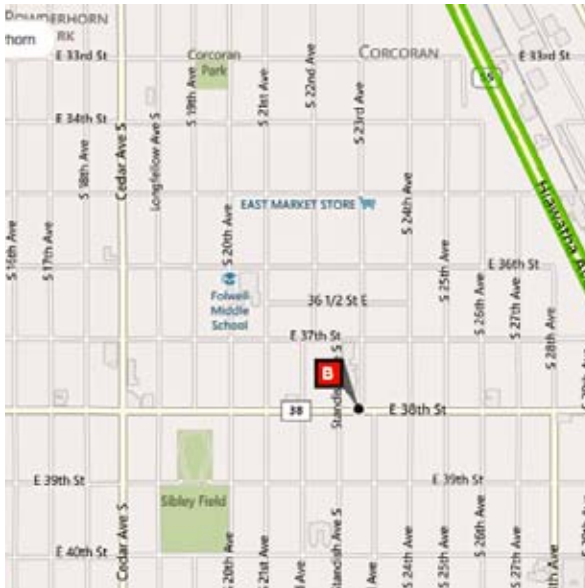
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Camelot Comes to Wisconsin: A Love Story *By Suzi Blumberg*

This year the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire Viennese Ball celebrated its 38th year, and it turned out to be an extra special event for local dancers Jessica Madson and Reuben Van Hemert. Jessica and Reuben met in college at UW-Eau Claire nine years ago, where she was president of the Ballroom Dance Club and Reuben was president of the Hwa Rang Do Martial Arts Club.

While in college, they began attending the annual Viennese Ball together, a formal event that recalls the culture, history, and music of 19th-century Vienna. Each year, the Davies Center turns into a replica of Vienna and is the largest Viennese ball outside of Vienna, Austria, with over 5,000 people attending from all over the world. It hosts a live orchestra, a live jazz band, and a live polka band in different rooms, and ball-goers can dance to their hearts' content surrounded by opulent mirrors and crystal chandeliers.

Jessica and Reuben both graduated and moved to the Twin Cities and have returned to Eau Claire each April to attend the event. This year would prove to be different, though. When Reuben picked Jessica up for the big evening, there was a beautiful white limo parked outside. When she entered, she was very surprised to see her parents inside all dressed up in tuxedo and ballgown, ready to go to the Viennese Ball.

Once at the ball, they wasted no time in getting on the dance floor and were having a great time. After one song, however, Reuben's brother came up to them in the middle of the floor and gave him a big hug. All of a sudden,

Reuben had a microphone in his hand and was telling everyone around them that they had been dance partners for nine wonderful years. He promised to always be there for her, saying that he didn't know what the future would bring but that it would find them always together. He dropped to one knee and asked Jessica to marry him.

Jessica was overjoyed. She felt like a princess all made up in her beautiful white gown in the middle of the ballroom, surrounded by people. Of course she said yes as he pulled a sparkling ring out from his tuxedo jacket and put it on her finger.

Reuben had orchestrated the entire event very nicely. He coordinated the proposal with the conductor of the orchestra. Jessica remembers that when she was still in college, she used to hint that it would be romantic to get engaged at the ball, and nine years later, her wish came true. They danced the night away, and to Jessica, it was a wonderful, fairytale evening.

For those of you who don't know, Jessica was the event coordinator for the 2012 Star of the North and is among the best bakers in town. Her business, Haute Chocolate, sells delicious cookies, cupcakes, bars, cakes, and pies. Many attendees of USA Dance events remember her desserts. She has a wedding to plan now and is open to lots of orders that will help pay for a lovely, memorable wedding. If you have an event coming up in need of baked goods, you can email her at jessicacarolyn@hotmail.com. ■

The Twin Cities Rebels 16th Anniversary Weekend Saturday – Sunday June 9-10, 2012 Featuring Workshops by Celebrated Dancer & Instructor Michael Kiehm

Michael competes, performs, coaches, judges, and hosts dance events throughout the year on top of his very busy teaching schedule. Michael holds a "Rising Stars" International Latin Champion title with his sister, Carmen Garcia, and several "Pro-Am" Ballroom and Latin championship titles. At the present time Michael competes in West Coast Swing. Don't miss Michael's rare visit to the Twin Cities!



Workshop Schedule

Saturday, June 9

1:00-2:00 p.m.: WCS: Advanced Basics
2:15-3:15 p.m.: WCS: Intermed.-Advanced
3:30-4:30 p.m.: Night Club 2-Step: Intermed.-Advanced
7:00-8:00 p.m.: WCS: All Levels

Sunday, June 10

1:00-2:00 p.m.: Cha Cha: Intermed.-Advanced
2:15-3:15 p.m.: Swango: All Levels
3:30-4:30 p.m.: WCS: Intermed.-Advanced
4:45-5:45 p.m.: WCS: Intermed.-Advanced

Workshops are \$12 each For Rebels members and students w/ID; \$17 each for guests. **Get more Michael for your money!** Pay for 4 or more workshops at the same time and get them for only \$10 each for Rebels members & students w/ID; \$15 each for guests.

For more information, please check the TC Rebels website at www.tcrebels.com, call the Hotline at 952.941.0906, or email at info@tcrebels.com. The TC Rebels are members of the World Swing Dance Council.

The Anniversary Dance* Saturday, June 9, 2012 8:00 p.m.- Midnight

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Theresa Kimler and Nels Petersen in top form at the National Championships held March 30th - April 1st in Baltimore, MD.



Local couple Pete Westlake and Sehyun Oh demonstrated Minnesota dancing talent at this year's USA Dance Nationals. They placed 2nd in Adult Novice Standard and took an impressive 6th in Adult Pre-Champ Standard.



2012 Tea Dance and Brunch

Sunday, May 6, 2012

11:00 am – 4:00 pm

Celebrate spring in a spacious country club ballroom. Dine with friends in an elegant setting overlooking Lake Minnetonka. Then step on the dance floor for an afternoon of dancing to a variety of ballroom music. All dancers, beginner to advanced, USA Dance members or non-members, are encouraged to attend.

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Dance into Your Best Life

Embodied Leadership — Part Two

By Julie Delene

As a society, we value knowledge and information that require us to exist more in our heads than in our bodies. This causes us to focus on external results rather than an internal view. Thus we can get overly involved with affirming ourselves through our accomplishments, comparisons, and the opinions of others.

Embodied leadership invites you to reverse this perspective and operate from a place of wisdom, peace, passion, and purpose. This practice helps create a balanced movement between external and internal worlds.

There are five main principles of embodied leadership: presence, passion, purpose, partnership, and practice. Last month, we began with the first principle, presence. This month we are reviewing open heart practices to arrive at our second principle, passion.

Recent scientific research proves the importance of having an open heart and demonstrates the power of passion. The Institute of HeartMath uses instruments to measure heart resonance within one's body and the impact of their energy. They find that when a person's heart is open and available, their energy extends multiple feet beyond. This is far more impactful than when a person is closed, judgmental, cynical, or fearful.

Julie Delene is the founder and principal of Move As One, LLC, helping individuals, groups, and organizations to co-create astounding results. Find out about upcoming workshops by emailing her at julie@move-as-one.com.

Photo by Theresa Kimler



USA Dance Minnesota and the University of Minnesota Ballroom Dance Club partnered to create a great May monthly dance on April 21st. Special performances were presented throughout the evening.

Additional ancient support comes from a Chinese proverb that states: "Nothing in the world is accomplished without passion." Quantum physics has brought awareness to the fact that thoughts and emotions are energy. This leads us to understand that heart-centered intentions can improve our effectiveness in both work and life.

How do we do this? I take the lead from my experience in ballroom dance. Often called "emotion in motion," dance is a beautiful expression of passion, especially when combined with inspiring music. Sound improves whole body connection and stimulates our hearts. Further studies show that opening the heart improves brain function and overall strength. This is clearly demonstrated in dance.

A few years ago, a couple who loved to dance became frustrated because they were no longer moving well together. After observing them in their dance, it was obvious that the man as leader was forcing the movements from his arms and upper body. The woman, feeling overpowered instead of guided, felt his force and was choosing to stop and not participate. After several lessons, they learned to reengage their hearts, which improved the communication through their whole bodies. As they now connect from this centered power, they delight in the joy of their dance together.

By engaging your passion, you can impact other areas of your life as well. In our work lives, passion arises from knowing your strengths and being able to apply them to

your daily life. Ask yourself how are you being called to serve your clients, your organization, your family, and your community.

I experienced this when I moved to LaCrosse, Wisconsin, and found a need within the community to stimulate quality ballroom dance. I decided to take this on as a hobby business and share with others. As a result, my consulting and coaching work grew. It provided connections with people and exposure that expanded my business quite quickly. Now having moved back to the Cities, I feel called in other ways.

How can you put your heart energy in motion?

Notice what touches you, what inspires you, what speaks to your heart. Listen to beautiful music to uplift your spirit and expand your body sense.

Put your hand on your heart and breathe with it. When our heartbeats and breath are in rhythm with each other, we are most able to engage the creative mind.

Remember your mission. Why are you doing what you're doing? What does your heart long to do next?

It takes active listening to become attuned to your heart, and it is easier for some than others. Through practice, you can use heart wisdom to put emotion in motion. ■

Photos by Theresa Kimler



Gentlemen Lead

By Jack Munday

In the most recent issue of the USA Dance magazine *American Dancer*, the Social Vice President, Jean Krupa, had an essay on volunteering. Her point was to get dancers to volunteer for dance events. She writes, "Volunteering means you spend time with others, and it also takes your mind off your own worries." She also wrote, "Higher levels of satisfaction are found among people that spend time with friends. Every friend you make increases your chances of being happy by 9%."

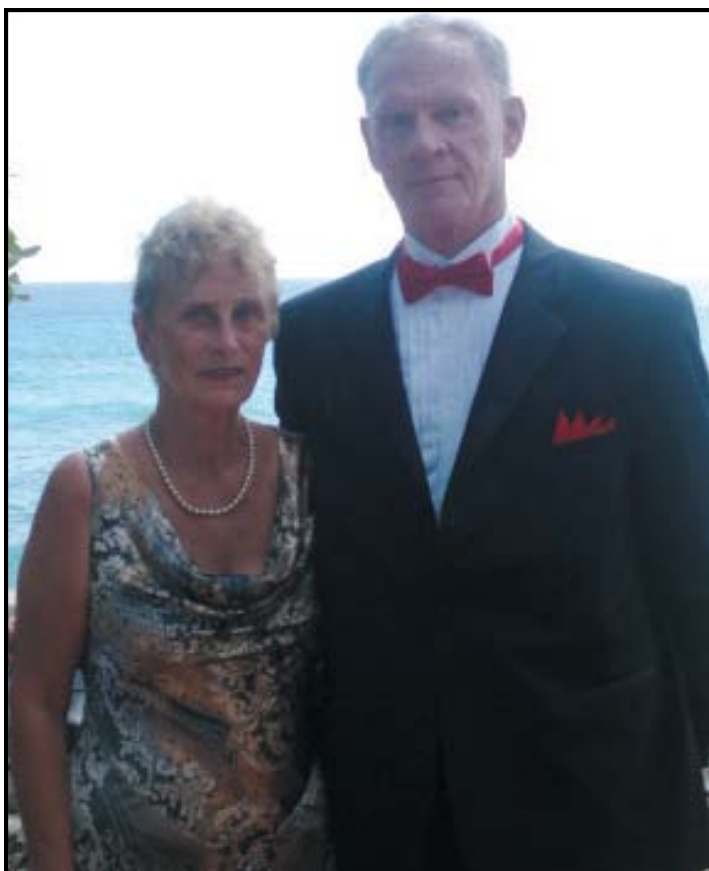
We think that is extremely good advice. Once again Fran has had knee problems that are keeping her from dancing. A studio owner asked me if I was coming to a particular party they were hosting. I said I wasn't because Fran isn't able to dance now and I don't go social dancing without her. Some people do, and this is not a criticism of them. It is just how I feel about dancing. The studio owner smiled and said, "You're a good man, Jack."

Because I'm not dancing at social events and showcases, I have very little floor time, though I do continue my lessons. But I miss dancing, as does Fran. Then a light went off when I read Jean Krupa's essay. (Jean, by the way, wrote a very nice endorsement for my dance memoir.) The light said, "Try volunteering at dance events. You don't have to dance, and Fran can be with you." We both will learn more about dancing than we would staying home or going to see the Twins.

Watching dancing can be instructive. I remember when I went to watch a competition for the first time at Twin Cities Open in 2008. Monica met me there and explained a lot, and what I remember most is her saying I had to watch the gentlemen, not the ladies. What has happened in the years that have followed is that I do watch the gentlemen. At the fundraiser "The Spirit Moves," which I wrote about last month, I watched instructor Jeff Nerhbass teach that New Orleans salsa. I learned simply by watching him.

A story I like about volunteering involves Monica. She had stopped competing for a few years and volunteered at Star of the North. As she tells it, "A lightening bolt hit me that I want to teach. I saw where I could help one couple with this, another dancer with that. The lightening bolt hit. My jaw fell. I *have* to teach. Not want to or like to." And that is what Monica has been doing for the last many years.

Fran and I have volunteered in many ways. But what will happen if we are at a dance event, watching but not able (or willing) to dance? Will one of us see a pattern we like and point it out to the other, saying we want to learn it? Or will the desire to dance give us more pain than we want? We will see and let you know. ■



*John S. Munday is a writer and lawyer who lives in Isanti County, Minnesota, with his wife Fran. Together they found ballroom dancing at Cheek To Cheek Studio. Jack is a student of Monica Mohn. Jack's new book, *Beauty In Partnership, A Memoir of Ballroom Dancing*, is available at www.johnsmunday.com and at several dance studios.*

Competition Calendar

May 6, 2012

Minnesota Star Ball Ballroom and Latin Dance Competition

Hosted at the Medina Ballroom. www.MNstarball.com

May 12 - 13, 2012

Columbia Star Ball - NQE

Organized by Mark W. Tabor & Tiffanie Rhodes to be held in Portland, OR. Qualifying event for 2013 Nationals.

Jun 9 - 10, 2012

NJ DanceSport Classic "Summer Sizzler" NQE

Organized by Mario Battista & Wendi Davies to be held at Battista Dance Studio in Hackensack, NJ. Qualifying event for 2013 Nationals.

Jun 29 - Jul 1, 2012

Gumbo DanceSport Championships - NQE

Hosted by Louisiana Gumbo USA Dance Chapter #5031 in Baton Rouge, LA. Qualifying event for 2013 Nationals.

Jul 12 - 14, 2012

Twin Cities Open Ballroom Championships

Organized by Scott & Amy Anderson to be held at the Minneapolis Marriott City Center. www.twincitiesopen.com

Jul 28, 2012

River City Ball

Hosted by Portland, OR USA Dance Chapter #1006. Will not accrue proficiency points and may not follow all rules in the rulebook.

Jul 28, 2012

Southern Star Mid-Summer Classic

Hosted by Southern Star USA Dance Chapter #6038 in Tampa, FL. Will not accrue proficiency points and may not follow all rules in the rulebook.

Sep 22, 2012

Quest for the Best

Hosted by the Seattle, WA USA Dance Chapter #1004. Will not accrue proficiency points and may not follow all rules in the rulebook.

Oct 5 - 7, 2012

Carolina Fall Classic - NQE

Organized by Wayne & Marie Crowder in Greensboro, NC. Qualifying event for USA Dance 2013 Nationals.

Oct 21, 2012

New England Fall Challenge

Hosted by Greater Hartford CT USA Dance Chapter #3056.

Oct 27 - 28, 2012

Northwest DanceSport Championships - NQE

Hosted by Seattle, WA USA Dance Chapter #1004. Qualifying event for 2013 Nationals.

Nov 2 - 4, 2012

Chicago DanceSport Challenge - NQE

Hosted by the Chicagoland USA Dance Chapter #2001. Qualifying event for 2013 Nationals.



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ASK DR. DANCE

Submit your questions to Dr. Dance: newsletter@usadance-mn.org.

Question:

I'm not proud of how I did at Nationals. At all. My partner and I worked really hard to prepare, and it feels like all that work was for nothing. We upped our practice schedule, took more private lessons, and made sure we felt calm, comfortable, and in shape for the competition. I even thought we danced pretty well, but our marks were another story. How do I keep from feeling discouraged? At this point, I just kind of want to replace my dance partner with a bucket of ice cream. I feel like nothing I do will make me a good dancer. How can I change my attitude and become inspired to work harder? What should I be focusing on in my dancing to make me a more viable amateur competitor? Or is it just time to trade in the dance shoes for heaps of chocolate?

The Dance Medic Said:

I'm assuming you're from the upper midwest, and so "I even thought we danced pretty well" means "we did some of the best dancing we've ever done." You dedicated yourself to efficient, productive practice of all elements of your dancing, you experienced tangible improvement in your performance, and you successfully delivered that improvement on the competition floor. If the judges' marks had determined you were the winner, you'd be thrilled with your dancing, but as the marks were not in your favor, you're disappointed.

The urge you feel to become discouraged is a product of the awkwardness in how you're measuring success. It's important to separate the two measurements you're encountering: the assessment of judges and the progress you experience firsthand.

You cannot count on judging to be a reliable measurement of the quality of your dancing. To judge is to insert yourself beneath the status of an athlete at the level of a commentator. In that position, the only contribution you can make is to express your opinion about the dancing before you in the form of a mark. As there is no governing body that holds judges accountable for their marks, judges are free to judge based on anything they like, and any part of their environment may influence their marks (which couples they recognize, how tired they are, what they had for lunch, if you look like one of their ex-boyfriends, etc.). This doesn't mean all marks from all judges are wrought with bias and utter dishonesty (many judges take their work seriously and do their best to assign marks fairly based solely on the dancing before them), but it does mean that you should treat marks from judges as just one metric in a greater

scope of measurement. Did a judge that marked you below couple 212 at your last competition mark you ahead of them this time? That shows good progress. That's a way judges' marks can be a useful tool of measurement.

It is much more useful to measure progress according to what you experience firsthand. Flash back to when you were a new dancer. What did you picture as "dancing you'd be proud of"? Now picture what you view now as "dancing you'd be proud of." Are you picturing the same thing you used to? Chances are, your standards have risen. This is good. This means that as you continue to study dance, you demand more of yourself. This also means that you can expect to *never* achieve a sense that you are dancing as well as you'd like to. This might be a daunting thought at first, but it is actually empowering once you get a grip on it. You know you'll always move the goalpost, so there's no sense in measuring success based on its proximity. You felt great progress in your preparation for Nationals. You can feel that progress as it happens, and in the moment, the process of advancing your dancing feels a lot like failing a little less than you failed last time. Enjoy that feeling. Then move the goalpost a little farther away.

As for steps that will help you achieve greater competitive success: your preparation for Nationals looks like an excellent template. Focused productive practice that yields improvement in both partners is key. Here are a couple points you might be missing.

Dance is an intellectual exercise. Ultimately, it's just a study of physics. Dancers often attempt to improve their dancing without improving their understanding of how a dance or a pattern or a trick is designed to work. I'd encourage you to apply part of your practice and coaching sessions to the goal of understanding the physics that facilitate the pattern at hand. This will make you a better problem-solver and therefore a much more self-sufficient dancer.

Lastly, remember that we dance because it's fun. It feels good. It's exciting. It's not worth it to make each practice with your partner miserable in pursuit of the ever-evasive *improvement*. If you're not having fun, you're losing.

Good luck.

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Paul Botes is a dance instructor, coach, choreographer, and judge. He is an owner of American Classic Ballroom, located in Chanhassen, MN.

Paul Said:

Welcome to reality. The position you find yourself in has been experienced untold times by almost all serious competitors.

If I gave you five cards to play a hand of poker, you would be faced with three possibilities. One, play the hand as best as you can; two, bluff; or three, fold. The cards I gave you are the judges in a competition. You have no control over their decisions, regardless of your actions. All you can do is play the hand as best you can. In other words, dance your best and let the chips fall where they may.

You say that you danced "pretty well." Does that mean you could have danced better? If so, then perhaps your results reflect that. Amazingly, we tend to blame politics when we lose, but I have never heard a competitor say, "We won because of politics." I feel your pain. I've been there, and my advice is to chalk it up to experience and use this experience to get better.

Remember that judges like to see improvement and consistency. You are inevitably going to sometimes lose when you should have won and win when perhaps someone else was more deserving. Look at videos of your performance and try to see how you

would improve. Share your videos with your main coach and get his or her input on your performance. Set realistic goals for yourself. Try not to use the shotgun approach in lessons. In other words, pick one or two teachers you trust and who are invested in your success. Too many cooks spoil the broth, and similarly, too many teachers may confuse the issue.

Dancing is much more than the sum of its parts. A student once asked me why she did not win, as she made no mistakes. Look at all aspects of your dancing. This includes but is not limited to grooming, technique, performance, floor craft, musicality, and being true to the character of the dance. Look at your video again and turn the sound off. Do you recognize the dance as a waltz or foxtrot, or could it be either?

Finally, it is with the understanding that in all walks of life, only the ones who persevere succeed. Often these are not the most talented but rather the ones who decided that whatever happens, they are going to continue to push themselves to succeed.

Good luck!



Donna Edelstein is a coach, judge, and organizer of the Snow Ball DanceSport Competition. donnawrites@msn.com 763-557-6006

Donna Said:

First off, you need to realize that most couples prepare for Nationals by taking loads of lessons, practicing more, and working on their stamina and mental preparedness. So basically, you did the minimum of what all the others are doing, but expected an exceptional result.

Before you say you are not proud of how you did at Nationals, ask yourself this: is your dancing better? How have you improved? What were your specific, tangible dancing goals prior to Nationals? Did you achieve them? Why or why not?

As for your marks, marks are dependent on many elements: how you danced compared to those around you, how you looked compared to those around you, how much excitement you created compared to those around you, how well you portrayed the character of the dances and the musicality, etc.

In addition to putting in practice time and lesson time, how much did you delve into your artistry? What did you do to make your dancing special?

All the great champions have overcome periods of discouragement to become better, stronger, and more effective competitors. Without seeing you dance, there is no way I can comment on what would make you a more viable amateur competitor, but I can tell you that a serious competitive couple would be back in the studio the day after Nationals analyzing their video with their coach to identify new goals and direction.

If you want to excel, then get input from a few different coaches who are judges. See your dancing through their eyes, and start rekindling your love of dance.

Good Luck! ■

SWAPLINES

➤ **Contact Jean at 952-922-7425, Size 11 Silver 1.5 in heel.** Only used twice - \$60

➤ **Contact Mark at 612-701-8553**

For Sale: MENS TAIL SUIT, Custom-made by Arthur Ashmore Tailors in England. NEVER WORN! Made for 5'11"/165 Lbs. Alterations could be done.

➤ **Contact Anne @ 612.280.7818**

Striking black and hot pink American style gown. Sexy while still being covered up. Feminine while still being bold and strong. Whatever your vision on the floor this one has it covered. Light weight and effortless to dance in. The bottom of this dress dances unbelievably taking your movement and showcasing it to the max. Made by Marsha Wiest- Hines. Sz. 6-10

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Ladies dance shoes size 11 narrow width, 1½" heels, silver. Only worn a few times. \$60.

➤ **Contact Jeff @ 320 266 4137 or jeff@studiojeff.com**

New women's dresses for sale \$200 to \$400 size small. Pics at www.studiojeff.com.

➤ **Contact: diana.fu2@gmail.com or 952-288-6159**

Latin, rhythm, salsa Dress, Size 0-6, brand new, piquant red color, sensual fringes show movement, open back with straps that can tie into various patterns, built in bra. \$380, negotiable.

➤ **Contact Cheri at 763-544-6724 or artncheri@aol.com**

Size 2-6 prices \$500-\$700 American smooth gowns. Contact Cheri for details and pictures.

➤ **Contact Stacie @ 612-251-8108 or SPIERSON0081@yahoo.com**

Purchase, rent to own or weekend rental available. Pictures available. **Seafoam green latin/rhythm dress.** Short playful skirt. Includes matching bracelets, choker and ear-rings. Sizes 0-6. \$1,950.

Black latin/rhythm dress with bugle beads and Abs. Dress worn on Dancing w/ Stars and in Take the Lead. Size 0-6. \$1,850.

Black Lace with peach underskirt smooth gown. Entire dress is lace, long sleeves, open back. Skirt slit in back. Worn on dancing w/ Stars. Size 0-6. \$3,150

Deep Purple rhythm/latin dress. Skirt has some movement. Sexy but covers your sides. Size 2-8. \$2,750

Fusia Smooth Gown. High slight on side, open back. Including jewelry. Worn on Dancing w/ Stars. Size 4-8. \$2,350

Blue latin/rhythm dress. Full flowing skirt. Matching jewelry. Made for a larger chest. Size 6-8. \$2,450.

Black and Rose Print Standard Gown. Full sleeves, large floats. Size 0-4. \$2,950

Lady Supadance latin shoe, 2.5" heel, fits an American 5 ½-6, never worn, style #1066, sell for \$151 asking \$75.

➤ **Contact Theresa at theresakimler@yahoo.com or 651-773-3511**

Size 2-6: Royal Blue Beauty Smooth Gown. Navy blue dress covered solid in rhinestones in different shades of blue. Gives an ultimate shimmer and looks almost royal blue on the dance floor. Fox fur cuff on left arm, long sleeves, slimming fit. Made by Randall Designs. Championship dress. Pics avail. \$2800.

Size 2-6: Black Elegant Smooth Gown. Black mesh peeks through an intricate overlay for a stunning look. Cobalt blue rhinestones, necklace, earrings complete the intrigue of this dress. Long sleeves, one arm with fox fur cuff. See photo in April 2010 issue, page 21. \$2400 pics avail.

Size 2-6: Championship White Ballgown covered in AB and Aurum rhinestones. One long sleeve and one bare. Diagonal rhinestone design for slimming effect and 8-godets of silk for the ultimate flow. Made by Doré. This dress is a must-see...classic and elegant. Pics avail. \$2800. Ask about dresses that will be become available in May.

Size 2-6: Black with Red Scarves Rhythm Dress. Jet stones on body, silk chiffon skirt for great movement, ¾ length sleeves, sweetheart neckline with mesh up the back. Includes bracelet, earrings, hair decoration. Red scarves complete the look and give beautiful flow. Skirt ends just above knees when still. Dress is classic and elegant. Pics avail. \$2000

➤ **Contact Janie @ 763-797-5230 or janienordberg@comcast.net**

Georgous Peach Championship Gown. This dress is one of a kind! Beautiful open back, stretch satin skirt with godets add fullness to movement. Fully stoned bodice and elegant gloves to match! Like new! Made by Marsha Weist Hines. Size 2-8. Asking \$1200. Pics available. **Newly Offered! Beautiful Pink/Metallic Gold Smooth Gown.** Very feminine look with lace trim on neckline, bodice, long sleeves and hems. Full coverage in AB multicolor stones! Like new - worn only twice! Size 2-8. Asking \$1100. Pics available.

Elegant Black Championship Gown, luxurious maribu boa on hem & neckline. Beautifully designed with open back and long sleeves, shows off curves. Covered in AB multicolor stones. Size 2-8. \$1100 obo. Pics avail. **Black Gown with Hot Orange & Yellow Accents.** Stunning gown has fiery orange and yellows accents drapes on long sleeves, bodice and chiffon layers of skirt, sexy slit shows off legs, beautiful color rhine stones. Size 2-8. \$800 obo. Pics available.

Sexy Pink & White Rhythm Dress! This stunning dress has tons of stones, beautiful pearl beading & flirty skirt! Bracelets, necklace, and accessories included. A showstopper! Size 2-8. Asking \$700. Pics avail. More gowns available to purchase and rent. Payment plans accepted.

➤ **Contact Joan @ 6123864174 or jdazer@comcast.com**

FOR SALE: 1 pr DAnSport t-strap rhythm shoes, size 3 1/2 European; 2" flare heel worn approx. 10 times. Price: \$40.00; original price \$145.00.

1 pr Kelaci Eminence 3 rhythm shoes, size 5 1/2 European; 2

1/2" flare heel worn once. The Kelaci shoes are very very flexible. Price: \$75.00. Original price \$155.00.

Also one pair of nude court shoes with clear bands, size 7 or 7 1/2 American; 2". Worn less than 10 times. Price: \$50. Original price \$150.00.

FOR SALE: Designed by Doré. Beautiful Royal Blue Smooth Gown. Size 6-10. Bodice is encrusted with blue and green AB stones. Long sleeves. Skirt has godets and moves very elegantly. The skirt is royal blue with a green underskirt. Earrings included. Original price of this gown was \$3800. Price slashed to \$1400.

➤ **Contact janislivi@msn.com for the following:**

Super sale on many ballgowns. Under 5'3" and 130 pounds? try these:

The Millenium Gown, Silver sparkle all over, white sheer netting on sleeves with AB stones, peridot stones, and crystal stones scattered.

Zipper entry. hand washable. asking \$300.

The Tangerine Dream Gown, neon tangerine color stretch lycra, swimsuit entry, AB stones, floats, hand washable. Asking \$125.

The Genesis Gown, neon yellow, orange roses, yellow stoning, yummy to wear, swimsuit entry, smooth/standard floats. hand washable. \$125. May sell Pink Champagne Gown for the right price.

➤ **Contact Shannon xin9264@hotmail.com (651)230-8901(c)**

Design Dress by Vesa, One-of-a-kind dress yellow stretch velvet drapes elegantly in front and back. Covered in crystal and citrine rhinestones. Large citrine rhinestones and other decorative beads accent shoulders and panel at front and back, beneath the waist. Also large gold pallettes on the panel. A fringe skirt in front and back creates movement. Sides open to show off lines. Matching wristband, headband, feather hair accessory inc. Worn once by British prof rising star. Fit 0-6, 5'1"-5'5". Asking \$950.

➤ **Wanted: Tailsuit.** College student looking for a used men's dance suit or tail coat set, 6'0" 150#, approx. size 37L. Contact Andreas at 651-983-5348 or amantius@comcast.net

➤ **Contact Sherri Earley at 651-271-7690 or wwp2005@gmail.com**

Red salsa or Latin beginners dress. Can fit anywhere from a 2 to 6. Adorned with black, silver & gold disc bangles. Comes with matching earrings & arm bands. Email for photos. \$75/obo.

Black beginners Smooth gown. Fits a ladies size small/2-4. Skirt is 3 layers. Red and silver stones. Optional black gloves can be included, \$10 extra. Email for photos. \$75/obo.

➤ **Contact Janet @ 763-389-9038 or kneadmypspace@yahoo.com for photos**
Gently used International latin dance shoes, size 7.5, dyed beige strappy heels. Great deal at \$40 plus will throw in a free pair of fishnet tights!

➤ **Champion dance dresses, Jennifer Foster at 952-938-0048**

➤ **Contact Lisa Wu at 651-278-4434 or lisa_wu_us@yahoo.com**

Green & blue rhythm dress sz. 4-10 green body & skirt with blue belt, lots of rhinestones all over, matching arm/wrist bands. Great for new competitor! \$300 nego.

Purple & white Smooth Gown. Sz. 6-10, \$300

New Latin & Ballroom Shoes for sale, sz. 7, 8 & 9 \$40

➤ **Contact Bernice at 952.936.2185 or 952.545.2989**

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