

Ocala's USA Dance chapter named 'Rising Star'



Pat Vollmann, president of the Ocala chapter of USA Dance, dances with her husband, Rudy.

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**Published: Thursday,
February 19, 2015 at 12:09
p.m.**

**Last Modified: Thursday,
February 19, 2015 at 12:09
p.m.**

The Ocala chapter of USA Dance, one of 158 chapters nationwide, has been singled out by district leadership as a "Rising Star" for its effort to promote dancing and community service.

The 145-member Ocala USA Dance chapter was presented with a plaque at its meeting Tuesday night by USA Dance District 9

director Don Davenport of Fort Myers.

"The Ocala group has had a good membership (increase), put on demonstrations at the local mall and gone to local nursing homes (to entertain)," Davenport said in presenting the plaque to Ocala Chapter 6027 president Pat Vollmann. Davenport said the two main goals of the local chapters are social dancing and providing beginner classes, especially for those intimidated by dancing.

Vollmann is a retired hairdresser from New Jersey. She became involved in the group after she met her husband, Rudy, a dancer for at least 20 years, in 2001.

"Our chapter has done exhibitions for residents at The Bridge, Freedom Pointe in The Villages, overall a total of six nursing facilities in the area. We did an exhibition at Macy's," Pat Vollmann said.

She said fundraisers by the chapter during the past year or so have raised about \$2,000 to help nonprofit agencies, including the Salvation Army.

The local chapter is part of a national organization that involves perhaps half a million feet. "Our dancing

outreach touches about 250,000 dancers nationwide," said Angelia Prince, public relations director for USA Dance, a 501 (c)(3) volunteer organization started in 1965 to promote ballroom competition in the international Olympics. It now also is aimed at getting all of America out on the dance floor and giving back to the community.

Prince indicated ballroom dancing is in the World Games and expects it to be added to the Olympics at some point.

Members and guests at the chapter's recent dance gathering shared their reasons for hitting the dance floor.

Ed and Louise Hanlon met in a disco in 1977 and have been dancing ever since. "We've been married 36 years. We love to dance. We see old friends at the events," said Louise Hanlon, 57.

The couple, who moved to the village of Charlotte in The Villages two years ago from Michigan, have participated in dance competitions in Baltimore and Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and recently went on a dance-themed ocean cruise.

"Dancing is the best way (for a couple) to express their feelings," Louise

Hanlon said, adding that the popular “Dancing With The Stars” program may have helped encourage people to try dancing. Pat Vollmann said dancing is a good source of exercise.

“We have two doctors in our chapter and they call dancing ‘oxygen to the brain,’ ” she said. Dances seen at the twice monthly chapter meetings include the foxtrot, waltz, cha cha and West Coast Swing, which is a “slot” dance done in a limited space with upbeat movements.



USA Dance District 9 Director Don Davenport and Ocala Chapter President Pat Vollmann

Retired secretary Mary Whitney, 91, a native of Chicago, enjoys the local gatherings with her husband, Don.

“I went around the dance floor in a quick step (on my 90th birthday) and the people gasped. Then they asked me to do the same dance at the chapter in Leesburg,” Mary Whitney said. She said her favorite dance is the Viennese Waltz.



USA Dance District 9 Director Don Davenport, Ocala Chapter President Pat Vollmann, and Dennis Rose

Facts

Learn more

What: [Ocala chapter of USA Dance](#)

Dues: \$25 annually or \$10 non-member entry to each dance meeting

Lessons: \$25 for members for four lessons; \$35 for non-members

Where: Armenian American Cultural Hall, 8831 SE 58th Ave. (Baseline Road) Ocala

When: Meetings first and third Tuesdays each month. 7 to 7:30 p.m. dance lesson, 7:30 to 10 p.m. open dancing

Photos: To see photos, check

usadanceocala.com/photos.



(Left to right) Dorothy Hefferon, Joy Schimborski, Pat Vollmann, Don Davenport, Norma Wayland, Ken Ward, and Gail DiCorcia