

Volume 8, Issue 2

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PHOENIX CHAPTER #4033

# Dance Chatter



## Spring Is In The Air

We haven't had much of a winter this year. Temperatures were in the 80's already in January and spring is officially upon us as we turn over yet another calendar page to April. The Mexican poppies have already been in bloom. Tulips are in the stores. Even my mom's daffodils back in the Midwest were pushing through the dirt to meet the sunshine weeks ago.

As we head towards our latest spring season, we think primarily of "refresh and renew", but we hope you will also take time to reflect. Have those New Year's resolutions been kept? What new adventure will you try this year that you keep promising yourself you will attempt? Have you challenged yourself to ask that unfamiliar face in the ballroom to dance yet?

Spring is a great time to begin new things, plant new seeds, and test new ideas like kites on the wind. What will your "spring fling" action be?



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# President's Point of View



By Beth Kahn

I want to thank everyone for your good wishes and encouragement since I have been your chapter president. It is so much fun to see everyone out on the dance floor at our bi-monthly dances.

The board is working together to continue to support the mission of USA Dance. We work to organize and support programs for the recreational enjoyment of ballroom dancing by all ages and create affordable opportunities for the general public to participate in ballroom dancing and DanceSport competitions.

The Phoenix Dancesport Challenge is just a few weeks away. The competition committee has been working hard to sign up competitors at local dance studios and colleges. They have also reached out to our dancing friends in Prescott, Flagstaff, Tucson and neighboring states. If you haven't yet heard about this event check it out at [www.PhoenixUSADance.org](http://www.PhoenixUSADance.org). The date is April 14<sup>th</sup> and the location is Leisure World in Mesa.

I hope to see you all at the competition; whether you are out on the floor competing, cheering on your favorite dancers or enjoying our general dance breaks during the day and our social dance that evening. It should be a wonderful day of dancing for all! Hope to see you out on the dance floor soon!

Beth Kahn  
President, Chapter #4033 Phoenix USA Dance

*The first step toward change is awareness. The second step is acceptance.*  
- Nathaniel Branden

Congratulations to Sue Putzier for receiving National Volunteer of the Year through USA Dance. She was nominated and won our district award, (AZ,CA,NV) and was then chosen by the national board from among the district winners.

# Dance University

## Part One—Etiquette



### Why we Dance

The reasons we come to dance, and stick with it—whether it's for a few weeks or for decades—are very personal.

- Social interaction
- Health benefits
- Romance
- Education

The list could go on and on, but most people would fit into one or more of these categories.

Dance is inherently a “social activity”. While you can dance alone, the desire to “share the moment” has been a common thread among tribes, communities, and people who share a similar passion across the centuries.

We all know the physical, mental and emotional benefits of dance. It is a great cardiovascular workout. A proven mental challenge which keeps those synapses firing, and it's much more fun than doing a crossword puzzle. Plus it's hard not to leave a ballroom feeling better than when you walked in.

The “romance” of dance can mean different things to different people. For some—the romance of dance comes from the general sharing of a common passion for music and movement with another person. For others, the “romance of dance” is found in each 3-4 minute moment on the floor—a short-lived ‘love affair’ with each partner for the duration of a song—a safe and appropriate place to flirt, play, communicate, give and take—all within the structure of a socially acceptable format. For others, there is that “hopeful romantic” desire to find something longer term, something that will last beyond one song, one dance or beyond one magical, musical night—a sharing of common interest that will evolve into something more.

And for anyone who has stuck with dancing, even a little beyond the basics, you have come to learn that “the more you know—the more you know you don't know” about dancing. There is ALWAYS more to learn, to improve, to try, to experience. That is one of the best things about dance. It never gets old—all you have to do is keep your eyes and heart open and it will always remain fresh and “new”.



*Dance first. Think later. It's the natural order.*  
--Samuel Beckett

# Competition Corner

By Chuck Ericksen  
Competition Committee Chair  
for the 2012 Phoenix DanceSport Challenge

Last year our Chapter accepted the resignation of Felix Ray , the individual responsible for starting and chairing the competition committee from its inception. Under his leadership, our competition grew from a small local event to a National Qualifying Event (NQE). The big question at that point was --Will the competition continue? I am proud to answer that by saying YES and with some new twists we have never offered before.

Why do we have dance competitions, and why does our chapter have a competition? Who benefits from this event and how do they benefit? These are typical questions voiced by many both in and outside the dance community and have several answers.

The mission of USA Dance on a national level is to "improve the quantity and quality of ball-room dancing." This statement involves both the social and competitive dancer and to follow through with this mission, it is our chapter's duty to fulfill this mission. As a chapter we hold bi-monthly dances that include lessons that support part of that mission on a social level. In order to fulfill our responsibility to include the competitive dancer, we offer our Phoenix Dancesport Challenge. This year it is being held April 14<sup>th</sup> at Leisure World (go to the chapter website [phoenixusadance.org](http://phoenixusadance.org) competition page for more info).

Competitions are not just about who is the best or who wins a championship. Dancing for many is a very holistic experience affecting the mind, body and spirit that compels them to dance. Competitions encourage improvement, they promote the dancer in becoming a better dancer by learning proper technique for leading and following and in challenging the dancer to their limit. This is a benefit to the entire dance community, both social and competitive by developing better quality dancers. They also promote a sense of community, meeting new people from different and varying backgrounds and cultures and creating new friends and bonds.

This year's competition is offering more events geared toward the social dancer such as a Jack and Jill event and a category for social/club dances and the addition of an open social dance to follow the competition. We are able to offer these due in part that we are not an NQE this year and our event is not sanctioned and open to any amateur dancer who wishes to participate.

I encourage all dance enthusiasts to attend our competition this year, join in by cheering on your favorite dancer, register as a competitor, volunteer to help make this event a great success or join us for the social dance from 7pm to 10pm following the competition.

*"Good luck is another name for tenacity of purpose."*

**- Ralph Waldo Emerson**

# Return of the Phoenix Dancesport Challenge

## Social Dancers!!

Just for YOU!

- Be a spectator at the competition and support the dancers
- See the sparkle of gowns and the elegance of tailsuits up close and in person
- “Club Dance Categories”  
No costuming required. No “syllabus” criteria.
- Social Dance at the end of the competition  
7—10 pm / \$5.00 admission



## Competitors!!

“Traditional ballroom categories”  
of Bronze, Silver and Gold syllabus, along with  
Open categories for Novice, Prechamp and Championship

We are also conducting a ballroom Jack & Jill competition  
open to all ages, all skill levels.



# USA Dance Inc.

## Phoenix USA Dance Chapter #4033 Proudly Presents Phoenix Dancesport Challenge 2012

This is an open event for all amateur dancers\*

**Saturday, April 14th, 2012**

Leisure World

908 Power Road • Mesa, Arizona 85206

Event details and registration forms are available at:

[www.PhoenixUSADance.org](http://www.PhoenixUSADance.org)

### Contacts:

**Chuck Ericksen**, Competition Chair  
[Chuck@PhoenixUSADance.org](mailto:Chuck@PhoenixUSADance.org)  
(602) 618-4079

**Beth Kahn**, Competition Registrar  
[Beth@PhoenixUSADance.org](mailto:Beth@PhoenixUSADance.org)  
480-329-3127

Presented by Phoenix USA Dance, #4033

There will also be a social dance for everyone in the evening!

Spectators welcome!

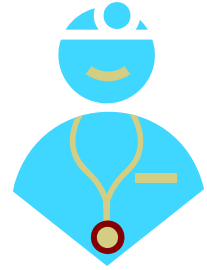
\*You do not have to be a member of  
USA Dance to compete in this event.

Social / Club dance categories will be offered.



# Dance University

## Part Two—TRIAGE



*Excerpt from an Article by Richard Powers—Stanford University*

### USE IT OR LOSE IT

The 21-year study of senior citizens, 75 and older, was led by the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York City, funded by the National Institute on Aging, and published in the New England Journal of Medicine. Their method for objectively measuring mental acuity in aging was to monitor rates of dementia, including Alzheimer's disease.

The study wanted to see if any physical or cognitive recreational activities influenced mental acuity. They discovered that some activities had a significant beneficial effect. Other activities had none.

They studied cognitive activities such as reading books, writing for pleasure, doing crossword puzzles, playing cards and playing musical instruments. And they studied physical activities like playing tennis or golf, swimming, bicycling, dancing, walking for exercise and doing housework.

Quoting Dr. Joseph Coyle, a Harvard Medical School psychiatrist who wrote an accompanying commentary: "The cerebral cortex and hippocampus, which are critical to these activities, are remarkably plastic, and they rewire themselves based upon their use."

One of the surprises of the study was that almost none of the physical activities appeared to offer any protection against dementia. There can be cardiovascular benefits of course, but the focus of this study was the mind. There was one important exception: the only physical activity to offer protection against dementia was frequent dancing.

#### Reported Reduction in the symptoms of Dementia:

- Reading - 35%
- Bicycling and swimming - 0%
- Doing crossword puzzles at least four days a week - 47%
- Playing golf - 0%
- **Dancing frequently - 76%**

Dance was the greatest risk reduction of any activity studied, cognitive or physical.

*Stifling an urge to dance is bad for your health - it rusts your spirit and your hips.  
~Adabella Radici*



# Pearls from the Pros

Mona Brandt

## What first inspired you to dance?

I have been dancing since I was 7. My mom put me in ballet and tap class. I really had no idea what that was, but I was scared. I had seen "I Love Lucy" on TV where the mean Ballet Mistress hit Lucy on the legs with a cane when she made a mistake. That's how I pictured ballet class. But actually my first teacher, Joni Reese, in Wheaton, MD, was very nice. Once I started, I was hooked.....



## What keeps you on the dance floor through the years?

I am a full time dance professional. That is how I make a living. I had a career as an electrical engineer for about 20 years, and taught dancing part time. During that time I travelled around the World competing professionally on the Country Western dance circuit. I was working for NASA in Houston, Texas, when I decided to quit and become a full time dancer. That was about 5 years ago, and I have not looked back. I have the best job in the world because I can do what I love..... I get up each morning and look forward to teaching people to dance and helping them improve their lives through dance.

## What "Pearl of Wisdom" would you like to share with other dancers?

A couple of years ago I started a tradition in all of my group classes. At the beginning of class I remind people of my "Number One Rule", which is to have fun. For most people, dancing is a hobby, for fun, relaxation, stress relief, exercise, meeting new people, etc. Sometimes we forget that, in the heat of the moment, when we are frustrated with ourselves, trying to learn a new step. So I always like to remind people to relax, have fun, and be patient when they are learning to dance.

## Contact Information:

Shall We Dance

480-491-2393

[www.shallwedancephoenix.com](http://www.shallwedancephoenix.com)

[info@shallwedancephoenix.com](mailto:info@shallwedancephoenix.com)

## Bio:

Mona Brandt, originally from Silver Spring, MD, is the owner of Shall We Dance Phoenix, and a full time dance instructor in the Phoenix area. Mona has been dancing for most of her life, and has been teaching people to dance for over 25 years. She teaches all levels of students, and all types of dance, including Ballroom, Latin, Swing, Hustle, Country, and Line Dance. She currently has 2 teams who perform locally, the Shall We Dance Divas ladies team and the Shall We Dance Rough Riders formation team. Mona currently competes with her professional partner, Ross Pearce, on the Country Western circuit, where she holds 6 World Championship titles. Mona is the Dance Director for the Greater Phoenix Swing Dance Club, where she can be found teaching the group classes most Sunday nights at the VFW in Phoenix. Mona is also the event director for the Arizona Dance Classic, a 3-day Ballroom, Country and Swing dance event that will take place August 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup>, 2012 at the Mesa Marriott. Mona tells people she has the "best job in the world" of helping people improve their lives through dancing.



# Upcoming Events



**DanceBrazil**  
April 26 and 27  
Scottsdale Center for the Arts



**Cirque de la Symphonique**  
Phoenix Symphony and guest performers  
May 26th  
Symphony Hall

**Kick-A-Dance**  
Scorpius Dance Troupe  
May 3,4,5  
Phoenix Theatre



Dancing With the Stars—  
Season 14

**meet  
the cast**

## Ladies

Gladys Knight—singing legend  
Katherine Jenkins—classical singer  
Maria Menounos—actress / TV host  
Martina Navratilova—tennis legend  
Melissa Gilbert—actress  
Sherri Shepherd—actress / TV host

## Gentlemen

Donald Driver—NFL player  
Gavin DeGraw—singer  
Jaleel White—actor  
Jack Wagner—actor  
Roshon Fegan—actor / singer

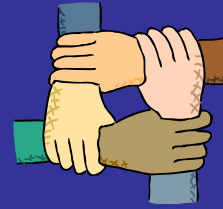
## **Phoenix USA Events**

April 14th  
Phoenix DanceSport Challenge  
Leisure World in Mesa / Social Dance following

May 12th—chapter dance  
LOCATION CHANGE— PARAGON DANCE CENTER

# REACHING OUT

## *Outreach Team Update*



Since the last newsletter in January—the outreach team has been keeping busy.

### January 28th

- A team of 21 dancers performed as pre-show entertainment for the Chandler Center for the Arts one-night-only show of Ballroom With A Twist. Patrons attending the event were greeted on the front entrance veranda of the Center by music and dancers, getting them in the mood for an evening of ballroom dancing on stage.

### March 9th

- The outreach team provided dancing entertainment as part of the Central High School Prom Fashion Show. The event organizers wanted a little “classic elegance” added to their evening of fashion and requested several numbers of “traditional ballroom dancing” to be showcased. Four dancers performed on stage, in full costume, adding a dash of Fred and Ginger to the event which was run, MC’d, and modeled by students.



### **!!VOLUNTEERS WANTED!!**

As you can see from the earlier page—the Phoenix Chapter is hosting the PHOENIX DANCESPORT CHALLENGE on April 14th. Whether you are a member of the chapter’s outreach team or not, if you have a few hours you would be willing to donate—please contact our volunteer coordinator, Stephanie Tusalem (steph8808@gmail.com). We would love some extra hands and bodies to help out on the day of competition. If you have non-dancing friends who are the ‘responsible type’ and would like to come along to help and see what ballroom is all about, refer them to Stephanie as well. We’re always in “recruit mode” when it comes to bringing new interested members into the world of dance.

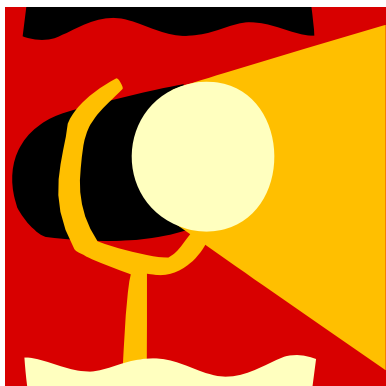
### **ANTICIPATED UPCOMING EVENTS**

*Some of these events are not yet “set in stone”. Applications or inquiries have been made, and the outreach team’s participation is still being determined.*

April and May—nursing homes (Citadel in Mesa on April 28th / Veteran’s Home in May)

April 27th—Franciscan Renewal Center’s volunteer appreciation event

July 28th—Kaity’s Way Celebrities Step fundraising event at the Talking Stick Resort



# Member Spotlight

Betty Mermelstein

**1. What first got you interested in dancing?**

I took tap when I was little, and a ballroom class in the eighth grade. I always knew I would come back to dance, but it wasn't until 12 years ago that I starting taking group lessons here in the valley.

**2. What is your favorite dance and why?**

I guess chacha is my favorites. It's fast and I love the accentuated rhythm and there's always great music for chacha.

**3. What is one of your favorite dance moments / memories?**

Being fortunate enough to do show-cases with my instructors Rik Dault and J.C. Yeh, and compete Pro-Am with Yeh.

I've had so many wonderful moments in dance. One that stands out is performing with Yeh at one of the USA Dance Saturday night events. It had always been one of my goals to be able to do that.



Betty is also a member of the Phoenix Chapter's Outreach Team and sits on the organizing committee.

We greatly appreciate the time she volunteers to the outreach team, both on and off the dance floor.

*"Dance is your pulse, your heartbeat, your breathing. It's the rhythm of your life. It's the expression in time and movement, in happiness, joy, sadness and envy."  
~Jacques D'ambroise*

# Dance University

## Part Three— History

*Dance has inspired artists, both those who perform it, and those who observe it, for centuries. Enjoy these captured moments of dance throughout history from some of the world's most renowned painters.*



Degas



Van Gogh



Renoir



Aboriginal—Australia



Pissaro



Native American—Nevada



Green



JACK VETTRIANO

**"Excellence can be obtained if you:**

- care more than others think is wise;**
- risk more than others think is safe;**
- dream more than others think is practical;**
- expect more than others think is possible."**

**-Anonymous**



# !WE WANT YOU!



The [Phoenix USA Dance Outreach Team](#) is always looking for dancers who would like to share their time, talent and smiles with the community. You do not have to be a “high level” dancer in order to participate. The more dances you know, the more opportunities you will have to be utilized, but we welcome all who are interested in being ambassadors for our chapter and for ballroom dance in general.

The outreach program of the Phoenix USA Dance chapter provides dance demonstrations, performance, education, and/or dance hosts at different venues around the valley, both by our own design (we seek them out) and by request (others request our participation).

These demonstrations typically fall into two categories:

1. Nursing homes, assisted living facilities, schools, etc — this portion of the outreach program is spearheaded by co-chair Sue Eldred.
2. Community events such as the Arizona State Fair, Glendale Glitters, etc — this portion of the outreach program is spearheaded by co-chair Sue Putzier.

If you choose to become a member of the outreach program, your name and information will be placed in our database from which we draw performers for specific events. Depending on the requirements for each event, and the dancers’ indicated abilities or preferences, you will be notified of upcoming events and given the opportunity to sign on to perform. Venues and dance surfaces vary (carpet, wood floor, cement, tile, indoor or outdoor) and we will provide as much detail as possible to help our dancers make informed decisions about their participation and to prepare accordingly.

Our primary goals with outreach are:

- To share the joy of ballroom dancing with the community
- To provide entertainment to varying populations throughout the valley
- To promote the positive educational, health, and social benefits of ballroom dance

**We hope you will join us.  
Simply fill out the questionnaire on the chapter website  
([www.phoenixusadance.org](http://www.phoenixusadance.org))  
or talk with either of the Sue’s for information.**

# HELP WANTED

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Keep your eyes open in this section for future opportunities to put your membership into action within the Phoenix USA Dance chapter.

Check out the website for resources to local dance spots, instructors and other useful information.

## **Volunteers:**

We are always in need of volunteers for a variety of tasks related to our regular dances. This is not a long term commitment. Even if you volunteer one time, you will have helped us out immensely.

Volunteer opportunities include:

- Dance hosts (primarily male, but we are considering including a few female dance hosts as well). This role interacts with all event attendees and invites single and newcomer dancers onto the floor. This role is time-limited to the first half the dance.
- Front table (accept admission and act as greeters)
- Refreshment hosts (furnish and replenish supplies periodically during the evening)
- Set-up and/or Wrap-up crew (set-up includes: prep event locale, decorate as needed, prep refreshments. Tear-down includes: quick trash clean up, reset studio furnishings, pack up pertinent items)

Please contact Cindy Warford ([cindy@phoenixusadance.org](mailto:cindy@phoenixusadance.org))  
or Beth Kahn ([beth@phoenixusadance.org](mailto:beth@phoenixusadance.org))