

Dance



Week

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY DANCE WEEK

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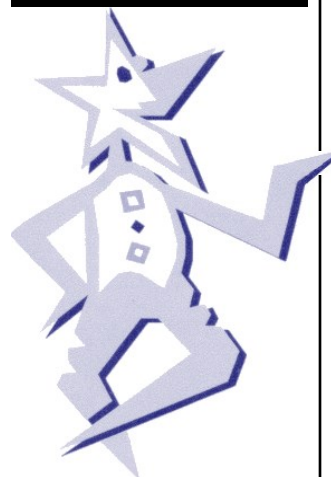
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WHAT IS BALLROOM



XXX ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

Thirty years ago Dick Mason had an idea to report the results of ballroom dance competitions in the United States on a weekly basis. His first issue of DanceWeek was devoted to the reporting of the results of the United States Ballroom Championships (USBC).



This endeavor was remarkable considering that there was no internet for easy access to various dance results and photographs of the competitions; there were no computers to lessen the work load of typing and transcribing of information; and, there were no printers that could transcribe all this information into an easily readable newsletter.

Dick Mason relied on his telephone and friends in the dance business like Mr. John Kimmins to provide the necessary results and interesting developments in the ballroom industry.

In all the 22 years DanceWeek was published by Dick Mason, there was never a lapse in producing the newsletter. Despite vacations, business and illness, Dick Mason produced his newsletter with consistency

and accuracy. Because of this incredible achievement, Dick Mason was inducted into the National Dance Council Hall of Fame several years ago.

In 1998, The Heritage Dance Foundation, a 501 (c) 3 non profit corporation created by Charles S. Zwerling, MD bought DanceWeek from Dick Mason in order to continue his fine work and



report the news of ballroom dancing in the United States. DanceWeek became overnight the flagship for the Heritage Dance Foundation whose mission is: to promote the international sport of partnership dancing through encouraging opportunities for dance education, cultivating excellence within the sport and elevating overall standards for a superior competitive environment. Over the past years the Heritage Dance Foundation has developed and maintained many worthwhile projects, including:

1. The Junior Dance Foundation assisting youth in ballroom,
2. The United States Dance Congress annual event and seminar which the HDF transferred to the NDCA

3. Publication of the national bi-weekly newsletter, DanceWeek.
 4. The publication of Ability, The Ballroom Dance Journal,
 5. Establishment of amateur and professional dance scholarships
 6. Serving on the board of directors of the National Dance Council of America
 7. Assisting Competition Organizers for tax deductible scholarship events
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We hope you enjoy this special retrospective



GIFTS OF BALLROOM DANCING

BY CHARLES ZWERLING

My wife and I have received three gifts from ballroom dancing that remain with us today. We have been dancing for 15 years together. These three gifts were revealed to us by our dear friend and coach Richard Diaz:

The first gift was finding our body's center. This is the dancer's "holy grail" which allows them to feel and identify their body's exact location on the dance floor. Some dancers, like my partner Melissa, are naturally born with this awareness, many dancers never find it. To know "who" you are in life is a wonderful point of self-realization, but to know "where" you are in time and space at anytime in your life allows you to experience each moment that you breathe as if it were the only moment there is. When a dancer knows their center, they know "that they know" and are less attached to the outcome of the judges opinion as to whether they can dance or not.

Our second greatest lesson was learning the art of partnering. Partnering in ballroom dancing is based on the human social behavior of how a man and woman treat one another in a social setting. In other words, how you behave and communicate in real life in relating with the opposite sex will have everything to do with how you make each other feel on the dance floor. So whatever ideas you may have of the "technique" of leading and following, ask yourself this, "Does this apply when I go out on a date, enjoy a stroll in the park, or go to a party where I present my relationship to others?"

Finally our 3rd gift and perhaps the one that presented the most challenge for us was

humility. By losing more than winning on the competition dance floor, we have learned true humility. And with that humility I found a greater love for our relationship, a greater respect, love, and compassion for my dance partner who stayed by my side despite our "failures".

Each time we compete on the dance floor, we are provided not only with an opportunity to be the perfection we dream about but also how to accept losing and failing with the same grace and nobility of winning and succeeding. This is how we build character and grace in life and how we move to the dance called Life.

These three gifts are still with us today and we are eternally grateful to have received them through Ballroom Dancing. Today when I teach my dance students, I always attempt to transmit these three valuable gifts. It's always a delight to see how easily technique is better understood when we bring in life values.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY DANCE WEEK

Thirty years seems like a long time; more than a generation for sure and long enough to have a whole war named after the thirty years spent fighting it in the 1600's. It is also enough time to pay off the entire mortgage if you are one of the few who hasn't moved six times in those years. Time enough to see your children grow; long enough to enjoy the grandchildren and certainly expensive enough to be buying serious anniversary gifts. If your kids are thirty they are most likely married. If your car is thirty years old and still in good shape, it is worth more now than it was new. If you spent the entire time working for one company you should be getting your retirement watch about now. All in all thirty years is an impressive amount of time.

So when asked to write about Dance Week's thirty years it seemed only natural to be impressed. So I decided to take a look back in time, and see what was important then and what is now. Personally, I was out of the Navy, in college, back at a studio working as a dance teacher, advanced teaching department supervisor and actively trying to learn enough to become certified as a Judge, which I would accomplish a couple of years later. So I could tell you from my perspective what things have occurred, but let's see what those that were there have to offer.

To be as complete and thorough as possible I emailed and asked Arthur Murray International, and Fred Astaire Dance Studios, to provide, statistics, history and their impressions of the industry and their companies and organization from 30 years ago. In 1976, neither Arthur Murray nor Fred Astaire was active in the companies that bore their names, and the ensuing corporate entities that controlled those companies certainly had their own agendas and plans, but neither could have anticipated the times to come.

So secretive were their plans that even now Fred Astaire Dance Studios when asked to provide information has yet to respond. Arthur Murray's John Kimmins was kind enough to provide the following information (which has been edited to remove information about years other than 1976,
"...Please understand that some of the information you requested is confidential material. In 1976 we had several hundred studios.... In 1976 we had studios in England, S Africa & Australia, ...The

president of the company in 1976 was George B. Theiss The International Dance Director...: 1976-1979 - Don Roule...."

The NDCA (in those days known as the National Council of Dance Teacher Organizations Inc.) was active, but small and in those days headed by John Monte. Tom Murdock was kind enough to furnish the Minutes of the 1976 Board of Governor's Meetings. According to the Minutes of April 25, 1976 in NY the Board discussed ways to counteract the ... **"reference (that) was made in two dance magazines recent editions and ... articles and letters (that) put the Council and Board of Governors in a very poor light."** The suggestion of a reprimand or more was offered. It seems, criticism was not well received, and retribution was evidently, even then, considered. The November, 1976 report shows a mere 289 members. Other items included ISTD's independence from England, rewriting the Bronze Syllabus, Examinations, publishing the calendar quarterly, and a Performing Arts Meeting. Item 12 of the November Ballroom Department Meeting, " suggested that judges coming from a pool on a rotational basis would be fairer to the judges, but on the other hand, (might) give the organizers some judges that they don't want..." I wonder why that idea was put aside by assigning it to a committee instead of being adopted or voted on.

Looking back to 1976, ballroom dancing was not a major part of everyday life. Dance Fever would not be released until the following year. A few Latin dancers were doing a new dance that would eventually develop into Latin Hustle, but it had not really taken hold yet. Gerald Ford was president, and certainly was never known for his agility and grace. The movie of the year was "Rocky". The Concorde jet introduced high speed trans-Atlantic flights. The Vietnam War was over, so the peace movement had lost its punch. The folk songs that addressed and even identified an entire generation of youth no longer carried the needed message of the day. This generation was now more interested in looking ahead than behind. I feel that dancing in this country in particular has run in cycles. These generational changes in style and music have been more responsible for the variations of dance styles than dance instructors, dance schools and non-profit groups dedicated to the advancement of them. Recent solo dance styles include heavy metal, grunge

HAPPY BIRTHDAY DANCE WEEK

pits, and break dancing and they all had one thing in common. They were solo styles of dance that were as far removed as possible from their parent's disco dance styles. The Charleston now often depicted in movies as a couple dance also appears to have started as a solo dance. Not meaning there wasn't a person of the other sex around, just that the people danced independently and to their own strengths, perception and intensity. The Black Bottom was another one. Vaudeville Shows offered an entire generation of first individual performers, and then side by side and partnership acts that then ushered in the first round of Trots and Walks, and couple acts that would provide entertainment for both sexes simultaneously.

By the mid 1970's a new age had begun. A new genre of music really took off with Van McCoy's "The Hustle." Young teachers loved it and in studios around the country, were already using the new songs by Donna Summer, Bee Gees, Captain and Tenille and others for the Cha-Chas, Swings and wherever else they could make it work. Old Timers thought it would never last. It would not be until Dance Fever's release in 1977 that operators would finally start to recognize the craze. After a generation of dances like the Frug, and Watusi, many thought studios were relics from the past. The names, Astaire and Murray that had made chains famous were no longer active. Fred Astaire was still active in movies, though rarely dancing. In 1976 he recorded a disco styled rendition of a Carly Simon's "Attitude Dancing." Then he co-hosted, "That's Entertainment Part 2 with Gene Kelly. They would perform together, one last time, and many felt that was the end of an era. Arthur and Katherine were long retired but would reappear a few years later on Dance Fever, a TV Disco show.

The World Standard Champions of 1976 were Richard & Janet Gleave. The World Latin Champions were Peter Maxwell & Lynn Harman. U.S. Professional Dance Champions of the day included Rick Gutteridge & JoAnn Duvernay in the American Style, which was a combined rhythm and smooth event, Larry Broussard & Mary Ellen Lacy, Bill Davies & Sandra Cameron, and Vernon Brock & Linda Dean. The English were kings and most all that was worth reading came from there.

It is easy for people starting in dance today to be advocates. It does not matter whether you are an amateur, professional, performer or spectator the world is full of dance competitions, dance movies, and reality based shows and more. Some offer the hope of upcoming stardom. Others use stars of TV, movies, sports and the news and expose their talents, failings, aspirations, and personalities. Still others even go back and use old competition formats and styles and hope the general audience will learn to love them as we do. Television has even offered its own "Pants Off" amateur stripper show, a dance "boot camp", and of course more and better choreographed dance routines for MTV and other music channels.

Dick Mason, the founder of Dance Week, recalls the first edition of Dance Week having a photo of Beverly Taylor (later Kimmins) dancing a Bolero. He also recalls Dance News of London and Dancer's Digest as the primary dance publications of the time. So Dance Week started first with results of competitions and not political matters, but they would come soon enough with disagreements between USABDA's policies regarding pro-am participation and expelling an amateur. It is against this backdrop that Dance Week began, 30 Years ago, as a way to keep America informed on dance. I congratulate it on remaining independent, and hope dancers everywhere will wish it, as I do, the very best on its birthday.

Michael Reichenbach Michael is the co-organizer of the Sunshine State Championships and national judge, and a frequent contributor to DanceWeek



NEWS BRIEFS

I am pleased to say that I have read every issue of DanceWeek since I arrived in the US in November 1976. At the invitation of the founder of DanceWeek, Mr. Richard Mason, I wrote my first competition reports for them, my start up opportunity in this area for which I am very grateful.

Since the very smooth transition after Mr. Mason's retirement to Mr. Chip Zwerling & Ms. Patti Troy, DanceWeek has continued to be a prosperous and open minded publication providing a welcome weekly service to North American Dance enthusiasts. I congratulate them on their past success and wish them even greater success in the future.

John Kimmins



Dear Friends at Dance Week,

I am delighted to offer my congratulations on your 30th anniversary. The Dance Community has enjoyed your publication all these years and as one of your readers I wish to acknowledge the tremendous contribution your journal has made to American Dancing.

Chip Zwerling and I go back along way together in fact when I was the Dance Sport Chairman for the World Dance and Dance Sport Council Chip was the one individual who sponsored the official Journal for the Dance Sport Committee of the WDDSC. Many thanks Chip. In my capacity as President of the National Dance Council of America Inc I wish to express the thanks of the NDCA for all the advertising coverage we have enjoyed in Dance Week.

May I take this opportunity of wishing all at Dance Week good health, happiness and many more years of reporting Dance

*Yours Sincerely,
Brian Mc Donald.*

Dear Dance Week,

It has been a pleasure to witness and participate in the growth of DanceWeek in the past 30 years. From its inception with Dick Mason until its present editors and publisher, Heritage Dance Foundation, DanceWeek has been a reliable source of information and news about ballroom dancing the USA.

Congratulations
Vincent Bulger



Dear DanceWeek,

Congratulations on your thirty year anniversary. We are proud that the 1976 USBC was your first issue and we look forward to many more years to come.

*Sincerely,
Wayne Eng*



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FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE POND

I have had the privilege of living in Germany for most of the past ten years and have been asked to share some observations on how the dance industry in Europe differs from that in the United States.

My first observation is that dancing in Europe is very much part of the culture and something that is studied, at least at some level, from a very early age. Although most people are not competitors, they at least possess some social dance training and have ample opportunities to use their dance skills at routine social functions throughout Europe. The most noticeable difference in the dance environments between the US and Europe is the comparison of social and competitive dancing.

In order to compete in Europe, you either compete as a professional couple or an amateur couple, so there is no venue for a pro/am couple like in the US. The other stark difference is the age at which students begin training and the number of hours per day dedicated to lessons, coaching, and individual rehearsal. It is common for children to start dancing as young as age two or three and by age five to be training three to five hours per day. Beginning to dance at age eight is considered a late start in Europe. Dancesport is looked upon as being similar to ballet or classical music, so the dedication and discipline are nearly identical.

Because the training begins so early in life and is very intense, at European competitions, I find it very difficult to tell the amateur and pro competitors apart since their dance skills are so highly developed. The junior dance categories are the most amazing -- at a competition I've seen ten year olds with better technique and performance skills than many American pros and it's simply incredible to watch. From my experience, many of the top junior couples are from eastern European countries such as Moldova, Lithuania, and of course, Russia. Most competitions in Europe begin with 250-400 professional couples in the same category, and dance through about ten rounds of elimination to get to the final six. Even the amateur categories are extremely large, so as you can imagine, the competition is fierce.

As for the routine social dancers in Europe, my opinion is not quite as glowing as with the junior, amateur, or professional competitors. Most studios only offer group classes and you must have a partner in order to participate. Typically, you will only dance with this person and no one else, so if you are single, you cannot participate or must pay top dollar to train with a private coach. Even then, they may not train you "sans partner". It has been my experience that when I see many European social dancers on the floor, they are mostly "pattern smart" and really don't seem

to emphasize lead and follow or many other areas of technique.

One of the worst aspects I have routinely observed from most European social dancers is their general lack of floorcraft. Unless you are a seasoned competitor, there seems to be very little training in this area, so when dancing socially, I'm constantly having problems with people who cannot maneuver around the floor without slamming into other couples. While working for many years in several studios in the US, floorcraft was always emphasized as being necessary to good dance etiquette. This doesn't seem to be the case with the average European social dancer.

Another difference between Europe and the US is that most dance studios do not have air conditioning. It has been a cultural aspect for many decades among most Europeans that air conditioning is not only unnecessary, but unhealthy. Slowly, throughout Europe, more and more establishments are beginning to install air conditioning, but it is not the norm, even in dance studios. I can't imagine teaching several hours, back to back, without this, especially as the summers seem to get hotter every year.

Even though I do envy the amazing dancing I've seen here, I really dislike the current trend in "browning" or tanning that I've seen at the European competitions. It is so extreme and unnatural looking, I find it very unattractive. The Americans are more moderate in this area and thus, more becoming.

There are certainly pros and cons to both the European and American dance environments, but even though I'm impressed by the high level of competitive dancing here in Europe, I would say the dance training offered in American dance studios creates a more well-rounded and skilled social dancer. For the American students who want to compete, excellent dance training is certainly readily available. As for European dancers, the competitive circuit produces many incredible dancers, however, in my opinion, typical European social dancers lag well behind their US counterparts in many areas of dancing.

Stephanie Hamann-Fagan

Danceweek – A Milestone in Our Dance History

Danceweek – A Milestone in Our Dance History By Frank Regan

Publications of all kinds play a vitally important role, not only in their informative value regarding current affairs, but also in their function pertaining to the documentation of events.

We tend to interpret the reporting of such events as significant or perhaps in some cases inconsequential but ultimately all events have some consequence and it is invariably in retrospect that we come to appreciate the importance of documenting our past.

This process allows us to lend a more profound meaning to the evolutionary steps that have led up to our current way of being and in some way can enhance the quality of our lives. This factor in and of itself can validate the power of documentation.

Danceweek has effectively acted into this capacity over the past 30 years.

Given that everything exists for us in the domain of communication, the role of Danceweek as a communication vehicle has been remarkable not only for those of us who “remember when” and were actually “there” during certain cross roads in our history but also for a whole new generation of young people, some of whom have no knowledge of the origins of our traditions and distinctions as a dance community.

Let us hope that Danceweek continues to contribute to all of us who share the passion of dance and enjoy the richness of the printed work for many years to come.

Frank Regan is a former United States Dance champion who has distinguished himself in many areas of the performing arts as a writer, director, choreographer, historian, and lecturer. He is a recipient of the “Legends of Dance” award and has the singular honor of serving as the “Period and Stylistic Choreographer” for the world famous Miami City Ballet



THIRTY YEARS OF GROWTH

By Dick Mason

Thirty Years! A lot has happened to ballroom dancing in the U.S. in that time. The influx of Russian dancers, increased media

attention, dance information on the internet, dancing’s association with fitness, and in the last few years, the participation of celebrities in televised competitions, have significantly increased public interest in ballroom dancing.

Perhaps the most spectacular growth has occurred in the amateur dance organization USABDA. Through a succession of strong leaders—Mary Wethington, Peter Pover, and Archie Hazelwood, it has changed from a fractionated group of 1,500 members and half a dozen chapters, to a powerful unified organization of 23,000 members and 123 chapters along with a new name-- USA Dance-- and the excision of the word “amateur” from its name and organizational documents. The National Dance Council of America, a dance teacher’s organization that in June 2003 also began registering amateur competitors, has shown substantial growth.

Among the dance studios, business has perked up since the recent movies on ballroom dancing, but even more so following the televised dance competitions with celebrities as principal partners. Arthur Murray International has experienced a 70% increase in business since 2003, according to John Kimmins, executive vice-president. In southern California, independent dance teacher Mel Carillo reports a surge in his business in the last few years. “I’m working seven days a week now. Each time there’s a movie on ballroom dancing my number of students increases.”

And our children? The movie *Take the Lead*, the story of Pierre Dulaine, has already spurred the growth in children’s classes. The future of ballroom dancing in the US depends on their continued growth.

Dick Mason is the founder of DanceWeek. The first issue reported the results of the USBC in September 1976



BALLROOM KRUMP

Having been on a forced Hiatus for the past two and a half years, due to ill health, my only contact with my passion and beloved profession was the 'phone and TV. "Dancing with the stars", "So you think you can dance" and yes, even "America has Talent". How wonderful for dancing! Finally, with friends, I ventured out to see a Competition. At first I was so happy to be there that I sat quietly just absorbing the atmosphere until I witnessed the Open Amateur Modern final. What I saw distressed me. I waited for the Professional Open Modern Final just to confirm my feelings. [By the way, if Modern wasn't broken why did the powers to be fix it!] What was presented to me was a total lack of Ethics and Protocol. What has happened to floor craft? What has happened to the elegance of the dance and why did I see better footwork and usage of feet and ankles from the men than the ladies? Why are the ladies wearing two inch heels? Do they not know how to use their feet? But I digress.....It seems to me that Modern has become "first past the post" and that speed and "flash and trash" is now the genre for winning a Modern competition/championship! Don't get me wrong, body speed is very necessary and I love flash and trash but not to the degree that it interferes with the overall presentation of the elegance of the dance. I am so sad that the couples don't seem to have any consideration for the other couples on the floor. Floor craft allows one to control the direction that one chooses to take without banging or bully-

ing. Having taken control of the floor, all executed groupings will look great because the path will be clear. Understanding the stronger use of feet and ankles will allow for a better execution of patterns and much better control. And don't forget body contact!! The Latin, on the other hand, is really exciting right now. The ladies' leg lines are better than ever because of the higher heel and their reaction faster than ever. The Rhythm.....I'm still working on that. Generally, the basic action is so sophisticated and wonderful to actually dance, but with all the new "rolling on the floor" innovations one can hardly see the action let alone recognize the dance! Thank goodness for music and sadly, we must mark what we see. Oh dear! The Smooth is beautiful to watch and hopefully will stay clean and readable. On a positive side, the Modern Rising Star event did have several couples that were a joy to watch. A reflection of excellent teaching/coaching and.....Benji did win.

Patti Andersen Troy, Worldwide Judge.
pattitroy@earthlink.net
Co-editor of DanceWeek



CONGRATULATIONS FROM ROMANIA

First, I wish to congratulate you for 30th DanceWeek anniversary. Happy Anniversary for DanceWeek!



*Kind regards,
Diana Neicu
IDO President-Romania*

The history of ballroom dancing in Romania has been primarily a 20th century development. Until the first years of the 20th century, dancers at parties held in saloon or public places all over Romania.

In the fall of 1913 Meszaros Illes founded a dance school for Tango.

Very outstanding figure in the history of Romanian dance is Jean Uliczay. During his 88 years, he experienced the "Charleston period" between the two World Wars, and was the only Romanian dancer who dared to dance American ballroom dance steps during the Russia and the Communist period.

At the beginning of the 1980's, Joan Corneliu Vasiliu organized the first dance classes for a developing area of ballroom dance.

The first Dance Sport contest for couples was held in 1984. At the contest, which took place in Pitesti City, 24 couples attended from all over of the country.

On January 1, 1992, the Romanian Dance Sport Federation (RDSF) became a member of the International Dance Sport Federation (IDSF).

In 1996, Romania entered its first international dance competition at European

Championships in Holland.

Today, RDSF has registered more than 100 dance clubs with about 4000 dancers. Romanian dancers frequently compete in national and international competitions.

In 2001, Sergiu Rusu-Mirona Gliga win gold medal, in juvenile competition (standard) and this year, Ilea Vlad-Kilin Dora win gold, in juvenile competition at GOC-Germany.

At the end of the 2001, Romania became a member of the International Dance Organisation (IDO) and in 2002, participated its first international dance competition at World Championships in Sweden. At the beginning of the 2006, Romania became full a full member of the International Dance Organisation.

The first National Championships for: Hip Hop, Break Dance, and Salsa was held in 2006.

Today, IDO-Romania has registered about 200 dancers.

In 2005, at World Championships (Seefeld -Austria), Romania win silver medals in SinchroDancing (juniors and adults) and in 2006, at World Championships (Seefeld -Austria), win silver medal in Rueda (adults) contest.

What is ballroom dancing?

By Charles Zwerling

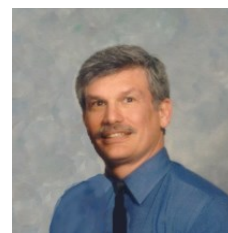
What is ballroom dancing?

If dance is the art of physical movement to music requiring specific technical skills and training, then ballroom dancing would be that form of dance requiring specific partnership skills and training to social music. Thirty years ago DanceWeek had its first issue at the 1976 USBC (United States Ballroom Championships); this definition of ballroom would have been generally accepted without much controversy; however, in the past 15 years there has been an attempt to re-define ballroom dancing or at least competitive ballroom as dancesport. Moreover, there has been a concerted effort to make dancesport an Olympic event. The result, hopefully, for all this work was that ballroom would gain valuable exposure to the general public, and, ultimately the ballroom industry would have financial growth and success with enhanced media coverage. Eventually, ballroom dancing would become a mainstay on one or more of the major television networks and revenues would flow into the dance studios. Of course, this potential Olympic financial goldmine created an immediate battle for control of this new Olympic event between the amateur and professional ranks. Amateur dancers became dancesport athletes and now could train other dancers for a fee and judge events like their professional counterparts. As a result there were battles between the amateur and professional organizations; competition organizers re-named their ballroom competitions as dancesport competitions (for example the USBC became the USDSC), amateurs became dancesport athletes, and the terminology of ballroom dancing was now considered an archaic. Of course there were some ballroom dancers, teachers and organizers who refused to join this new direction. We felt that ballroom dancing was indeed an art and not a sport. Today, the storm of controversy is passing. Ballroom is back and, frankly, better than ever. What happened was that the Olympic dream is probably gone. The International Olympic Committee

simply did not accept dancesport as a sport. Thus, the applications have been pushed aside for later re-consideration as a summer event (a more logical dream would have been to apply for status as a winter event). However, another event occurred completely independent of this Olympic dream. With the clever programming of some British producers, ballroom dancing became a media success with the introduction of Dancing with the Stars and So You Think You Can Dance. All of a sudden the ballroom industry was catapulted into mainstream TV, magazines, and even movies like Take the Lead, the story of Pierre Dulaine. Ballroom studios and competitions showed an incredible growth in attendance and participation.

Without the Olympic battle for DanceSport, we now see serious attempts of the professional WD&DSC and "amateur" IDSF to develop common goals. We see the correct distinction between professional and amateur competitor. And finally, we see that ballroom dancing has become again the proper term for partnership dancing as an art form and not as a sport.

Charles S. Zwerling, MD, FACS is a former US-ABDA amateur competitor and now professional competitor and NDCA pro am teacher. He has his member's certification in all ballroom styles with NADTA. He is the founder of the Heritage Dance Foundation, Inc. and editor of Danceweek for the past 8 years.



My Journey with Ballroom Dancing

By Charles Zwerling

My journey with ballroom began twenty years ago at age 37, after being mesmerized by a movie named Dirty Dancing. I immediately signed up for dance lessons at a local Arthur Murray and embarked on my journey with ballroom dancing. I figured that this hobby should be fun and easy, since I have always been successful at athletic endeavors; however, to my surprise it was very difficult. Twenty years later I am still waiting to master it. During these twenty years I have had endless hours of training, coaching and competitions. I have bought and converted an old Victorian building in downtown Goldsboro, NC into a jewel of a dance studio. I remember many hours on my knees laying 3000 square feet of a floating hardwood floor, tile and marble. If running and developing my own studio wasn't enough, I felt the need to do even more. I created the Heritage Dance Foundation, Inc., bought DanceWeek from Dick Mason, and even passed my members exam to become a legitimate dance professional and teacher. I have experienced the thrill of victory on occasion and often the agony of defeat. After all these years of time and money, one truth remains. I love ballroom dancing. It has given me that artistic fulfillment and euphoria. But even more importantly, ballroom dancing has embedded in my mind and heart some of my fondest memories.

I remember vividly to this day the first dance competition I had with my two daughters at Tom O'Dell's New Orleans competition. It was a special connection between a father and his two daughters Tiffany and Alexis. Now, I am the proud grandfather of two beautiful girls Charlee Anne and Haylee whom I plan to have on the dance floor real soon. Next year I look forward to the wedding of my older Tiffany and our special father and daughter wedding dance.

I remember the last dance I had with my mother, Nancy, before she passed away. She loved ballroom dancing with a passion and even created her

own dance competition locally. Eventually my coach and dear friend Patti Troy took over this competition, the Carolina Classic, after my mother's death. To this day we still celebrate her love of dancing with a memorial in her name.

I have been blessed to have developed real friendships as a result of my dancing. I am proud to have as true friends Richard Diaz, Bonnie Herbert, Allison Chang, Vincent Bulger, and Patti Troy. I am also very fortunate to have had some excellent dance partners/teachers over the years like Nataliya, Miss Bonnie, Dawn, Melanie, Andrea, Kathleen, and of course Miss Patti. I regret the loss of my former amateur partner, Goldie Golden, who left this world at far too young an age.

I cherish my ballroom connection with my wife, Melissa. I knew the first time I danced with Missy that there was this unique connection. She completed me and I her. We competed together with fun and success, but our highlight with ballroom was our wedding dance. She has always supported this love I have for ballroom dancing. She is always there at my competitions cheering me on. She deals with the weekend coaching and unexpected changes in plans. She has unrelenting patience with my late hours putting DanceWeek together. I am truly blessed to have such a loving, supporting wife. My journey with ballroom still continues. At the end of the day, I dance.

Mom
I miss you.
Chip





NATIONAL DANCE COUNCIL OF AMERICA, INC.

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recognized by the World Dance & Dance Sport Council as its
sole representative in the United States of America*

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