

The Silver Slipper

A Publication of the Nanaimo Ballroom Dance Society

Celebrating 20 years of the Island Fantasy Ball

With just two weeks to go before the 20th Anniversary IFB, faithful volunteer forces and many others are feverishly preparing for this exciting annual event hosted by the NBDS. Many feel it could become the most memorable IFB on record. With this Silver Slipper, we honor of the hard work that goes into this event, both by organizers and competitors, and commend them all for their dedication to our beloved pastime.

We visit with a few local competitors as they prepare for the IFB. We see these folks on the dance floor socially dancing or practicing their routines but often know little of their history, their passions or their dreams. We also find room to highlight their current experiences at a recent dance competition.

We hope you will enjoy the stories we obtained and will look for these featured couples and pro-am ladies (as well as all our mid-island entrants) on the May 5-6 weekend. For those that didn't have more detailed articles here, we look forward to hearing from them for a future issue to celebrate their successes and their journeys. It is an achievement to simply get to the competitive dance floor so make sure to let them all know when they hit the floor at IFB. Enjoy!

Presidential Musings - Dancers Need Floors!

I joked at the AGM that I might be President of a Ballroom Dance Society with no dance floors. Beban was going vinyl, Nanoose was a muddy skating rink and Bowen had doubled in price. Fortunately, through major efforts by our members, the City was persuaded that dancers are significant to our community and voted to retain the Beban dance floor. We have established a collaborative relationship with the Beban staff, using the money raised at the Christmas Dance to improve the lighting there to the benefit of IFB and other users.

Doubling the rent for Bowen led to a significant increase in our admission fees. Attendance dropped at first but has risen again and, taking into account a small grant the City has given us, we hope to break-even this year. We are appealing the rent increase and requesting a larger grant. We will continue to dance there.

Nanoose staff worked hard to repair the floor and our members spent a lot of time helping them and testing the floor for dancing. We found it had become treacherous for dancing again 3 days before the March 17 dance. Through major efforts by members we were able to relocate to the Bradley Centre, get the message out, re-organize the food, etc, and have a very enjoyable dance. Since then Nanoose has been resurfaced and those at practices have reported it to be excellent again. This Silver Slipper will be published in time for the Nanoose dance on 21st April and you will be able to judge the state of the floor yourselves.

Regards, Brian Gaines



April 2012

Editors:
Marilyn Assaf
Mark Pearce

Spring 2012 Events

Nanoose Dance **Apr 21**

7:30 Jive Workshop
Zillion Wong
8:30 Dance

Island Fantasy Ball **May 5-6**

**Beban Park
Social Centre**

Nanoose Dance **May 19**

7:30 Waltz Workshop
Andy Mundy
8:30 Dance

Bowen Dance **June 1**

7:30 Samba Workshop
Nelson Wong
8:30 Dance

Nanoose Dance **June 16**

7:30 Night Club Wkshp
Holly/Keith Foraes
8:30 Dance

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For a full list of events and offerings by NBDS:
<http://ballroomnanaimo.ca/>
See also for NBDS contacts

"Music and Rhythm find their way into the secret places of the soul."

- Plato -

Garrett Jolicouer and Laura Haynes

Garrett and Laura are among the youngest dancers competing at the IFB. Their favorite dances are the Quickstep and Jive because they are fast paced, exciting and fun.

"Right now our goal in competitive dancing is to get to the silver level so that we can wear fancy costumes," says Laura. "We enjoy competing because it gives us something to work towards and pushes us to be the best we can be."

Garrett and Laura train with Ken Yung at the Forever Yung Dance Studio in Parksville about five times per week. "In order to be a good competitive dancer, you need to be focused, dedicated, and willing to work hard," says Garrett. "You need to be confident as well as enjoy what you are doing. In training for competitions we have had to improve our technique and maintain consistency in our dancing."

The major highlight in their dancing career was their first competition, the IFB in 2011. "We came first in Adult Newcomer Latin and won a trophy," says Garrett. "That moment encouraged us to keep going."

Garrett started dancing in the summer of 2010 with a group of friends and Laura joined later that year in September. "We met each other through dancing and were partnered by Ken. We recommend new dancers stick with it and not get frustrated or discouraged if they don't get it right away" added Laura.

Garrett quit dancing at one point but was persuaded by a friend to come back and give it another try. "It's a good thing he did because we've come a long way and have done really well," says Laura.

One of their highlights was winning fourth place in the finals for Adult Bronze while dancing the Tango at the recent UBC Gala.



John Burke and Doreen Thompson

"Our goal is to dance at the championship level," says John Burke who started competitive dancing five years ago with Doreen.

"I like to compete because of the personal challenge," he adds. "I most enjoy the relationship that you have between yourself, your partner, the dance floor and the music." Doreen loves the constant learning and the challenge. "Winning something on occasion is good, too," she adds.

Taught by dance teacher Nelson Wong, John and Doreen practice about ten hours a week, sometimes more. "All our dancing is practice," adds Doreen.

"You need to be a perfectionist, although you never achieve it. Ballroom dancing is very difficult to do well, so you need a lot of motivation, determination and perseverance. It also takes a lot of time, so patience is necessary as well.

"You also have to have self-discipline, drive and ibuprofen," jokes John. "We train hard because we want to do well at IFB and at other competitions we may enter. You always want to improve, and an upcoming competition is an extra good motivator."

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Bill and Jean Pennington

Bill and Jean were social dancers for several years before they started competitive dancing in 2009.

The Penningtons compete in international standard dances and strive to be the best dancers they can be. "We enjoy the challenge and the social aspects of competition," says Bill. "We have met many great dancers from all over and enjoy their enthusiasm for the sport." (see next page....)



**Stephen Gower
and Elaine Thompson**

Stephen and Elaine began competitive dancing in 2005 and currently train with Nelson Wong in Nanaimo.

Stephen's goal is to feel comfortable on dance floor and compete at the Gold level. Elaine likes to compete to be- cause it's challenging and gives her the opportunity work on technique.



The couple take two lessons per week and practise as often as they can. "We need to dance every second or third day to keep our dancing sharp," says Stephen.

Elaine agrees, adding there's a lot to learn about the "science of dancing." "We deal with velocity, counter weight, balance between partners and connection," she explains. "The whole purpose is to dance 'as one'. We have learned that every movement has a reason. If you learn this when you will dance fluidly.

The feeling of dancing correctly can be intoxicating. If you know you are not dancing it right, then the frustration can be overwhelming."

Stephen says the most important qualities needed for competitive dancing include patience, a good sense of humour, good rhythm, and the desire to compete.

Winning four first place trophies at Dance Pacific in Victoria and receiving the award for highest aggregate scores in the competition was a major highlight in Stephen and Elaine's dance career – especially since Stephen was facing cancer.

"Stephen was waiting for treatment," says Elaine. "He was determined to control his life and not have the cancer take it from him. Pacifica was a milestone for us. Neither one of us truly believed we were good enough to call ourselves 'ballroom dancers'. That was a true turning point. Stephen received treatment shortly after that and even during his treatments he took Flamenco dancing lessons and worked out at the gym every day. He's cancer free and dancing up a storm today."

Stephen says dancing was a wonderful escape for the mind and the exercise reduced the harmful effects of the therapy. "Things seem to happen for a reason as these wins couldn't have come at a better time for my emotional wellbeing."

Advice for new dancers? "Practice, patience and perseverance," says Stephen. "Be kind to each other and take as much time as needed to feel comfortable with new steps.

"It is so important to keep everything in perspective and take it one step at a time," adds Elaine. "My mother used to say if you have a man who will dance, be careful not to break him!"

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Pennington continued from Page 2...

The Penningtons take two lessons a week and practise two to four hours a week. They train with Nelson Wong and work with his son Zillion once a month. The most important quality for a competitive ballroom dancer is perseverance, says Bill. Jean adds that competition forces dancers to focus on basic technique, frame, posture and musicality.

A major highlight of their dance career thus far is moving up to the silver level and making a final round in one competition. Their advice to new dancers? Learn the basics really well, and practise, practise, practise. "Don't be in a great rush to learn new steps until you have mastered what you are already doing."

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**"My mother used to say if you have a man who will dance,
be careful not to break him!" - Elaine Thompson 2012 -**



Daphne Simpson and John Blythe

Daphne's favourite dances are Jive and Cha Cha and her goal is to one day dance at the Gold level.

"I like to compete because it is the best way to work through the syllabus steps of ballroom dancing and do them the best you can," says Simpson who is competing at the IFB with John Blythe. "There is always a goal to work towards. It keeps you motivated to work hard. Competing is fun and exciting."

Simpson and Blythe train with dance teacher is Ken Yung at Forever Yung Dance Studio in Parksville. They take two hours of private lessons per week. In addition, Daphne has two hours of private lessons with Dean Rimmer each week. She tries to practise for two to four hours with each partner during the week, and attends NBDS dances and workshops.

"Competitive dancers need to have a good work ethic, the ability to pay attention and to apply yourself," says Daphne. "When things don't work you just have to try harder. Never give up. You have to have the personality and patience to work as a team. Dancing well takes a high level of commitment. It is quality of your steps that counts, not the quantity of the steps."

A highlight of Simpson's competitive dance career is fourth placing fourth in the Adult division in pre-bronze latin competition.

Her recommendations for new dancers? "Have fun and enjoy yourself."



Shiloh Durkee

Shilo began competitive dancing as a teenager. Now with the NBDS for three years, her favourite dances are the Samba and Cha Cha. Shilo is happy to dance in Pro-Am events and continue to push herself in Latin group/Solo. Her goal is to win top solo routine and be asked to perform it twice during the upcoming Island Fantasy Ball.

"I push myself to learn because I want first place!" says Shilo.

Shilo takes private classes once a week with Nelson Wong. How a dancer interacts with the audience is vitally important, she says. Dance training has helped Shilo focus more on proper technique to look better on the dance floor and be more reliable for her dance partner.

Learning a new style of dance is like learning a new language. "Nothing makes sense at first; frustration sets in and you don't feel like you're getting anywhere. And then one day, suddenly, that Cha Cha doesn't just feel like stomp, stomp. It feels like a dance step."

"Don't give up," Shilo tells new dancers. "Practice at home, go to dance workshops, watch the pros at IFB, enter competitions as a beginner, and persevere. There is nothing better in this world than just letting loose and dancing."



Marion Hicklin

Marion started line dancing after her husband passed away. "Dancing got me through the first rough years of grieving and I will always be grateful," she says. "The dancing community is so supportive and music feeds the soul."

Marion signed up for individual lessons with Ken Yung in January 2011 to learn how to follow better and learn the Slow Fox Trot. She takes two private lessons a week, and practices at home as often as possible, working on muscle memory.

Last year's IFB was Marion's first competition. She loves the fun of the Cha Cha but competes in standard ballroom dances. "I love the detail of competitive dancing and want to keep dancing and improving," she says. "I enjoy competing because it gives me a sense of great accomplishment."

Marion competed at the IFB last year and the Grand Ball in Richmond last November. "The highlight was my first competition," she says. "I had so many friends and relatives supporting me. I felt really special."



Christine Harringa

The IFB will be Christine's third competition. She started her dance career with beginner Cha Cha lessons in February 2010.

"Then I was hooked!" she says, wondering if there are support groups for this "new kind of addiction."

Christine takes two one hour private lessons per week with Ken Yung. Her favourite dance is the Slow Foxtrot. Her goal "is to not totally mess up on the floor and to keep enjoying dancing!"

"One of the most important things in competitive dance, actually dance in general, is to not take yourself too seriously and just have fun," she adds. "I think it should be all about the joy of dance."

"There is nothing better in this world than just letting loose and dancing."

- Shiloh Durkee 2012 -



Maureen Devoe

Maureen's favourite dances are Waltz, Quickstep, Foxtrot and Cha Cha. She currently takes two lessons a week with Ken Yung.

Maureen's goals and aspirations are to continue learning, improving and competing. "I like competing because it is a big challenge," she says. "I have danced in one competition at Newcomer & Intermediate Bronze levels. I liked the feeling of satisfaction afterwards. I did my best to follow my leader, maintain my frame, remember my steps, and best of all...control the nerves."

According to Maureen, the number one quality needed to be a competitive dancer is a love of dance. "You also need patience, determination, a willingness to learn and improve, and self confidence," she adds. Maureen's first competition was at the Grand Ball in Richmond (November 2011). "The highlight for me was that I didn't get nervous," she says. "I have learned so much since then. It keeps getting better."



BC champion returns to his roots

Ballroom dancer Kevin Fahy is excited about competing in front of a home-town crowd at this year's Island Fantasy Ball.

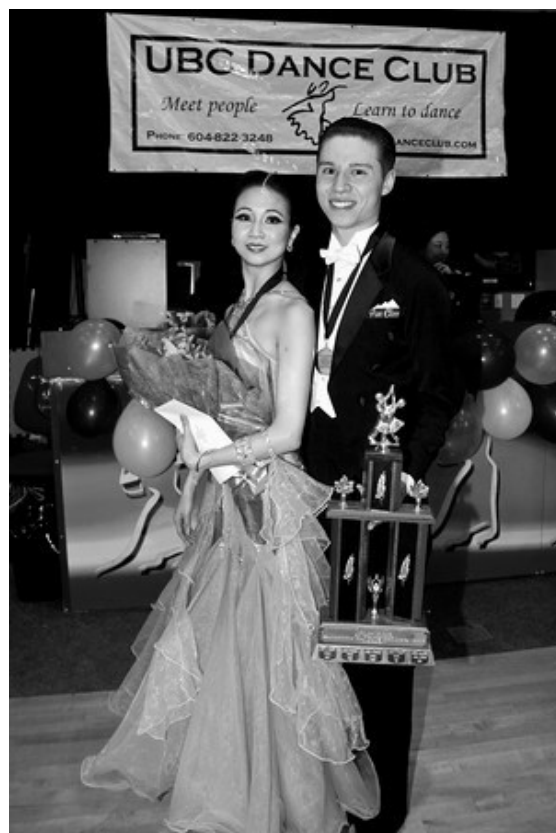
Together with partner Yukie Li, Fahy won the title of BC Open Standard Ballroom Dance Championship at the University of BC (UBC) Gala Ball in Vancouver in February. Fahy and Li began dancing together six months ago, making their UBC win an emotional and poignant victory.

"Yukie started crying," explains Kevin. "It came as a complete surprise. We honestly didn't expect to finish near the top."

"We were just dancing and having fun," adds Yukie. "We're overjoyed. Our dream has come true."

Kevin's 'dream' started at age 10 when he started dancing in Nelson Wong's Swing Kids class in Nanaimo. His first competition was in 1998 at the UBC Gala Ball with Christine Gossland.

"I remember it clearly," says Fahy, now 25 years old. "Nelson took us to Vancouver and we won a third place bronze medal in the Newcomer category. "All these years later, to have Nelson present at the ballroom in Vancouver when Yukie and I won the BC Championship was incredible. He's the reason I'm in dance. I'm very thankful to him and everyone who helped me to make it this far."



Fahy's mother, Corliss, still lives in Nanaimo. "Mom drove me to all my dance practises year after year," says Fahy. "She sat and knitted while I practised. I want to thank her for suffering through that!"

In 2008, Fahy left Nanaimo to study computer science at Simon Fraser University – he graduates next month. Originally from Hong Kong, Yukie began ballroom dancing at age 22 with the UBC student dance club. The couple met each other at dance competitions and began to date.

While they danced with different partners for several years but their goal was to eventually dance together. The timing was right last fall when they joined forces as a team, competing at the Grand Ball in Vancouver in November 2011.

"We didn't make it past the first round," says Fahy, "but two months later, we competed at the North West Regional competition in Seattle and won fourth place." In February, they won second place at the Northern Lights Classic in Edmonton.

(to next page....)



(.... from previous page)

The couple has an unconventional practise schedule. Yuki often works 12 hours a day, five days a week as a Chartered Accountant, so practise time is limited. “We practise mostly at social dances in Vancouver,” explains Fahy. “We also have two dance coaches and take private lessons every two weeks.”

Yukie’s favourite dance is the Tango while Kevin’s favourite is the Slow Foxtrot. Together, their best dance is the Waltz.

Their advice to new dancers? “At the end day, it’s not about competition or learning new steps,” says Kevin. “It’s an emotional and musical experience. You dance to have fun. Everything else follows from that.”

“Story by Marilyn Assaf; Photographs courtesy of Nelson Wong

Greetings to our newest NBDS members for 2012 (to-date):

Pat Andrews, Roberte Arseneault, Elisa Belveal, Tarja Belveal, Stephen Brown, Debbie Butler, Joy Caw, Alex Dragani, Diana Dugas, Kohen Hofer, Toby Hofer, John Jensen, Albert Kennedy, Eric Lam, Emily McKee, Shelley McKenna, Sheila Norgate, Darlene Oneill, Aquila Ortlieb, Darlene Patrick, Nancy Rowan, Vern Schoenfelder, Chris Sumando, Jim and Pamela Welstead, Allen and Marion Win-decker. There are probably more as we go to press. Welcome ! Hope to see you at upcoming dances.

DESIRED: VOLUNTEER BARTENDER FOR FIRST FRIDAY BOWEN DANCES!

Plenty of perks in store for you! :) Ok—there isn’t any free beer but you do get to keep your eyes and ears on the NBDS scene first hand. You;’ll get to know members better and you will even have time for a dance or two!

The job is pretty simple really—make the beer cold and then sell it along with cider, glasses of wine and other beverages to our thirsty dancers. You don’t even have to make change as our door volunteers sell tickets. Keep a supply of large cups, water and ice ready for the non-drinkers to serve themselves.

Later, help with the cleanup of tables, collect empties, and put the bar stuff away at the end of the night. The bar coordinator will look after purchasing supplies and getting the license. Contact: John Maher at 250-758-5272 or johnmaher@shaw.ca.

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NEEDED: FEMALE DANCE PARTNER

For Beginners Ballroom; contact
Alan Ciesek at 250-713-3202

TO EXCHANGE: RIGHT FOOT FOR LEFT

I think I will dance better with
one less left foot! Can you help?

FOUND:

Andy Mundy reports that NBDS members
Trish and Matthew Morrison are now the
proud parents of a baby boy, Joshua Peter
Morrison, born on April 3rd. He says that
they were doing the Jive while she was in la-
bour!! :) Congrats Trish and Matthew!





The UBC Gala Ball—held March 10-11, 2012, at the Grand Ballroom in Richmond BC

At this year's UBC Gala Ball, competitors and dance enthusiasts from across BC were focused on who would become the new BC Open Champions. Nanaimo's very own Zillion Wong was moving on to the professional level after a run of six consecutive undefeated years as BC Open Champions with his partner, Sarah Liang. Who would be crowned the new champions was the hot topic at this year's 50th annual Gala Ball.

What an exciting and emotional event it proved to be. Impressively, Nanaimo has produced another BC Open Standard champion to follow in Zillion's footsteps. Kevin Fahy, teamed with his new partner, Yukie Li from Vancouver, took to the floor and the couple danced their way magnificently to the 2012 title. Congratulations Kevin and Yuki! NBDS members should be proud and share the excitement for having supported and encouraged so many local competitors including Zillion and Kevin throughout their early dance careers.

Nelson Wong attended the event and felt that it was both 'emotional for not seeing Zillion dance and yet very exciting to see another Nanaimo Swing Kid take over Zillion's place.'

Nelson also noted that 'when the BC DanceSport Committee was formed in 2000, it had five aims and purposes; the very first of which was to support all levels of local competitors to become champions'. It seemed, at the time, an ambitious goal to consider that Nanaimo might even have a chance at producing a single Champion. But it has happened, not once, but twice!

It is clear that providing support to all of our local competitors has true value! Check out our NBDS results below from that exciting weekend in Richmond. A few of these competitors are featured in this issue of this Silver Slipper. Come and cheer some or all of them on also at the upcoming IFB in May.

Grand Ballroom and UBC Gala Results –March 2012

John Blyth & Daphne Simpson

Adult Pre-Bronze Standard	9/23
Adult Pre-Bronze Latin	4/21
Senior I Bronze Latin	3/6
Senior III Bronze Latin	2/5

Stephen Gower & Elaine Thompson

Senior I Silver Standard	2/14
Senior II Silver Standard	2/12
Senior III Silver Standard	2/9 (tied 1st broken by rule11)

Joshua Moroz & Lisa Rimmer

Adult Pre-Bronze	Latin 3/21
Adult Bronze	Standard 1/13 Latin 5/16

Willem Kuun & Emily McKee

U21 Pre-Bronze Standard	4/12
Adult Pre-Bronze Standard	10/23

Christo Doukakis & Jessica Hickey

U21 Pre-Bronze Latin	6/11
Adult Pre-Bronze Standard	16/23

John Burke & Doreen Thompson

Adult Bronze Standard	5/13
Senior I Silver Standard	6/14
Senior II Bronze Standard	1/5
Senior III Bronze Standard	1/5

Bill Pennington & Jean Pennington

Senior II Silver Standard	3/12
Senior III Bronze Standard	3/5

Garrett Jolicoeur & Laura Haynes

Adult Pre-Bronze Standard	4/23	Latin 6/21
Adult Bronze	Standard 4/13	Latin 6/16

David Ollech & Fanni Simon

U21 Pre-Bronze Standard	9/12
Adult Pre-Bronze Latin	13/21

Placings example: 3/12 means 3rd of 12 competing



IN HONOR OF: A Most Deserving Couple

The NBDS is simply a group of people who love to dance. As we have grown and developed, we have learned that one thing is essential to keeping us vibrant, and that is the active involvement of our volunteers —people who give generously of their time and energy, asking nothing in return except the satisfaction of creating dance experiences for the enjoyment of others.

Occasionally someone comes along who really embraces the club and what we are all about. These are the people who jump in with both feet, make a long term commitment, and work countless long hours, sometimes well into the wee hours, year after year just to make things happen. Such people are the backbone of our club.

John and Tina Maher simply love to dance, and love to make dance happen for others. This couple moved here almost 20 years ago. It was a career move, but we are told that the reason they chose Nanaimo was because they had learned that there was an active dance community here. So they found us, they joined us, and both of them became active right away.

John started out helping to plan and organize dances, then joined the Board of Directors. He has been a director almost continuously for the last 16 years, during which time he held every position possible. In fact he was president not once but four times. He has also held a position on almost every NBDS committee. He organized and catalogued our music collection, upgraded our sound equipment, managed our venues, and looked after important details (like making sure the bar was well stocked). He is continuously full of ideas, and full of initiative. He likes to try new things, like introducing the concept of workshops ahead of our dances, reaching beyond ballroom to attract other dancers in our community, exploring new venues, such as summer dances at Newcastle Island, and coming up with the idea of a destination dance camp.

Tina plays the ultimate support role, making sure that things happen as they should, organizing volunteers to make sure the important positions at our dances are filled, and looking after all of the little details which make our dances enjoyable. Tina has also served on the Board. She is the special kind of person who steps forward when the need is there, saying those three little words which are music to the ears of any organizer: "I'll do it!"

John and Tina have attended every Island Fantasy Ball - all 19 of them. They have opened their house to volunteer appreciation barbecues, swim parties and other club functions. The concept of dancing on the lawn was born in their back yard. Although now retired they continue to play an important role at NBDS. The Board of Directors has unanimously voted to bestow honorary life membership on:

JOHN AND TINA MAHER

Congratulations to this well-deserving couple!



John (left) and Tina (centre)



Togetherhness in Dancing - by Andy Mundy

No one is perfect, especially in the world of ballroom dancing, but perfection is always something to aim for. Aim for the top and you might just reach half way; if you only aim for half way, then you are unlikely to get anywhere at all.

Togetherhness in dancing is something we should all strive for, whether as an experienced competitor, a purely social dancer or a novice. It's not rocket science, it's not "advanced technique", nor is it impossible to achieve – it just takes application and a mutual understanding between the two partners to work together as a couple.

When two people dance together, each partner not only has to move themselves freely from one foot to the other, but must be able to do so without being forced into a particular position or movement. Two individuals, each moving independently on two legs should transform into moving as one couple on four legs.

Firstly, the man's hold should be the frame for the lady to dance in so she is able to keep her position relative to her partner. But, it should also be flexible enough to allow the lady to move freely and independently of the man when so required. One of the biggest faults by the man is to maintain rigidity in his hold.

There are many figures in which each partner turns by a different amount, or in which each partner turns at a different time, or a combination of both. For example, in a simple figure such as the Natural Turn in waltz, both partners make 3/4 turn overall, but at different times. The man turns 1/4 between steps 1 and 2, 1/8 between 2 and 3, and 3/8 between 4 and 5. The lady turns 3/8 between steps 1 and 2, 1/4 between 4 and 5, and 1/8 between 5 and 6.

Another example is of a more advanced figure, the Fallaway Reverse and Slip Pivot, where the man turns 1/4 between steps 1 and 2, and 1/8 between 2 and 3, while the lady makes no turn until step 3 when she turns 5/8. If the man's hold is too rigid, this cannot happen.

Secondly, the man's lead should be by indication through his body movement and position, not by pushing or pulling with his hands or arms which likely to unbalance the lady. The principle of the man guiding the lady, allowing her to move, and then following her is a concept which seems alien to the oft repeated "man leads, lady follows", but this is exactly how the man should lead.

It takes guidance from your instructor and lots of practice, but the end result is a happy, smiling couple moving elegantly around the dance floor, whatever level of dancer they may be. It looks good and feels good, and enables you to enjoy your dancing much more.

Andy Mundy

Gabriola Dance Camp—June 22-24

From Tango to 2-step, this year we'll focus on the art of *connection* with your partner - that magic ingredient that allows you both to enjoy a higher level of dancing.

[Ari Levitt](#), Seattle's master of connection, will show you the secrets of great connection in West Coast Swing, Blues, Latin and various Ballroom dances.

Workshops, dances Friday and Saturday night, yoga even! Work on your connection skills in Waltz, West Coast Swing, Salsa, Bachata, Tango, Cha Cha, and all those other dances with names! Early Bird only \$110 until May 15; then \$135. Check ballroom-nanaimo.ca/gidc/ for more details. Gwen Spinks or John Maher are the coordinators and this means a great event!

NBDS Dance Fest in Lighthouse Country

SAVE THESE DATES: JULY 20-22nd!

A new NBDS event has been announced. More summer dance fun at the Lighthouse Community Centre in Qualicum Bay, north of Qualicum Beach. This 5000 sq ft hall has a great dance floor, reportedly bigger than Nanoose. Good local motels, resorts, restaurants and a well run campsite are nearby. Highlights: Friday night social ballroom/swing dance, workshops before all dances, 4 daytime workshops on Saturday, a ballroom dance Sat. night and a tea dance Sunday afternoon.

Details are still being worked out but check the NBDS website for more information and to get your tickets!





How A Ballroom Dance Competition Is Judged

Excerpts from an article written by Dan Radler, L.I.S.T.D. Ballroom and Latin Dance

What factors does a judge weigh in assessing a couple's performance?

The criteria that a judge might choose to consider are actually too numerous to examine individually in the brief time allotted, since at least six couples are being judged simultaneously. Therefore, the judge must rely on the impression each couple makes relative to the others. The experienced judge, having seen and studied dancing at all levels, can quickly assess these factors collectively.

POSTURE - One of the most important aspects. Good posture makes you look elegant and exude confidence. It improves balance and control, and allows your partner to connect well to your body in the smooth dances. One's competition result is often directly proportional to one's postural correctness. Hence the old adage, "Persistent practice of postural principles promises perfection."

TIMING - If a couple is not dancing on time with the music, no amount of proficiency in any other aspect can overcome this. The music is boss.

LINE - By this we mean the length and stretch of the body from head to toe. Attractive and well- executed lines, either curved or straight, enhance the shapes of the figures.

HOLD - The correct and unaffected positioning of the body parts when in closed dancing position. For instance, the line of the man's arms should be unbroken from elbow to elbow. Also, there should be symmetry of the man's and woman's arms coming together to form a circle, which, although changing in size, should remain constant in shape so that the dancers remain in correct body position relative to each other. The silhouette of the couple should always be pleasing.

POISE - In smooth ballroom dancing, the stretch of the woman's body upwards and outwards and leftwards into the man's right arm to achieve balance and connection with his frame, as well as to project outwards to the audience.

TOGETHERNESS - The melding of two people's body weights into one, so that leading and following appear effortless, and the dancers are totally in synchronization with each other.

MUSICALITY AND EXPRESSION - The basic characterization of the dance to the particular music being played and the choreographic adherence to musical phrasings and accents; also the use of light and shade to create interest value in response to these accents and phrases. For instance, in foxtrot, the stealing of time from one step to allow another to hover; or a quick speed of turn in an otherwise slow rumba; or the snap of a head to suddenly freeze and then melt into slowness in tango.

PRESENTATION - Does the couple sell their ballroom dancing to the audience? Do they dance outwardly, with enthusiasm, exuding their joy of dancing and confidence in their performance? Or do they show strain or introversion?

POWER - Energy is exciting to watch. I've noticed that, in a jive, it always seems to be the most energetic couple that wins this dance. But the energy must be controlled, not wild. For instance, powerful movement is an asset in waltz or foxtrot, but only if it is channeled into the correct swing of the body, and not just by taking big steps. The lilt of the music must be matched by the action of the body. In a waltz for instance, the dancers' body action must clearly show the influence of the one down beat and two up beats. So the release of power into the beginning of a figure must be controlled and sustained during the rise at the end of the figure.





FOOT AND LEG ACTION - The stroking of feet across the floor in foxtrot to achieve smoothness and softness; the deliberate lifting and placing of the feet in tango to achieve a staccato action; the correct bending and straightening of the knees in rumba to create hip motion; the extension of the ankles and the pointing of the toes of the non-supporting foot to enhance the line of a figure; the sequential use of the four joints (hip, knee, ankle, and toes) to achieve fullness of action and optimal power; the bending and straightening of knees and ankles in waltz to create rise and fall; the use of inside and outside edges of feet to create style and line all fall under this most important of categories.

SHAPE - Shape is the combination of turn and sway to create a look or a position. For instance, in Paso Doble does the man create the visual appearance of maneuvering his cape? Does the lady simulate the billowing flow of the cape through space? In foxtrot, does the man use the appropriate shape on outside partner steps to enable body contact to be maintained?

LEAD AND FOLLOW - Does the man lead with his whole body instead of just his arms? Does the lady follow effortlessly or does the man have to assist her?

FLOORCRAFT - In Ballroom dance, this refers not only to avoiding bumping into other couples, but the ability to continue dancing without pause when boxed in. It shows the command of the couple over their choreography and the ability of the man to choose and lead figures extrinsic to their usual work when the necessity presents itself.

INTANGIBLES - such as how a couple "look" together, whether they "fit" emotionally, their neatness of appearance, costuming, the flow of their choreography, and basically whether they look like "dancers"; all have an affect on a judge's perception and therefore on his markings.

Different judges have different predilections in what they want to see, and weight these factors differently. One judge, for instance, might be especially interested in technique, while another wants to be moved by musicality and expression. While both factors are obviously important and need to be considered, it can result in couples getting widely disparate markings. Couples wondering what a judge saw to give them a particularly high or low mark should know that any one of the many factors listed in this article could be responsible. The use of a heel when a toe is warranted can just as easily hurt you in a judge's eyes as a meticulous closing of feet can help. Because the judge sees each couple for only a few seconds, anything that draws the attention, either positively or negatively, could very well be the deciding factor on how you are marked.

Competitors, please be assured that virtually no qualified adjudicator will mark you for any reason other than his or her honest evaluation of your performance. Most judges hold their own opinions highly, and try to do a conscientious job. Anyway, no one judge can make or break you. The use of a panel of these experts usually insures that the end result is the correct and equitable one. — Dan Radler



*Willem Kuun and
Emily McKee*



*Joshua Moroz
and Lisa Rimmer*



*David Ollech and
Fanni Simon*



*Sam Doukakis
and Jessica Hickey*

Watch also for these local competitors at upcoming dance competitions, including this year's IFB.

Our apologies to any competitors that were not mentioned. In this Silver Slipper Edition. Good luck to all!

