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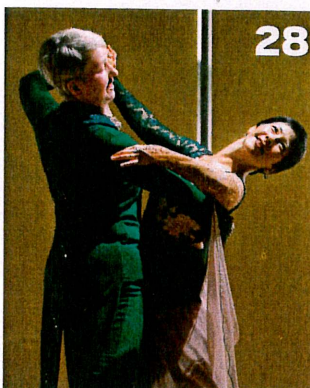
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# The Buzz

DANCE

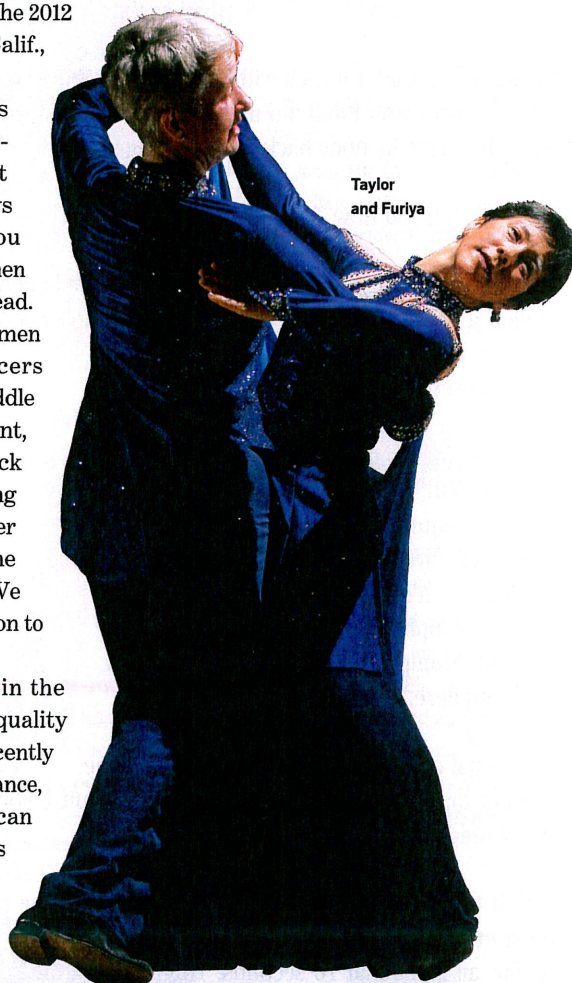
## STRICTLY BALLROOM

Moves you won't be seeing on *Dancing With the Stars*

**Sonja Furiya and Ann Taylor** are champions of a sport with which you might not be familiar: same-sex ballroom dancing. The Alton, Ill., couple won the 2010 North American Same-Sex Partner Dance Association Championships ([nasspda.org](http://nasspda.org)) in women's international Latin dance, and they're gearing up to compete in the 2012 contest, to be held in Sacramento, Calif., this month.

So just who leads? "The whole issues of gender and how we represent ourselves are very inert in the straight world—if you're male, you lead," says Taylor. "In the same-sex world, you express who you want to be. Some women choose to wear a tuxedo when they lead. At another point, those same two women may both wear gowns. Some dancers choose to switch their roles in the middle of the dance; in a very elegant moment, they will both drop their holds and pick up again, and the person who is leading will become the follower, and the follower becomes the leader. You often hear the audience applaud when that happens. We have added a completely new dimension to the sport."

And the sport's caught on here in the St. Louis area, too. The St. Louis Equality Dance team ([stlequalitydance.org](http://stlequalitydance.org)) recently won a national championship in team dance, and Furiya sits on the North American Same-Sex Partner Dance Association's board of directors. Speaking of herself and Furiya, Taylor says, "We're known in national circles as 'the St. Louis couple.'" —B.K.



Taylor  
and Furiya

### GO CARDS! AND GO FANS, TO WINTER WARM-UP.

They say St. Louis is America's best baseball town, so an opportunity to not merely worship, but actually interact with our local gods is something special. Winter Warm-Up—the annual Cardinals Care benefit, January 14 through 16 at the Hyatt Regency St. Louis at The Arch—allows serious fans to get autographs from 50 to 70 players past and present, enjoy memorabilia auctions, and this year pose with the 2011 World Series Champions trophy.

"What with the Cards' historic run, we're anticipating this being one of the most exciting Winter Warm-Ups yet," says Keith Brooks, director of Cardinals Care, which builds ball fields in economically depressed areas, coaches kids in baseball, and funds educational programs.

"There's a great sense of camaraderie with other fans," says Tom Glick, a longtime attendee. "You'll stand in line for a long time, but it's fun to talk baseball with everybody."

Glick's advice to newbies: "Bring a friend, so you can hold places in line and get autographs for each other."

Glick once got some great advice himself from one Winter Warm-Up guest, a certain erstwhile Cards skipper: "Tony La Russa told me to switch from Sharpies to ballpoint pens for the autographing of my baseballs. He told me that the Sharpie ink bleeds into the leather over time, and he was right." —B.K.

BY THE NUMBERS

# 69.4%

Percentage of St. Louisans who were born in Missouri or Illinois and have stayed here—the sixth highest percentage in the nation among 34 other major U.S. cities.

—2010 American Community Survey