



From the President

Benjamin Soencksen

The formation of NASSPDA was prompted by calls for unified standards of same-sex competitions. From event to event, categories, levels and procedures differed, making it difficult for participants following any strategies for their own development.

Part of controlling the standard of NASSPDA sanctioned events is that all invited adjudicators have to be approved by NASSPDA. There are distinct differences to consider in judging a NASSPDA from a mainstream event. When formulating the qualification requirements and judging criteria for NASSPDA's Competition Rules, these differences were a main focus.

By being with presented different gender configurations and the possibility of switching lead within a dance at NASSPDA sanctioned competitions, adjudicators are faced with differing interpretations of these dances and presented role perceptions from mainstream. Having a clear understanding of our community's dynamics is key to being a fair and effective judge at NASSPDA's events. It is therefore deemed helpful to have experience within our community, by having actively participated either as a dancer, teacher and/or activist.

NASSPDA created a committee with four members of the elected Directors of the Board and two non-Board members that have had a longstanding and successful engagement within the community as a competitor. Adjudicators that have been invited to judge at a NASSPDA sanctioned event or want to be added to NASSPDA's roster of approved judges have to submit an application to the committee, citing information on prior experience within the dance community and our community at large. Once an application has been received, the committee discusses the merits of the applicant (often, a member of the committee can contribute personal experiences with the applicant) and formulates a recommendation for approval or disapproval for NASSPDA's Board of Directors. Based on their background, the approval for some adjudicators is limited to a specialty, a particular style of dance.

As we all know, judging dance is quite a subjective way to achieve results. There are no distances or times to be measured. It's comparative judging, taking into account some of the basic, more calculable aspects, such as basic rhythm, characteristic step patterns for a dance and style and the technical execution, as well as those not as clearly definable, such as musicality and presentation. That is why at titled events, whose results are deemed of greater importance to the competitors, NASSPDA requires a minimum of five judges, guaranteeing a wider range of opinions.

Adjudicating partner dancing takes a keen eye for all the elements mentioned above as well as for the counterbalance within a couple, signifying partnering (as supposed to just

dancing next to each other), which differs from qualifying other forms of dance. As with teaching, not every talented, successful dancer makes a good candidate for this job, which is why NASSPDA's Judges Committee tries to take into account all aspects of the applicants' engagement in our community and which is why NASSPDA states in its rules regarding the qualifications necessary, either a "license for judging from an official dance sport association" or "prior experience competing in same-sex competitions at top level," that "NASSPDA reserves the right to reject a judge, even if all criteria are met, and to accept a judge not meeting all the listed criteria."

Additionally, at most NASSPDA sanctioned competitions, the head judge will have a meeting with all invited adjudicators prior to the start of the event stressing all the points that make NASSPDA events special, such as that competitors will present a great variety of body shapes and gender identification, which shall not taint the judges' perception and assessment of dancing skills; that a change in lead can change the characterization of a dance by breaking a harmonious continuum and, if done well, shall be reflected in a higher score; and that the "student" identified in a student/teacher category shall be the only one judged, not the "teacher." The head judge typically cites examples and reasons for these notes and ensures application throughout the event, which includes giving advice on good grading practices based on the field of dancers present as well as making judgement calls when an unusual situation presents itself.

All NASSPDA approved adjudicators have to be active members of NASSPDA at the time of judging a NASSPDA sanctioned event, unlike the participating competitors. Everyone though is encouraged to become a member, so that you have a voice within your community by electing your representatives and adding to the weight of their engagement. If you haven't joined yet or still need to renew your membership, please consider doing so by visiting NASSPDA's new website and, in either case, creating an account by selecting the appropriate membership (see further instructions below).

Hopefully, we'll see you and speak to you at one of our next events (see calendar below)!

HAPPY DANCING!

All the best,
Benjamin

Competition Calendar

Competition Committee

Please note that ALL of NASSPDA's Competition Rules can be found by going to the NASSPDA website or clicking [HERE](#). Any questions or input are welcomed and can be sent directly to rules@nasspda.org.

April 29, 2017

April Follies

Website: <http://www.aprilfollies.com>

Title: California State Championships



May 29- June 2, 2017

World Outgames

Website: <http://www.outgames.org/sports/dance-sport>

Title: IFSSDA's World Championships

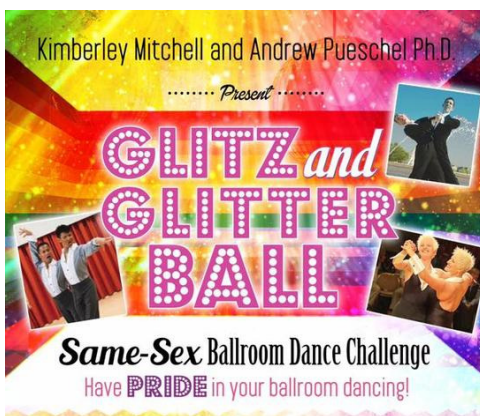


July 22, 2017

Glitz and Glitter Ball

Website: <http://www.glitzandglitterball.com>

Title: US Championships



August 30, 2017

Delaware Valley Equality Ball

September 2, 2017

Montreal Rainbow Dance Challenge

Website: <http://studioarcencielmt3.wix.com/rainbow>

September 30, 2017

Provincetown Dance Trophy

Website: <http://www.bostonopendancesport.com/events.html>



Membership Information

Membership Committee

We want YOU on our team!

We are seeking individuals to sit on our NASSPDA board. The deadline for nominations is Sunday, April 9th, 2017. If you would like to join the decision making arm of this organization, or if you know of anyone that might be interested in serving, please reach out and encourage that individual to stand for election. We are in particular interested in creating better gender, geographical and ethnic representation.

We proudly introduce our new website!

This is timed, in part, to coincide with our membership renewal period as well as the upcoming election of NASSPDA's Board of Directors. Only members can cast a vote and be part of shaping the future of our community. Please go to the website and click the "Join Now" button in the left sidebar. (Don't try to log in.)



We're asking you to join anew and, sorry, to enter some information again. Among other difficulties, we couldn't move our member data with passwords. Having you "join" affords us the chance to clean up our database and gives you a look at the new site. Clicking the "Join Now" button will take you to the new member sign-up page, where most of you will choose the "individual" level. The path from there should be clear.

Payments will now be taken by credit card instead of through PayPal. The new system has special encryption to keep your data safer than before. The new site URL is the same as before: nasspda.org.

If you have problems, or want to help us improve the website-parts are still under construction-please write to Kathy Wildman, our website administrator, at wildmankathy@gmail.com or to web@nasspda.org.

Outreach and Media

Promotions Committee

ACTIVITY GRANT FUNDING PROGRAM

NASSPDA would like to encourage its members and our community at large to engage in various fun activities that promote same-sex dancing. We recognize that many of our members may have a creative idea and NASSPDA would like to contribute in a small financial way.

Some ideas for events and organizers to receive grant support:

- Same-sex dance classes
- A social dance mixer with actively inviting and encouraging same-sex dancing or "alternative lead and follow"
- An excursion to a local competition, introducing dancers to the concept
- A welcome party before one of NASSPDA's sanctioned competition
- Setting up a booth at a local street fair promoting same-sex dancing
- A neighborhood or community event promoting partner dancing and the inclusion of same-sex dancing
- Involving studios to promote same-sex dancing
- An event in conjunction with a city's Pride activities

These are just a few suggestions. To apply for financial support from NASSPDA's \$250 Grant Program, please visit our website at NASSPDA.org, click on the 'Scholarships and Grants' bar and then 'Grants' to read more for more information. You can also email us at promotions@NASSPDA.org with any questions.

NASSPDA, 10352 Royal Oak Rd, Oakland, CA 94606

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