

July, 2013



Join Our Mailing List!

Dear Dance Friends,

Happy New Year... at least that's what it feels like now that we've completed Board elections and begun another year of increasing participation in and awareness of same-sex dancing.

One of our first tasks this year was to form a committee to organize the DanceSport event at GayGames2014. This is a major undertaking, and NASSPDA is honored to have been asked by the Federation of Gay Games and the Cleveland organizing committee to manage the competition. We're also delighted to announce that Argentine Tango has been added to the Country Western and Ballroom events. Rules and registration for Argentine Tango will be added to the Gay Games website shortly.

One of the Board's major initiatives this year is to engage our members in more interactive ways. To this end, we're stepping up our efforts to redesign the NASSPDA website to give our community more of a voice and quite frankly to make it even more user-friendly. We would love to have our community participate in this process and are reaching out to you first for any guidance or expertise in website development before we entertain quotes from outside vendors. Please contact info@NASSPDA.org if you are interested in further details or know someone who could assist us in this project.

We wish you a joyous Summer Full of Pride and of course as much dancing as possible. Good Luck to everyone competing at the Outgames in Antwerp this August.

Keep Dancing!

Sincerely,

The NASSPDA Board of Directors

Lee Fox, Florida

Garret Gerritsen, California

Pat Hogan, Vancouver

Christopher Kelleher, Massachusetts

Benjamin Soencksen, New York

Kathy Wildman, New Mexico

Barbara Zoloth, California

PS: Please share this e-newsletter with others by using the 'Forward email' link at the bottom of this page.

North American Championship SCHOLARSHIP

NASSPDA is committed to offering a scholarship annually to the extent our funds permit. Inaugural

scholarships were awarded to competitors at the 2013 North American Championship hosted by [April Follies](#), Apr 23, 2013. Awards are based on financial need, and recipients will receive (1) a \$200 USD stipend, (2) payment of their competition entry fees for the North American Championship, and (3) payment of their membership dues in NASSPDA for the year in which funds are awarded. The venue for the 2014 North American Championships has not yet been announced. The submission deadline for 2014 scholarships is January 29, 2014, and the application form and instructions are posted on the NASSPDA website at the links shown below.

[Scholarship Guidelines](#)

[Scholarship Application](#)

Boston Open 2013



Boston is a great place to be in September. The leaves change color and the air begins to cool. And this September marks the first annual [Boston Open Same Sex Ballroom Dance Competition](#), to be held at the [Hynes Convention Center](#).

Sanctioned by the North American Same Sex Partner Dance Association (NASSPDA), the Boston Open will be the first event of its kind in New England. All across the country, the same-sex partner dance community grows stronger by the season. As the veterans continue to train, wow-ing us at every turn, the novices prepare for that exciting moment when they take to the floor for the very first time! Come visit friendly Massachusetts at a fabulous time of year. Don your most dapper, rhinestoned dance-wear. Strut your stuff at a brand new venue.

Creating Community



Dancers, teachers, and event organizers are encouraged to visit and use Outdance! It is a website devoted solely to providing a calendar of events for the same-sex partner dance community. Anyone can post an event for free. You can update or edit your events whenever you like. You can customize your website by geographic area, dance styles, and/or type of event. This website was created for YOU!

Please make use of it. The intent is to provide one place where dancers can find information about where and when to dance!

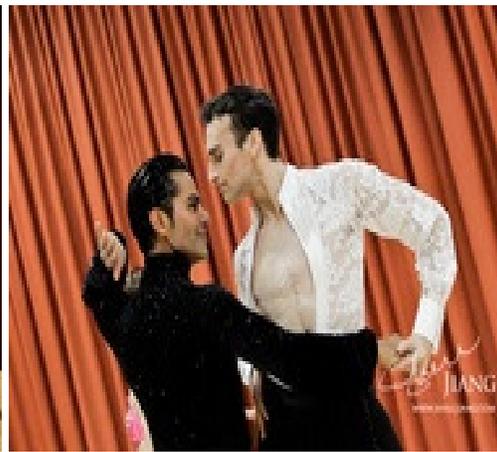
April Follies, 2013 NASSPDA North America Champions



Sunny Williams & Heather Brockett: Women's International Latin



Emily Coles & Kieren Jameson: Women's International Standard



Royce Anders & Jaime Zarco: Men's International Latin



Ron Jenkins & Photis Pishiaris: Men's International Standard



Kalin Mitov & Michael Winward: Men's American Smooth, Men's American Rhythm, and Men's 10-Dance



Kurt Popp & Aaron Palmer: Men's International 10-Dance



Sarah Hughes & Diane Willmott:
Women's International 10-Dance

Upcoming Events

- July 25-28 3rd Annual Festival Internacionale de Tango Queer de Mexico ([More Info](#))
- July 26 Dance Ambassadors, Oakland CA, (4th Friday every other month thereafter)
- July 31-August 11 WorldOutgames III World Championship
Sanctioned by IFSSDA, Antwerp, Belgium ([More Info](#))
- August 16 International Queer Tango, Seattle ([More Info](#))
- September 21 Boston Open ([Welcome to New England!](#))
- October 19 Blackpool Same-Sex Dance Festival ([Go!](#))
- January 19, 2014 Dancing in the the River City, Sacramento. California Championship.
Sanctioned by NASSPDA
- April 25, 2014 April Follies, Oakland. USA Championship. Sanctioned by NASSPDA
- August 9-16, 2014 Gay Games IX, Cleveland + Akron. World Championship.
Sanctioned by IFSSDA ([How hot is this?!](#))

Check our [links](#) for classes and events in your area, and send updates and additions to newsletter@nasspda.org.

STILL GROWING!! outdance.org Check. It. Out!

Board Member Profile: Kathy Wildman

How did you first become involved with partner dancing?

In Feb, 2006 I finally went to the St. Louis ballroom dance class after being endlessly encouraged by a friend. I thought she was crazy and that this was the dorkiest thing I had ever heard of. But I'd met some of the people, and they seemed normal and nice. My friend thought I needed to get out, because my partner of 22 years had died the previous year and I didn't really know that many lesbians in St. Louis.

A few months later the group was preparing for the *5 Boro Challenge in New York*. I was so irritated that my much-loved classes appeared to have been hijacked by this competition thing. How about those of us for whom a competition brought back memories of being chosen last for teams? The St. Louis group, however, is full of kind and tolerant people. They ignored my whining and brought me a shoe bag from New York. A year later I did my first competition, April Follies, and from then on I was mesmerized.



Kathy Wildman

Memorable experiences with same-sex partnering?

I went alone to the Vancouver OutGames and competed with a transgendered woman that I only met several days before the comp. We practiced together near her home on Vancouver Island for a few days and then traveled together to the comps. I was the first lesbian she had met. We both learned a lot, me about dance (she danced lead in the straight world for years) and she, I think, about our wonderful community.

How did you get involved with NASSPDA?

I moved from St. Louis to the Navajo Reservation 18 months ago and had to give up dance. I volunteered for the NASSPDA Board so I could stay involved and give back to this wonderful community that has become so meaningful to me.

What's your vision for the future of same-sex dance?

I want to see strong dance communities in other cities, like Chicago, where I'm from originally. Who would've ever thought that St. Louis would have the largest group outside of California? That's amazing! Boston has great potential too, which the Boston comp in September should encourage.

Anything else you'd like our readers to know about you?

I'm still looking for a competition partner! I'm back in St. Louis now, and dancing again. I'd prefer to dance lead (which is what I know) but I'd be happy to compete as a follow with someone taller than me.

Same-sex Dancing related Articles and Links

Bay Area Reporter, Interview with NASSPDA President, Barbara Zoloth

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Jock Talk: Same-Sex Ballroom Dance Aims to Break Rigid Gender Roles

Published 04/18/2013

by Roger Brigham

jocktalkroger@yahoo.com

Despite a monumental shift toward acceptance of same-sex couples getting married, iron-clad gender roles in line with heterosexist norms show no sign of relaxing when it comes to ballroom dancing. In this aspect, competitive dance lags behind the strides of acceptance seen the past two years in most other mainstream sports.

"They have a line in their rules that defines a couple as a man and a woman," said Barbara Zoloth, president of the North American Same-Sex Partner Dance Association and treasurer of the Bay Area Same-Sex Dance Association. "It's uncomfortable for a lot of straight people to watch same-sex couples dancing. My suspicion is that this is going to be one of the last bastions to fall."

Same-sex dancing will be showcased April 27 when the 11th annual April Follies Same-Sex Dancesport Classic is held at Just Dance Ballroom, 2500 Embarcadero (at East 7th Street) in Oakland. The event is the NASSDA national championship and is the longest-running same-sex dance event in America.

When it comes to pairing, the rules of sport seem to vary by the degree of intimate contact and aesthetic criteria. Mainstream figure skating and dance allow only opposite-sex pairings; tennis allows opposite or same-sex couples but calls them pairs rather than couples. And the rules in dance strictly require the man to do the vast majority of the leading.

Zoloth said she was introduced as a youth to dancing by her grandfather. "I learned as a follower," Zoloth said. "Then I was talking with a friend of mine and learned about a women's country dance. I discovered for the first time the possibility of being a leader. A few years later, I discovered ballroom dancing at the (1998) Gay Games in Amsterdam ballroom competition. I thought, 'This looks like great fun.' I was going to go to Sydney Gay Games in 2002 as a spectator, but I talked to a friend of mine and we agreed to enter as a dance couple. I had a great time."

Zoloth said same-sex dancing means much more than breaking free of societal gender-role restrictions or dancing with the one you love. "The dancers at the Gay Games and other same-sex dance events are way more supportive than they are competitive," she said. "Much more supportive than they are in mainstream dance. The people at the same-sex events just want the community to succeed and thrive. I got hooked in Sydney by how much fun it was and how supportive everyone was."

Perhaps same-sex dance lags behind same-sex marriage in universal acceptance because the physical

contact is concrete action of public display rather than a theoretical, behind-closed-doors intimacy. "I think homophobia is well named," Zoloth said. "I think it is fear. I think some straight people are uncomfortable with same-sex couples dancing because of internalized homophobia. I think a lot of people are afraid of homosexual behavior."

And thus the view from the dance floor is a curious one as all around gay and lesbian couples are getting married while still being barred from dancing together in mainstream circles.

"It's very interesting to me that same-sex marriage has become a political focal point," she said. "The groundswell shift has been somewhat stunning. I'm hoping that that will spell more equality and openness in the dance world, but there are a lot of people who prefer the same-sex competition. They like the accepting atmosphere." Spectator and participant information on the April Follies is available online at aprilfollies.com.

Our Mission

The North American Same-Sex Partner Dance Association (NASSPDA) is a membership organization committed to the promotion and expansion of social and competitive same-sex partner dancing, which includes Ballroom, Latin, Swing, Country Western, and other partner dances. NASSPDA acknowledges and celebrates its origins in the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community.



Winter & Auriel
(photo by Barak Yedidia)

eNews Contributors:

Barbara, Chris, Garret, and Pat

Become a member and support our work at www.nasspda.org

Visit our Community Links:

<http://www.nasspda.org/about/page/7/30>

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