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Monthly Newsletter

May 2016



From the President

Benjamin Soencksen

In the global world of dance generally no distinction is made between a professional and an amateur dancer. Dancers distinguish themselves by their achievements and experience. Everyone continues to take classes from everyone, young dancers get instructed by older dancers and vice versa. Any distinction is fluid and depends on circumstances. The same-sex partner dance community has from the start taken the same position. NASSPDA's Competition Rules start with the statement that one of the differences to the mainstream world of partner dancing is the lack of "distinction between amateurs and professionals," which is in alignment with its counterpart in Europe, ESSDA. Both organizations support "the categorization of dancers by their proficiency level" and strive "to ensure that the values of inclusion, participation, and fairness are upheld in every same-sex partner dance competition," a philosophy in line with and propagated by the Gay Games.

Historically, mainstream partner dance organizations always had very distinct lines of separation between a professional, someone that earns a living through dance (teaching, performing and competing), and an amateur, someone that receives no remuneration through dancing. These lines have significantly blurred over the past decades. However, the concept of an amateur paying a professional to compete with, developed and for the most part only practiced in the USA, is still a very important financial aspect of all competitive events in this country.

Now, it isn't unusual, though possible, that a same-sex dance couple consist of one dancer that is defined in mainstream as a professional dancing with a partner that is defined as an amateur, though neither pays the other to dance with, therefore being equal partners (there is no guarantee that by those mainstream definitions one is a better dancer than the other). Such a couple shouldn't and isn't considered a Pro/Am couple, as defined in mainstream. But if within that scenario one "bought oneself an excellent trained partner to win one's category," that wouldn't be fair in competition to any other couple on a purely financial, if not proficiency level.

One can dispute the validity of the existence of Pro/Am competition within Dancesport, but it is indisputably a part of and helps to sustain the competitive scene in the USA. In order to incorporate this form of competition (only the amateur gets judged, theoretically) NASSPDA continuously reviews its position on this issue for its sanctioned events. Until now its stand had been that this doesn't really fall under its purview, but that organizers are advised to hold separate events for identified Pro/Am couples, defined as one paying the other to dance. But there has been a call for a more active role of NASSPDA, awarding titles in that category for example. This is why NASSPDA's Board of Directors is now considering following the lead of USA Dance (the amateur organization in the US), in order to avoid any recognition of mainstream definitions of professionals and amateurs, by using

the terms "student" and "teacher," which seems to define more correctly the relationships in such couples.

Surely, as many other issues, this will be revisited again and again, as long as our community keeps growing. And since growth is another never ending concern, the inclusion of "Student/Teacher" categories might be one step that helps the lack thereof.

Please feel free to contact us anytime at info@nasspda.org with any comment, question or concern! Happy Dancing!

Competition Calendar

Competition Committee

July 23

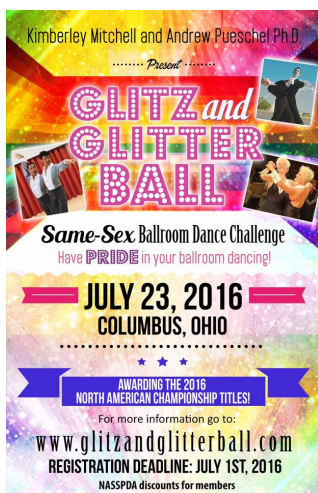
Competition: Glitz and Glitter Ball in Columbus , OH

Titles: North American Championships

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

Registration deadline is July 1st.

\$25 per person discount for NASSPDA members!



August 21, 2016

Delaware Valley Equality Ball
Woodbury, NJ

September 3, 2016

Montreal Rainbow Dance Challenge
Montreal

October 1, 2016

Provincetown Dance Trophy
Provincetown

Competition Recap - April Follies:

For the 14th year, April Follies took place on April 23rd at the Just Dance Ballroom in Oakland, a dance studio with a wonderfully large dance floor and state of the art lighting system that has been hosting this event now for many years. The Organizing Committee of the non-profit BASSDA once again put on a well thought-out event, which even

featured. scent-free and wheelchair spaces in the ballroom. Over 80 registrants battled for the NASSPDA sanctioned titles of the California and the USA Champions which were won by the following deserving couples and teams.

California State & US Champions

- Men's International Standard - Ron Jenkins & Photis Pishiaras, California, USA
- Men's International Latin- Le Truong & Chris Phan, California, USA
- Women's International Standard- Sunny Williams & Melissa Saphir, California, USA
- Women's International Latin- Sunny Williams & Heather Brockett-Williams, California, USA
- Men's American Smooth- Drew Miller & Tommy Belmontez, California, USA
- Men's American Rhythm- Drew Miller & Tommy Belmontez, California, USA
- Men's American 9-Dance- Drew Miller & Tommy Belmontez, California, USA
- Women's Argentine Tango- Michele Richards & Pamela Shreeve, California, USA
- Showdance- Dennis Yelkin & Rebecca Abas, California, USA
- Formation Team (Open Routine) - Fierce Femmes, California, USA
- Formation Team (Couple Routine)- Vima Vice Squad, California, USA

The following judging panel, led by Lee Fox from Florida, adjudicated at the event: Robin Horn, Diane Jarmolow, Tonia Kosovich, Diana Masarsky, Daniel Peters (Argentine Tango), Mila Salazar (Argentine Tango) & Benjamin Soencksen. As in the past, their scores were expertly scrutineered by Ava Kaye, who also filled the function of DJ and provided the event with a great selection of music. Entertainingly mc'd by Mat Rosswood throughout the competition, the event ended with a tribute to an LGBT movement in Mexico City, over one hundred years ago, titled "Rendezvous at Club 41" and enthusiastically mc'd by Sharon Washington, which featured not only the dancing talents of the presenting performers of our community, but also their talents as singers and musicians.

The following morning about a dozen dancers attended NASSPDA's community meeting discussing issues that are of common concern to the same-sex dance community, with a focus this time on what can be done about fostering growth in our community. This was followed by a brunch and a West Coast Swing workshop by Lee Fox, and was rounded off that evening by the Sundance Saloon in San Francisco, featuring a lesson and lots of dancing.

Again, a very enjoyable and successful event! Thank you, BASSDA's Organizing Committee!

Membership Information

Membership Committee

Now is the time to renew your memberships!

In order to renew, sign into your online account and you will find a button in the upper right hand corner next to "logout" for renewing your membership.

Not a member yet? [JOIN TODAY!](#)



Board Elections

Elections Committee

NASSPDA Board Elections will be held from May 8 to May 22.

All current NASSPDA members will receive an email from survey monkey to cast your votes. Thank you in advance for your participation.

Outreach and Media

Promotions Committee

SAME SEX DANCING IN THE NEWS

ABC television's "Dancing with the Stars" has helped create the biggest resurgence of ballroom dancing since the 1940's and it's not only limited to traditional couples. Oakland recently hosted the national championship for same-sex dancing, a showcase for partners with pride from all over the country.

[Read and see the AMAZING coverage HERE!](#)

ACTIVITY GRANT FUNDING PROGRAM

If you have an outreach program that you would like obtain funding for, please click [HERE](#) for more information.

PARDON OUR DUST

The current NASSPDA website is under a complete overhaul and we look forward to sharing our new site with you soon! You can still visit the existing site until the replacement site is up and running.

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