



Current events

Kalin Mitov: To put on a dance competition

Notes on Organizing a Same-Sex Ballroom Dance Competition

Organizers of NASSPDA sanctioned competitions have agreed to share their experience, thoughts and ideas on how to put on an event:

As the Director of the organization Boston Open Dancesport (www.bostonopendancesport.com), I have been organizing a same-sex dance competition for the last 5 years, a project that has been challenging. My impetus to start organizing a same-sex dance event was simply that I felt more such events were needed and should be available in every region. At that time I was an active dancer myself and could not comprehend why same-sex dancers had much more opportunities in Europe than in the United States. At the time our options were the Philadelphia Liberty Dance Challenge in Philadelphia, PA, April Follies in Oakland, CA, and Dancing in the River City in Sacramento, CA.



So I started by putting together an Advisory Board, comprised of a few of the students from the studio I taught at as well as myself. Everybody brought some expertise to the table but no one had ever organized a dance competition or anything similar. Many and long talks with the organizers of the other already existing same-sex dance competitions ensued, collecting information on how things are done.

Finding a venue was most challenging and took a very long time. It had to be the right combination of location, size and of course the right price. Places that have ballrooms can be very pricey, especially in larger cities like Boston. We couldn't settle for a small place, it had to be conveniently located near public transportation and couldn't have big columns right in the middle of the dance floor, as some venues surveyed did.

When all, venue, audio-video and officials are secured we needed dancers! Networking and networking again was the needed. The Country-Western, Salsa, Swing and Argentine Tango scenes received the honor of my presence at their dance practices, workshops and social dances. We even marched at Pride Events and had set-up Info Booths. Everybody needed to know about the same-sex dance competition coming to town. So many friends helped out with showcasing their talents or marching with us.



In other words, aside from all the other obstacles in putting together such an event, the most important part is having dancers participate, which in turn hopefully will encourage others to start dancing themselves and which then generates a need for more events to occur around the country. Some dancers are afraid that same-sex dance competitions are just for the best, but that isn't at all the case. You only need a partner and just a few dance steps. Dance competitions are a great place for socializing, making friends and having a big celebration of the acceptance!

Be part of it!



Presenting the dancers

Kathy Brophy, Millis, Massachusetts

Tell us when and how did you start dancing?

Growing up, I was an athlete....I think I was a closeted dancer and I didn't come out till after college and when I finally met the woman I wanted to marry (so thankful to live in Massachusetts).

Like most couples, we took lessons to prepare for our first dance. The moment I stepped on the floor, I was hooked.

What do you find more challenging to learn - the leader's steps or the follower's steps?

Well, when Maria (*Kathy's wife*) and I started dancing together, I knew I wanted to lead, and she wanted to follow....so that part was easy.

I love leading and now as I've gotten into it more, I try and learn more of the follow.....I tell myself, this will allow me to dance with more people.....I think for me right now, the follower is harder.

How do you approach to invite someone when you are not sure that they would dance same-sex couple at the social events and dance parties...?

Yes, this is a little challenging sometimes...especially when I don't know people and they don't know me...

I usually wait a while and hang off to the side. I try and notice other people that maybe also don't know others. I try and strike up a conversation.....if it's a predominantly straight environment and I'm talking to another woman, I might say, "hey I can lead if you want to dance?" If I'm talking to a man in that same environment, I'll just follow if he wants to dance. The cool thing about being in an LGBTQ environment is that you can just look at each other and ask, "do you prefer to lead or follow". There are no assumptions made and it takes the pressure off.

Is the dance society ready to have in the same dance floor mainstream and same-sex couples having fun together?

GOSH, I hope so.....marriage has been legal since 2004.....that's 14 years. I think we can all dance together on the same floor.

Dancing is dancing....it's creative expression between two individuals.....let's take gender out of it and let people dance.

Tell us a dance story that you will never forget.

A dance story I will never forget was walking into my teacher, Michelle's, Fred Astaire studio with my wife two years ago in Franklin, Massachusetts.

It was always slightly awkward when we were shopping around because I would feel the need to let them know we wanted to take lessons together and make sure they were ok with two women taking lessons as a couple.

Anyway, we walked into her studio and she spent some time with us and asked us what we wanted: I answered, "It's always been a dream of mine to compete." She smiled...Maria said, "I have no desire to compete but want to support Kathy...I just want to have fun and dance socially with her."

Michelle then said, "That's cool, a friend of mine runs a competition for same sex couples and I have actually been a part of it." This immediately told me she was an ally...I smiled and asked, "Well, who would I dance with?"

She smiled and said, "me"

I was like"oh yeah".

I mean Michelle is a gorgeous dancer and I couldn't believe that it was a possibility for me to dance with someone like her.

So in September of 2015, I got to go to Ptown and participate in the Provincetown Dance Trophy!

My wife and children were there to cheer me on, and my college roommates flew in from different parts of the country to support me. As I write this I am weeping with tears in remembering the feeling of love, support, equality and the fact that I was fulfilling a dream of being able to dance in the role I was comfortable with and to not have to hide and be in full view of those that love and support me.

Questions: Kalin Mitov
 * No edits has being made



Board of Directors Election

Election Committee

Board members needed!

Each nominee must have an active NASSPDA membership and submit the following to the Election Committee:

- * a Candidate Statement Form
- * a photo
- * two (2) Supporters' forms

Forms are available on <http://www.nasspda.org/about/> and instructions for submission are included.

Each nominee will be contacted via phone by a member of the Election Committee for a short interview. Once a nominee has been accepted, their name and Candidate Statement will be included in the ballot.

Elections take place in May, and every NASSPDA member will be sent an electronic link to the ballot. (People who have registered to vote via snail - mail will be sent a paper ballot.)

Voting will close on May 15. Results will be announced by or before May 31, and be posted on the NASSPDA's website: www.nasspda.org.

The Election Committee is in charge of reviewing candidates, supervising and running the election. No one on the Election Committee will be a candidate for election on the Board.

If you have questions, please email: info@nasspda.org

NASSPDA wants to continue cultivating a diverse board, representative of partner dancers from all over North America. If partner dancing is important to you, please consider running for the Board or nominating someone who represents you. Active NASSPDA members can find nomination materials at <http://nasspda.org/board-members/>.

And speaking of active membership, please show your continued support of NASSPDA by joining or renewing your membership. Remember this is YOUR organization, and we need your support to keep it strong and viable. We encourage all interested dancers and friends to participate in our work. We recently added a new benefit for active members; a registration discount at many NASSPDA-sanctioned competitions. Join or renew her

Competition Calendar

Competition Committee

Upcoming North American competitions:

April Follies

Hosting the 2018 North American & California State Championships

Organized by BASSDA (Bay Area Same-Sex Dance Association)

April 28th, 2018

Just Dance Ballroom

Oakland, CA

<https://www.aprilfollies.com>



New England Open

Hosting NASSPDA's 2018 New England Championships

Organized by Boston Open Dancesport

September 28 & 29th, 2018
 Rhode Island Convention Center
 Providence, RI
<http://www.bostonopendancesport.com/events.html>



Upcoming World competition:

Gay Games X

Hosting the World Same-Sex Championships
 DanceSport events August 6-10th, Paris

<https://www.paris2018.com/sports/dancesport/>



Membership Information

Membership Committee

Join NASSPDA TODAY! 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.

Welcome



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 info@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.

Up to 4 grants of \$250 each will be awarded per calendar year on a first-come first-served basis to applicants who can demonstrate that the proposed activity will advance NASSPDA's mission of promoting and expanding social and competitive same-sex partner dancing.

The proposed event should also be in alignment with NASSPDA's following goals:

- * Support functions and venues for social same-sex partner dancing.
- * Provide a resource for same-sex partner dancers.
- * Aim to raise the level of same-sex partner dancing
- * Encourage the inclusion of dancers from diverse backgrounds with regard to race, ethnicity, gender, age, [dis]ability, gender identity and/or expression.

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



At New York Pride Parade back in 2011 with many of us

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 | Lee Fox | 160 NE 58th St. | Ft. Lauderdale | FL | 33334