



## From the President

HAPPY SPRING to everyone!

With this annual season, each year our community is getting ready for April Follies, now in its 16th year and once again hosting NASSPDA's North American Championships. And along with the focus on finding the best couples in the various categories of partner dancing, such as International Style Standard and Latin, American Style Smooth and Rhythm, Argentine Tango, Showdance and Formation Team, other dances will take to the floor, such as the Night Club Two-step or Salsa.

When it comes to social dancing, whether in mainstream or our community, many more seem to take to these "other" partner dances, which differ from those often considered Ballroom dances (though Rumba isn't really a Ballroom dance). Why is that? What makes these dances more attractive and/or accessible to folks?



For one, I would say it's the music. Salsa, Country Western as well as R & B music is as popular as ever, making people want to not just listen, but dance as they sing along. You watch West Coast Swing dancers, and invariably you see someone sing along as they dance their heart out to an R & B number. That can of course also happen when one dances a Foxtrot to a Frank Sinatra song, but the occasions to hear his music are rarer.

Here in New York City, we have been saying for several decades now that there are three "obsession dance categories" in this vibrant and culture filled city, meaning there are dances to attend where folks dance all night long just that, "Salsa," "Swing" or "Argentine Tango."

The latter has Milongas all over town for almost every night of the week and many are now very open to any gender configuration in a couple. The Swing scene splits into two categories, with a very small Lindy community and a larger West Coast Swing crowd. But by far the largest, most diverse and youngest crowds are attracted by Salsa with the occasional Bachata.

In the early 1990's, this city also had a brief wave of popularity of the Country Western Dances, in particular the Two-step, Night Club Two-step and Line Dancing. This didn't last, except that the queer community took to this style immediately, still evident in the bi-monthly held dance named "Big Apple Ranch." Two-step, like Salsa, are relatively easy accessible dances for those never having moved their feet to any rhythm, and dressing for the part in boots and jeans adds to the attraction, no doubt.

In order to dance socially the more traditional partner dances, such as Foxtrot and Waltz, often also referred to as Ballroom Dances, and Rumba and Samba, clearly Latin Dances, but by many still also counted under the former, there aren't too many events other than Dance Studio parties or competition, such as April Follies. And on a social level, American Style dances are considered more "sociable" than International Style dances.

For various reasons, there is a much stronger connection between social and competitive dancing in a dance studio, trying to push boundaries and limitations in each dancer. This pressure can be found less or is much less apparent in the social scenes of the "obsession dances," which often even takes a strong stance against competing. But this focus on one style of dancing produces sometimes very tightknit communities that are hard to join and that bring the particular dance to a higher level of social dancing, similar to the effect competitions have on dances (interpretation, rhythms, patterns, etc.).



Growing up in Germany, "social dancing" had a somewhat different meaning to me. The dances you danced were the same you competed with. But for a special occasion, such a ball to celebrate a season or a local festival, for which you dressed up, you danced only the basic step(s) and a few variations, just enough to have variety and maneuverability, but nothing to make you stand out. Once you wanted to push your boundaries and have fun with developing your skills, you stepped off the social dance floor and entered the competitive arena.

It's a bit like running for exercise and fun or preparing for a marathon. Once you get serious about pushing your boundaries and reaping the benefits from doing so, you have to be prepared to invest time, get the right gear and take defeat. That's only heartbreaking, if your expectations unrealistically exceed your abilities. Otherwise, there are many added benefits, because you not only add many more friends to your social circle, but also increase your own well-being and self-confidence (need proof, watch the documentary by Gail Freedman "Hot to Trot").

Whatever you fancy, I hope that you'll pursue it with all your passion and reap the benefits!

HAPPY DANCING!

## **Announcement**

### **More NASSPDA Scholarships available soon**

As you know NASSPDA's Board of Directors has awarded April Follies competition for the second time in its history to host the North American Championships this year. Also we have approved two candidates to receive Scholarships for participating at April Follies which left us with available funds for more scholarships in the near future. Stay tuned and be ready to apply when the submission period opens up for the next Scholarship this year.

### **NASSPDA MEMBER'S MEETING**

NASSPDA meeting is open to all. Come, share your ideas, ask questions and meet some of the Board members.

Sunday, April 29th 2018 10:30-noon

Wooden Table Cafe  
2300 Broadway in Uptown Oakland CA  
(A few blocks from the 19th St BART)

## Board of Directors Election

### Election Timeline:

- March 31, 2018 - Deadline for nominations
- April 22, 2018 - Finish vetting & creating candidate profiles
- May 6, 2018 - Sent voting ballots to members via Survey Monkey
- May 13, 2018 - Sent reminder email to members to vote
- May 20, 2018 - Elections close
- May 27, 2018 - Results reported to the Board and to all NASSPDA members

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 be posted on the NASSPDA's website: [www.nasspda.org](http://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](mailto:info@nasspda.org)

## 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>



## EVENT DETAILS OVERVIEW

SATURDAY, APRIL 28, 2018

LOCATION: JUST DANCE BALLROOM 2500 EMBARCADERO, OAKLAND CA

- 9:30am: Ballroom opens to the public
- 10:00am - 5:30pm: Competition
- 5:30pm -6:30pm: Buffet Dinner (advance registration required).
- 6:30pm - 7:30pm: Dance Lessons: No partner or experience necessary! FREE to all evening ticket holders!
- 8:00pm - 11:00pm: Showcase of Champions: Featuring the North American A Level Finals, followed by a fabulous show and plenty of time for social dancing.

## New England Open

Hosting NASSPDA's 2018 New England Regional Same-Sex Championships  
Organized by Kalin Mitov and Boston Open Dancesport LLC

September 28th & 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

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](http://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](mailto:wildmankathy@gmail.com) or to [info@nasspda.org](mailto: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



These are just a few suggestions. To apply for financial support from NASSPDA's \$250 Grant Program, please visit our website at [NASSPDA.org](http://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](mailto:promotions@nasspda.org) with any questions.