



North American Same-Sex Partner Dance Association
Embracing and Welcoming All Dance Couples and Dancers

REMEMBERING APRIL FOLLIES

A Tribute to April Follies

by Chelsea Blandford

(written one day after the very last April Follies event that took place on Saturday, April 29, 2023)

About five years ago, I danced in my first ballroom competition. I was terrified and wasn't really sure it was something that I was going to be able to do. But one of the things that made me realize I could was the fact that I was competing at a queer competition - April Follies. I wasn't the odd one out on the floor, I wasn't pushing boundaries, I didn't feel like I had all eyes on me because I was different - I just got to exist as myself in what was a brand-new world to me. Back then. I saw other people who looked like me leading other dancers around the floor and, just like every time I see any queer couple on the floor now as well, my heart absolutely exploded. It's hard to explain the euphoric feeling of being in a room full of people who don't just tolerate or accept me being there, but they celebrate and understand it without question. Yesterday, I was honored to get to attend and dance at the last April Follies event ever. I kept finding myself with teary eyes because I was back in a ballroom watching dancers where gender or sexuality didn't matter at all but, at the same time, it also meant everything in the world to me. I was watching queer dancers dance with their loves, friends, teachers, students, partners and it truly meant the damn world to me. I know that the amount of gratitude I felt can't possibly be expressed through words but I'm trying anyway. So thank you for giving me a space to feel safe enough to fall in love with a sport and world that I didn't think I had a place in. Thank you for giving me role models to look up to, to aspire to be like, and to just feel 'normal' watching. Thank you for fighting for years and years before I ever even showed up. Listening to the history and stories of everyone in that room yesterday made me even more grateful that such a thing existed, even if it was the

end of an era. As I watched people leave at the end of the night, I kept thinking that I'll be carrying everyone there with me every time I step out on the dance floor from now on. How could I not when so many of them were the foundation of my ability to even imagine stepping onto a competition floor. The dancers, the spectators, the organizers, the volunteers... thank you for everything you did to make yesterday (and every other April Follies) happen. It was more profound and powerful for my queer heart than I even realized as I watched and danced yesterday. It was an event I'll never forget and always be grateful to have gotten to experience.

Thank you thank you thank you.



A Brief History of April Follies (a NASSPDA sanctioned event)

by Bridget Scadeng, Ellen Levitt & Susan Hoskins

After the 1998 Gay Games in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, which hosted for the first time a Same-Sex Dance Competition as an official sport, a core group of dancers created April Follies in the San Francisco Bay Area in the early 2000's. The founders were Richard Lamberty, Tom Slater and Ava Kaye. Ava went on to be the Scrutineer and DJ for the entire lifetime of the April Follies competitions. Beginning with International Standard and International Latin, the Follies gradually added new dance disciplines for the expanding Same-Sex dance community, including American Smooth and Rhythm, Country Western, and finally Argentine Tango, as these dance styles increased in popularity. Over the years, several people notably gave of their time and love of dance...Zoe Balfour trained numerous couples in varying dance styles, and brought Formation Teams to the competition

every year.... Barbara Zoloth was the first MC, a ballroom dancer and the head of the April Follies committee for too many years to count....and finally, Matt Roswood took over the job of MC with his dazzling wardrobe of sparkling tuxedos and caustic humor! The number of dancers grew to about 140 at our peak. And we were honored and thrilled to host the NASSPDA North American Championships numerous times during our 20-year run. But as with many wondrous things, April Follies gradually got smaller, both numbers of competitors and also committee members.... eventually reduced to just 3 people holding the fort, Bridget Scadeng, Ellen Levitt and Susan Hoskins. And then came COVID-19. With all of this, we still wanted to get everyone together one last time and go out with a bang. So, we threw open the doors, charged no admission, and danced the day away on April 29, 2023. Dancers and spectators filled the ballroom, and at the end of the day we were treated to a fabulous final show: **Platforms 20 – 30**, designed, directed and produced by Photis Pishiaras and Ron Jenkins....and we all danced off into the night.



Annual NASSPDA Board Election

The terms of NASSPDA's Directors of the Board, Benjamin Soencksen, Emma DiFrancesco, Erik Jaeger and Rufi Oswaldo, serving on the Board are expiring. With the exception of Rufi Oswaldo, all others are running for another term (Thank you, Rufi, for your invaluable services!!!). Everyone is welcome to run for these positions, whether self-nominated or nominated by others (see <https://nasspda.org/board-member-election>).

The timeline for this year's election is as follows:

- Candidate nomination deadline is April 22
- Ballots will be sent first by May 1

- Voting will end on May 14

If you are a NASSPDA member with an updated membership, please be therefore on the lookout for your ballot in May and make your voice heard by casting your votes for the listed candidates.



Ambassador Program

In need of broader visibility, better promotion in the DanceSport world and advocating for same-sex competitive dancing, NASSPDA is looking to engage Ambassadors.

As many North American DanceSport organizations have changed their definition of a dance couple, we are witnessing interest and participation of newly formed same-sex, reverse role, and gender-neutral couples at their events. Many of those couples haven't been introduced or exposed to NASSPDA as an organization; hence, they also do not know the benefits of being a member of NASSPDA.

[Please use this link to access description and details as well as the application form](#)

(* please contact us if you encounter problems with accessing this form. A Gmail account login is required)

Online Donations?

Recently, NASSPDA's membership and payment platforms have been under malware attack and as a preventive measure we have taken down the feature from the website temporarily, while we are working on it, that allows to donate, join or renew membership. Any help from our community with advise and knowledge how to permanently resolve this issue would be greatly appreciated.

Thank YOU!

Competition Calendar

- **NASSPDA Sanctioned Competitions in 2023**

2023 North American Same-Sex Championship at Floorplay, LA
on July 22, 2023 in *Dance Around the Clock*, Monrovia, CA
<https://www.floorplayevents.com/>

- **IFSSDA Sanctioned Competitions in 2023**

The XI Gay Games

From November 5 - to 8, 2023 in Guadalajara, Mexico
<https://gggd12023.org/en>


 GAY GAMES XI · 2023
Guadalajara
 MÉXICO


IFSSDA'S
 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

DANCESPORT
 VENUE
LARVA

TRAINING NOV 4	COMPETITION/GALA NOV 5-8	SPORT FEE* 1,600 : 850 \$ MXN : \$ MXN GENERAL : MEXICANS
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*THE FEES WILL BE PER PERSON AND ACCORDING TO THE EXCHANGE RATE OF THE MEXICAN PESO AT THE TIME OF THE SPORT'S REGISTRATION.

REGISTER AT: GGGDL2023.org








Membership Information

Membership Directory

Have you checked out the [NASSPDA Membership Directory](#)?

This is a resource to allow NASSPDA members to connect with others in the community. Please contact Webmaster and their email webmaster@nasspda.org if you'd like to be added to the directory (being added is a privilege available to NASSPDA members only).



Dance Partner Connections

We understand how hard it can be to find a dance partner. Therefore we'd like to help by offering this connection service where individuals in our community interested in searching for a partner can proactively post an ad and/or passively review ads. If you'd like to post an ad, [please complete this form](#). It does not cost anything and you can share as much or little information as you want. Here is the Dance Partner Connections webpage: nasspda.org/dance-partner-connections

Outreach and Media



New partnership with The National Academy of Health and Physical Literacy (NAHPL)

NAHPL is a diverse organization that seeks to advance health and physical literacy in our society, especially in K-12 schools, higher education, and in dance and sport venues. NAHPL seeks to grow and advance professional leaders who will interact and network on regional, national and global levels to expand health and physical literacy opportunities for all children and adults.

As a member and mission centered organization, NAHPL encourages and facilitates active participation by all members, advocating for health and physical literacy. NAHPL leadership and members plan and implement professional learning opportunities and events at the regional and national levels, and advocate for health and physical literacy in Pre-K-higher education and across society.



2023 USA Champions in Latin, Standard, Rhythm and Smooth, A class, 1st Places:
James Repetty and Justin Miller, NY

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

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