

Chassé

The Newsletter of Friends of Ala Wai Ballroom Dance Academy

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Just Friends *By Warren Mitsunaga*

A Word from your Prez'

Seldom heard, an encouraging word

Whether we went eagerly and enthusiastically or were asked or dragged to the dance floor, we all had to start somewhere.

This could be a very trying time, when we feel intimidated by more experienced dancers. Our two left feet just don't move like they're told to do.

This is when we need the most encouragement. Yes, we should be corrected when we make mistakes, but also praised when we do well.

I can recall when my wife Rikki and I first took up dancing. Our first instructor constantly criticized and scolded us. Understandably, we promptly quit! But we decided to give dancing one more chance and

happened upon a dance instructor named Michael Yee and his girl friend, now his wife, Susan.

We didn't know them, yet they welcomed us into their dance family. They didn't care if we could dance or not. If it weren't for them we probably wouldn't be dancing today.

This is how it should be for all of us. When you see new dancers struggling, encourage them and tell them to keep trying. It just might make more of a difference in the long run than any technical correction we might offer them.

Remember when you first started? This is what social dancing should be all about.

Syllabus *By Michael Yap*

The Dance Director's Corner

Following should not involve multiple choices

As a teacher, I often hear the statement:

"I don't have to think about steps, I just follow."

There are arguments on either side of this statement and I, too, have an opinion. Many of my students in class have heard me say that partnering is all about choices.

"The man makes a choice; he then communicates that choice to his partner through his lead, and the lady dances that one choice."

Problems occur when the man is not clear in his lead or the lady is not familiar with his lead, creating a

multiple choice situation.

When the man's lead is clear and the lady is familiar with his lead then the lady almost automatically dances what was led.

It is in this instance that the lady "feels" as if she is not thinking when, in fact, she has easily read and interpreted the lead from her dance partner.

Therefore, does the lady have to think?

The answer is YES, in all cases. When steps are properly led and interpreted, she just thinks a lot less.

Think about it.

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