

# Larry's Corner

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Do you have a story or helpful hints for dancing? If so, write it down and give to Larry Ablin or Barb Johnson. We will add it to one of the future News letters.

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Jeannie Tucker workshop held at East meets west was very good. Jeannie is a great teacher. Thank you to Eric and East meets west for bringing her here.

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Lynne had an open house dance party at her house in Champlin, It was a dance party alright, great dancing, friends and lots of food and beverages. What more could we ask for, Thanks Lynne most fun I had in a long time, hope you have another.

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Rebels thank you for having Gail play music on 10/27/2002 she did a great job picking music.

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## Dance Floors

I tell my students to sit out a dance if the floor is too full and then be first on the floor for the next one. If everyone did this it would sure make for a nicer place for all of us to dance. I do this socially.

Understand rules of traffic flow: counter-clockwise progression, fast lane is outside, slower traffic further inside, stationary dances in the center. Don't block traffic in the fast lane, don't follow too closely, share the dance floor.

Speeding through the middle of the floor is as rude as backing up in the fast lane. That having been said, the floor at a public dance is open to all. A total beginner has paid the same price you have to come & dance & is as entitled to as much floor as you are. It is up to the more experienced dancer to always be gracious about sharing the floor with, and to keep out of the way of, the less experienced who may not yet understand the rules. And, indeed, is a mark of good floor craft. If the floor is very crowded, good floor craft means sharing and using space fairly. This is something that a lot of fancy step sequence teachers don't help their students understand. The accom-



Gary and Sherrie at TGIS Dance

plished dancers who contribute most to the pleasure of other dancers should be an inspiration. The ones who steal social dance time to show off, or use floor space inconsiderately are just egotistical bullies who maximize their own pleasure at the expense of others. It is a very strong point with me that more experienced dancers should not try to intimidate the less experienced dancers. Don't forget, one of these days this beginner may be pushing you off the floor!

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Singles all together, Dance Class

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If you are walking on a dance floor, please do so on the outside of the floor and in the direction of dancing. Never, never try to get out of the way of a good dancer. By doing this he will have problems, since he has already planned, how to get around you. The best thing to do is: Ignore him! Just continue walking off the floor.

In general, avoid the corners so you don't get trapped. During a competition or social dancing, stay one lane in from the outside edge of the floor; ready to move inside or backwards in case the couple in front of you stops - never move to the outside of the floor to find space, it is the easiest way to find yourself trapped. Many of the top pros have groupings for competitions, routines for



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Thank you very much to the TC Rebels for a wonderful time at there masquerade ball at Mystic Lake.

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Thanks also to Gail for playing great music during the ball.

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### **Closed Dance Position**

When dancing in closed position the advanced dancer will be using 5 points of contact.

1. Mans Left hand holding ladys Right
2. Ladys Right hand holding mans Left hand
3. Mans Right hand on Ladys back with fingers just below shoulder blade.

4. Ladys Left hand on Mans Rt shoulder in front or on top, never behind the back unless doing tango.
5. Diaphragm of both partners are touching, gives the feeling of being close because you are in closed position.

Beginner dancers are not in full contact because they are afraid to step on toes. If you are in full closed position it is easier to dance.

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## Where To Look While Dancing

Be aware of the folks around you and avoid collisions. Doing so may cause you to mess up a pattern, but so what? If you bump into someone -- apologize!!!

"Leaders: Watch where you swing out your partner in a crowded dance floor. You should be constantly aware of the dancers around you and make great efforts to not bang into other dancers. The responsibility is only slightly on the follower's side."

Where should you look while dancing? A safe rule of thumb is: Always look where you're about to put your partner. Obviously we want to avoid injuring others at least as much as we want to avoid injuries. So each partner should be aware of nearby dancers, what they're doing, what they're likely to do. There are some Leaders near whom I will not dance. There are some Followers who, when they're dancing with others, I try to avoid. There are other times when I'm very concerned about the nearby dancers and simply can't look at my partner out of fear.

As a Leader, my primary concern is our safety. My secondary concern is to dance and lead well. Leaders must not only be aware of who's nearby, but must predict what they're likely to do, where they're likely to be, and simultaneously keep the couple out of the way of those flying across the room. That's a lot of looking around for someone who's not supposed to be wagging his head back and forth like a spectator at a tennis match!

The Followers who know and trust me tell me that they sometimes close their eyes. But I'm always appreciative of the back-lead that keeps us out of trouble.

When dancing Swing while surrounded by dancers I trust, my eyes are upon my partner.

I have always taught to look before you lead. The followers can also stop if they see a collision about to happen. So a pattern is lost the WCS police are not going to come out and give you a ticket I tell my students that having fun and NOT running into someone is far more important than the almighty pattern, therefore if they have to abort a pattern at any time, they abort it.

Dancing isn't just about moving when you shouldn't. The ability to collision is a very useful one. Preresitations at any point in a move in will thank you for it. In east coast out from a cuddle position, for ex-salsa, look to the left before you lead

well - it's also about not moving smoothly abort a move to avoid a tice being able to go naturally into the traveling dances. Your partner swing, if you're going to send her ample, look before you do it. In the second half of a cross-body lead.

In smooth dances such as waltz and foxtrot, look over her right shoulder, and watch out for collisions when you're going forward. She should also look over your right shoulder, and watch for collisions when, as occasionally is the case, you're going backwards. Basically, it's the job of whoever's going forward to give an abort signal before a crash. The Follower should not worry

about where they're going unless the Leader is dancing backward. With traveling dances in crowds, you might need to look around for converging traffic. How much you need to look around depends on the traffic density and the skill level of the other dancers. In beginning crowds, you may encounter people who have trouble leading and looking where they are going at the same time. In advanced crowds,

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you may encounter couples who will make that exact 3/8ths of a turn, no matter how many people they have to run down to finish their amalgamation. It is the Follower's responsibility to be aware of impending danger when it's not in the Leader's line of sight. Some Followers are mistresses of the gentle back-lead; what a pleasure to dance with them on a crowded floor!

In social dance, there's looking at, smiling at or even flirting with your partner. Many nightclub partner dances and swing dances lend themselves to this kind of thing.

Partners usually don't look at each other when they're dancing Ballroom (aka Smooth, Modern, Standard). For the most part, except the occasional sly look at each other in the Tango, the eyes are focused at spots in the room - necessary for proper movement and flight. You must be able to see where you are going and this is the responsibility of both the man and the woman - it is a partnership! Since the partners are in each others arm and very much dancing together - by feel, they don't need to look at each other. However, there are opportunities for eye contact. These can occur during the development of picture lines or during moves that make big changes to the relative body positions. In the open American style which incorporates a breaking of the closed dance position, there is even more opportunity for eye contact (underarm turns, free spins, etc.). Eye contact is necessary for spotting.

I use a simple method to show why you don't look at your partner. Your feet track the way you look. In an offset position take four steps back starting with mans L ladies R. By the fourth step, the ladies R foot is usually turned slightly just enough for the man's right foot to catch her right foot. As the foot goes, so goes the knee. If the knee bends now, it will hit the inside of the ladies knee. Secondly I like to kid that I don't talk into your nose, I talk into your ear, so if I'm going to make small talk it would make sense to keep my head straight ahead. Thirdly, "standard or smooth" are traveling dances while Latin or Swing are spot

## **Clubs And Bands**

Dancers need to understand that they have to support the clubs or they will get kicked out. Supporting the club doesn't mean you have to buy a drink with alcohol in it, just buy a soda or two. If all the dancers who go to a bar would do this fewer clubs would close. I personally don't drink alcohol, I always order at least two soft drinks... A restaurant manager told me that the bar makes more money from a soft drink from the gun than it does from most alcoholic beverages, so don't feel you're not helping to pay the bills thereby. Tipping the server is essential. Look at it this way: If the manager is unsure about whether to continue "swing night" or "Country Western night" or whatever. The opinions of the servers may tip the balance and nothing will get a bunch of servers allied against a group faster than the group's being known as lousy tip-pers.

I'm frequently upset by the lack of respect we dancers show our bands. Go to your next dance and listen to the smattering of applause after every number, at the beginning of breaks and the end of the evening. When we're not paying attention dancers often leave the floor tired and happy at the end of a song, forgetting to clap altogether.

More than one band has finished a tune, and left the stage, while the dancers mingle, chat, waiting for another tune, and then realize the band is gone.

Hearty applause is a good thing. Bands are often used to playing to crowds that don't react to them or acknowledge them, but if you want the most energy out of a band, give some back. Musicians play better in

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response to riotous applause than to lukewarm handclaps. If you really think the audience is enthusiastic about what you are playing you work a lot harder to please them - playing a wilder organ solo on that blues number, pounding the piano with ever more energy in those swing tunes.

As part of dance classes have clapping practice. Should practice clapping after a song as if a live band had just finished a number. Bands who are always shown appreciation by the dancers give out great energy in return.

Try, whenever possible, to act as a plant in the audience. Start the applause early, keep it loud and keep it going. This often helps other dancers to remember to clap. Always applaud after a set if the band announces they are taking a break. Finally, go over to the band while they are packing up and Thank them, as a group. All bands appreciate that.

## Dance Shoe Care

The suede on the bottom of dance shoes makes dancing very much easier. It gives just the right amount of traction.

Sometimes when you are at a dance, the suede gets clogged up with floor wax and becomes way to slippery. You can take care of them in different ways.

If you are at a dance and they get clogged up or way to slippery, you can use a flat file brush that you can buy at any hardware store for just 2 or 3 dollars.

When brushing the suede of your shoes brush just enough so they are not slippery anymore. Brush in the direction of heel to toe. That way you won't tear off the suede. Otherwise the suede will separate from the shoe at the toe if you brush toe to heel.

When you get home you can do a better job of getting all that built up wax. Do the following steps.

1. spray some 409 cleaning product just on the bottom of the suede and let it set for a couple of minutes.
2. Take a rag and rub the suede with the 409.
3. Rinse the 409 off but try not to get any on the side of your shoes or you will have to polish your shoes.
4. Let it dry and the built up wax will be gone and the sued will look like new, if you haven't used the file brush to hard.

Then you are ready for another wonderful night of dance.



Great Lessons with Jeannie Tucker

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## Swing Clubs

East Meets West; 952-949-3016; 1st and 3rd Friday Dance at Dancesport in Hopkins 816 1/2 Main St.

Minnesota West Coast Swing; 651-731-9768; 2nd and 4th Friday Dance at B-Dale Club South of the Dale and Cty. B in St. Paul.

TC Rebels Swing club; Hotline number 952-941-0906; Dances are at Everett McClay VFW on frontage road of 494 by Mall of America.

When dancing West Coast Swing be sure to line your slot with the boards on the floor. If no boards then line up with length of room

Singles all Together has Ballroom lessons on Monday night 8 pm at the Lenox Center in St Louis Park. Singles all Together West Coast Swing on Tuesday night 8 pm at Medina Ballroom.

Larry L Ablin

Help's at Singles All Together dance class on Monday nite, at Lenox center on Minnetonka Blvd in St Louis Park.

Teach at Singles All Together West coast swing on Tuesday night at Medina.

## TGIS dances will have free lessons

1 hour before Dance starting at 730 pm on the 1st and 3rd Saturday. For November we will be learning East Coast Swing. There will be 15 minutes of Beginner to get people started,

Debater: One who talks politics or religion while dancing.

Iceberg: One with no smile ( At least look like your having fun.)

Jolly Extrovert: One who is cheerful with surrounding people, but forgets his own partner.

Lead foot: One who can't seem to lift one's feet from the floor.

Octopus: One who holds the partner everywhere but the correct dance position.

Quitter: Suddenly tired 1/2 way through song.

## Dance Etiquette

Line of Dance is counter clockwise around the room for dances that move, like Foxtrot, and Waltz.

People who aren't moving like Rock and roll, Rumba, or Swing Dance in the middle of the room.

If you bump into someone, say sorry.

If you step on partner, say your sorry, then forget it. (Don't rag on it.)

Finish the song you started dancing to, before excusing yourself.

Don't do a step that requires kicking, on a crowded floor.

## Dance etiquette offenders

Bulldog: One who does step or kick, no matter who is in the way.

Chatter box: One who is always talking. (Social talk ok but not constantly)

Crooner: One who sings or hums with music.

