

# **UADC History (1957 - 1987)**

Foxtrot, Waltz, Tango, Jive, Cha Cha - in 1957 a group of about 20 students decided they wanted to learn how to dance. No one expected their idea would grow into what is now the largest club on the university campus and still be drawing students into ballroom dance many decades later!

Thirty years of personalities, ideas, music styles, campus and city changes, and, particularly, student energy have shaped the club and its activities. What follows is an overview of the University of Alberta Dance Club, through good times and bad, 1957 to 1987.

## **1957: The club is born**

The original group of students in 1957-58 approached Hughina (Ross) Krucik and Tony Nield, both of whom had achieved their bronze medals in dancing, and requested their help for instruction. Deloyce (Tolonen) Burns was appointed president of the group, and small classes began in Latin American and modern North American dance.

Deloyce Burns recalls, "The club began very unpretentiously with an idea. This idea was to offer professional dance instruction to university students on a group basis at a nominal fee. One of our founding members had acquaintance with the Delmar Studio. Our idea was presented to them and they were very accepting and interested. They were most helpful in working out all the details. We then held an organizational meeting to present our plan to the university students (those that were interested). We were overwhelmed by the enthusiasm and support given to both the idea and the club."

As Deloyce describes, the initial response from students prompted the group to register as the "Modern Dance Club" with the Students' Union and open its doors to all university students in 1958-59. Nearly 200 students joined for the very reasonable cost of \$4.50 for 10 weeks of instruction. Keith Brown became the new president and a promotions manager was appointed to aid in the work load, particularly with regard to the difficult task of finding space in which to hold the dance lessons. As it turned out, Provost Ryan from the Students' Union was most supportive of the club and, using his influence, was able to arrange space in the west lounge of the Students' Union Building (SUB) for one hour once per week. Hughina Krucik had in the meantime taken several months of teacher training with an Edmonton dance studio, and this proved most helpful when, as the club's official instructor, she was confronted with a room of 200 eager students waiting to learn to dance!

## **1959: North American dancing added to syllabus**

Tony Nield became club president in 1959-60 and oversaw what was considered a successful year even given the frustration of being shunted from room to room by

seemingly anyone who wished use of the SUB west lounge at the same time the club did. This year North American dancing was added to the previously Latin American emphasis of the lessons, and classes were held two nights per week.

## **1960: Brochures published, and the music collection begins**

The year 1960-61 heralded the introduction of the now very familiar colored brochures outlining the club's purpose and activities, listing executive members and giving the lesson schedule. Imagine how many of these have been printed in the past 27 years! Robert Leong began as president, but his studies took him to Ontario, so Tony Nield finished the duties of president during this season. Enrollment rates were fixed at \$5.00 per student and the club's music collection was begun with the purchase of a few records from funds remaining after the season's expenses.

## **1961: More lessons, a party, and a tragedy**

Lessons in 1961-62 were increased to three hours per week and use of space in the newly constructed Physical Education Building dance room was allowed. James Osenton guided the executive that season and the year was finished with a successful dance party with a live band held at the Jubilee Auditorium. An executive member of that year, Melvin Kletke, was tragically killed in a car accident in 1965.

## **1962: "Macombo Mambo"**

The success of the club continued to build through 1962-63. Peter Patterson was president and once again weekly lesson times were extended to accommodate the large number of people who wished to take two hours of instruction per week. Enrollment increased sufficiently that monies from student fees were available at year end to host the "Macombo Mambo", a banquet and dance attended by about 100 people at the Club Macombo, complete with a chartered bus running from the campus, and dance exhibitions in Mambo, Cha-Cha, and Charleston. The evening was a great success and surpassed in magnitude any of the dance parties to date.

## **1963: A new record player and the start of Winter Waltz**

Peter Enns started the 1963-64 year as club president and was unable to complete his term. Eileen (Hurnanen) Landa took over from Peter and did much for the positive public relations of the club. Overcrowding in the classes continued to be a problem and a third class for North American dancing was added to the existing Tuesday night schedule. The student fees remained set at \$5.00 for the session and funds were such that the executive was able to invest in the club's first record player! The tradition of the

"Winter Waltz" was begun at this time with year-end festivities held at the Troc '59. One club dance party in particular is still remembered by many members. The party was held November 22, 1963, the same day as the assassination of John F. Kennedy.

## **1964: Club is renamed. Membership doubles, and students catch "exhibition"**

Several changes were made to the club in 1964-65. The executive, headed by Russ Smart, received a letter which questioned the appropriateness of the club's name. Dr. Maury Van Vliet, then Director of the School of Physical Education, pointed out that the name "Modern Dance Club" suggested interpretive dancing, in which the club was not involved. A decision was made to indeed change the club name and suggested alternatives included "Up-To-Date Dance Club", "Modern Ballroom Dance Club", "Social (Ballroom) Dance Club", and the eventual choice, "U. of A. Dance Club". The position of vice-president was created to help deal with the increased work load, and the business manager's position became a three person promotions committee. They ran a huge and very effective advertising campaign - membership doubled which resulted in a further increase in the workload! The club had apparently always suffered from a shortage of females at classes. To alleviate this, a letter campaign was launched to all university residences as well as all city hospital nurses' residences. Classes continued to increase, with a total of seven hours of instruction available per week, using both SUB facilities and the newly built Education Building gym. At this time, classes were divided into Beginners North American, Basic Latin, Advanced North American, and Advanced Latin categories. Instructor Hughina Krucik and her dance studio associates provided the evening's dance exhibitions at the Winter Waltz, held at Troc '59.

Based on a story recounted by Hughina, it seems that "exhibitions" sometimes found their way into regular lessons as well. Hughina writes: "We had so much fun and laughter at lessons, but one happening still cracks me up after all these years. The year was 1964 or 65. Art Zedel was helping me teach. Lessons were in the back portion of the Education gym. Art came rushing in as the first lesson was beginning and he had no idea what we were teaching in the Latin American hour. Since I had planned to teach a tango dip and it has some important teaching points, Art and I went into the stairwell during the break to review it. We had just got into a low dip when the door opened and about 4 students who were about to use the stairs, stopped in their tracks. I have never been sure if they knew what we were really doing, but their shocked expressions are unforgettable. Since most of them knew very little about our personal lives, I'm sure there was much speculation. It was hard to teach that second hour as we could hardly stop laughing."

## **1965: Don Newsome gets a date :)**

Membership in the club continued to increase over the next couple of years. Don Newsome served as president in 1965-66. Dance classes were fairly large, and the membership that year was about 800 students, with fees remaining at \$5.00 per year. A

story recollected from this year involves a "behind the scene" Winter Waltz happening unknown to most students at the time. Don Newsome recalls that "... one memory I have is the time my escort for the '64-65 Winter Waltz had to cancel our date on the day of the dance. I didn't have the option of not going because I was the master of ceremonies. I couldn't find a replacement on that short notice (in fact, as memory serves, there were times even when 'long' notice gave me trouble) and so a mercy squad was set into action to find me a date. Thankfully, a volunteer was found from Pembina Hall, the girls' residence at the time."

## **1966: UADC Dance competition is born among troubles. Teaching Assistants are added to classes.**

The year 1966-67 marked the 10th anniversary of the club and membership soared to well over 1000. This resulted in class times increasing from three to four nights a week. This year's executive, under Barry Botsford, introduced some new ideas which are still important parts of the club today. First, it was decided that the students should take part in the entertainment at the Winter Waltz; so, to commemorate the 10th anniversary, the dance competitions were born and trophies awarded to the winning couples. The Winter Waltz that year was to be held in the Rainbow Ballroom. To mark the occasion, a trophy was made up with a nameplate honoring the ballroom. This trophy, now known as the "Rainbow Ballroom Trophy", is awarded yearly to the winners of the senior level dance competition. However, two weeks before the Winter Waltz and after all the tickets and posters were printed, the Rainbow people cancelled the club booking in favor of a more profitable event. Attempts by Barry to have the ballroom manager "play fair" met with no success, so Barry and the rest of the Dance Club started to spread the news of what happened all over campus. This eventually resulted in a person from the ballroom meeting with the club to ask the club to stop smearing their name, and as a gesture of apology, the ballroom agreed to sponsor the trophy.

The other important change introduced by this executive and Hughina was the concept of teaching assistants. The basic idea was to provide more "personal" instruction to members in the large dance classes. Training of interested students began on Sunday afternoons in Hughina's basement, and these people began playing an important role in helping students learn to dance.

## **1967: Classes begin being held in Dinwoodie Lounge. Romance blossoms!**

The dance club moved into new realms of affluency in 1967-68. Robert Hunt served as president and oversaw a club membership of 1150 dancers. Bert had his hands full with this task and he recalls the "fun" of "... organizing 1200 people over 4 week nights so all my Engineering friends had the girls they wanted on the night they were free to go!". The executive established the club in the new SUB facilities (Dinwoodie Lounge), although on a low-priority basis as dance club bookings were subject to cancellation on

one week's notice. As well, the executive created a new position of social coordinator under whose direction the club "went ritzy" on dance decorations and moved from the Troc '59 to the new Chateau Lacombe ballroom for the Winter Waltz. An executive member commented that this was a good year for meeting girls in the club, and indeed from within the five member club executive came two marriages!

## **1968: Price goes up, but sales still strong! Don't forget, girls can stack chairs too.**

In 1968-69, membership fees were raised from \$5.00 to \$6.00 in an attempt to reduce the club's unwieldy membership. Recruitment during this period was done through a number of avenues. Letters describing the club were placed in mailboxes at Lister Hall residences, the U. of A. Hospital nurses' residence, and in Frosh Kits. Students read that "... While dances like the jerk, frug, monkey, etc. were adequate at the high school level, you will find an ever increasing demand for ballroom (formal) dancing". The club had an information booth active during Freshman Introduction Week, the student newspaper "The Gateway", and campus radio were used for promotion, and a registration booth operated in the Students' Union Building. Tom Gray, president in 1968-69, writes that "... We have always been aggressive salesmen - having good looking girls and guys calling out to passersby seems to go well with most students". Hence, even with the increased membership fee, 900 dancers registered for the season of 10 instructional and 2 review lessons. At this time, the dances taught included Waltz, Foxtrot, Jive, Bossa Nova, Samba, Rumba, Cha-Cha, Tango, and Mambo. Old-time dances of Schottische, Polka, Heel-Toe Polka, and Butterfly were also taught.

Activities of the club in the 1967-69 period followed a format which had evolved to that point and which has remained basically unchanged to the present. Dance lessons relied primarily on SUB space, dance parties featuring refreshments and live bands gave students a chance to socialize and practice dancing in a relaxed atmosphere, review lessons were held, as were practice sessions for those couples involved in the dance competitions. Alas, there has been a perennial problem of student members avoiding the task of table and chair moving in Dinwoodie Lounge. Executive members have harassed students for at least two decades now regarding this issue, and equal opportunity advocates will be pleased to know that in 1968 it was noted that "... Girls are perfectly capable of stacking chairs and moving tables. There is nothing unfeminine about helping out. [The executive should] encourage them to do so especially if there are few boys". (!)

## **1969: Club constitution was born. Executives receive unforgettable food poisoning.**

The 1969-70 dance club season provided some memorable moments for the executive, headed by president Eric Hagedorn. The club constitution was born, an important step for an organization as large and successful as the club had become. As well, the Winter

Waltz, held Friday February 13 at the Edmonton Inn was not to be forgotten, at least by the executive, three-quarters of whom suffered a case of food poisoning. Deirdre McKay, vice-president of the executive that year, recalls the story. Apparently the desserts for the evening (of the cake/ice-cream topping sort) had been set out to thaw in the hotel kitchen. A delay occurred in serving the dishes, and the chef put markers on those which had sat on the counter too long and so were not to be served. A shift change occurred among the kitchen staff, and it was noted that the number of specially tagged desserts matched the number of people at the head table. The new crew assumed that these were "special" desserts for the head table and they indeed turned out to be! (You may have noticed that the executive at this 30th anniversary opted for seating with the masses, just in case.)

## **1970: Alcohol approved at campus events!**

During the next few years the dance club seemed to pass through a phase of lowered enthusiasm. Club president in 1970-71 was Sheridan McLeod and in 1971-72, Andy Odenbach. Andy recalls that in 1971-72, in addition to winning the advanced dance competition with his partner Maria Domke, "... I made the first application to the university to allow the club to have alcoholic beverages at their functions on campus. [The] application was approved."

## **1971: Records lost...**

Almost no written record of the club can be found from 1970-71 until 1976-77, when club minutes were resumed. However, executive members from that time have commented that the club membership fluctuated between 500-750 students during this period and there was some difficulty in filling the executive positions.

## **1972-1975: Record low membership and turbulent times. Dance instructors change and Teaching Assistant role grows.**

Gerry Kiss became a strong figure in the dance club during the years 1972-75. He took over from Andy as president in 1972-73, a time when membership had diminished to a record low of 450 and only 3 people could be found to accept executive positions. The early seventies was a period of turbulence on most university campuses, and interest in ballroom dancing among university students hit close to an all time low. For two years, Gerry, along with vice-president Maria Domke, guided the club through this tough period. The now familiar Dance Club banner which is hung during registration week and the dance parties was designed during this time by Gerry and Maria.

At the end of the 1972-73 season, Hughina Krucik left her position as club instructor in order to spend more time with her family. The club had enjoyed her teaching and involvement for 16 fine years!

Hal Anderson was hired at the beginning of the 1973-74 season to serve as the club's dance instructor. No elections were held that year - executive positions were filled by volunteers. Dan Magnan had agreed to be president, but left at the end of the summer after accepting a job in Kitscoty, Alberta. (This resulted in almost everybody who knew Dan to look at their Alberta roadmaps to find where Kitscoty was). Gerry Kiss returned as president to help guide the dance club through the fall and winter, and the Winter Waltz that year was held at the Holland House. At the end of his first season as instructor, Hal Anderson left the club to take a job in Calgary. For the second time in two years, the search was on for a new dance instructor.

Gerry was president for a third year in 1974-75, and during the early months of 1974, several dance instructor candidates were interviewed. A definitely positive aspect of the 1974-75 season was the hiring of dance instructor Irene Heine. She was to become, as had Hughina, a well-known and appreciated personality in the dance club, giving time and energy toward the teaching and enjoyment of many hundreds of dance students.

The means of teaching the large club dance classes has evolved somewhat over time, but the basic format used is still that introduced by Hughina Krucik. She made good use of a core of interested students who were willing to take extra training lessons so as to help her with the demonstration of dance steps and assist students during classes. Over the years these people have been variously designated "helpers", "teachers", and most recently, "teaching assistants" (T.A.s) and they have become a strong and constant backbone of the club.

As Irene Heine began her association with the club, the role of the teaching assistants was formalized. While holding the position of teaching assistant was voluntary, the compliance with official guidelines set up by the executive and dance instructor came to be expected. These guidelines for teaching assistants included such things as attendance, dress code, duties and responsibilities in the area of club functioning, and suggestions for helping students during classes.

Consistently, the energy and enthusiasm for dancing of the teaching assistants has produced an "underground" force which keeps the club functioning for the mass of students who come for lessons. The teaching assistants put many hours into extra training lessons, practice sessions for exhibition routines, club registration, dance party planning, set-up and clean-up, and particularly helping the many students work their way through each new step. Most often from the core of teaching assistants also springs the new club executive. The executive and T.A.s have become a consistently active social unit who participate in numerous social activities outside of the club as well. This 30 years of club success is most certainly the result of the many people who so love to dance that they have given hours and hours in the often thankless job of teaching assistant!

1974-75 saw a renewed interest in ballroom dancing among university students. The political climate at most university campuses had become far less militant than a few years earlier, and this helped result in an increased club membership to about 750. The

Winter Waltz was again held at the Holland House. With the dance instructor situation stabilized and a group of enthusiastic members coming up within the club, Gerry Kiss stepped down as president at the end of this season. Gerry's efforts and dedicated involvement with the dance club succeeded in keeping things alive during what must have been a difficult time of low enthusiasm among members.

## **1975: Renewed enthusiasm within the club and first time association with Lorraine Lynch**

The club executive of 1975-76 was headed by Shane Brenneis and marked a time of renewed enthusiasm within the club. All five executive positions were filled, a group of eager teaching assistants were active in their duties, and the club membership had risen to 800 from a low of 450 in 1972-73. The season's activities were increased to include 12 lessons and 3 on-campus dance parties, all for a \$10 member fee. The Winter Waltz was held at the Holland House, and an impressive and innovative group Cha-Cha routine was performed by 7 couples from the crew of T.A.s, some of whom had also hand sewn the matching costumes and all of whom had practiced like mad!

The dance club became associated for the first time this year with dance adjudicator Lorraine Lynch. Lorraine participated in judging the final dance competitions at Winter Waltz and has become a dedicated "regular" in this capacity, attending every Winter Waltz since 1976. The club is happy and honored to include her in the 30th anniversary celebrations!

## **1976: Insurance purchased, Instructor contracts signed, and Executive duties defined**

In 1976-77 Bonnie (Debolt) Chappell served as president within a well-organized and active executive. The record collection was increased this year and insurance was purchased to protect the numerous pieces of sound equipment used during dance lessons. A formal written contract was established between the dance instructor, Irene Heine, and the executive, and an outline was drawn up for the duties and responsibilities of each executive member. One "official" executive duty, recalled by then-secretary Margaret (Hammerlindl) Myroon was "... the wine tasting party held by the Dance Club executive and demonstrators to select a wine to serve at Winter Waltz. (The next day no one could remember which one we selected)." (!)

## **1977: Constitution updates and a successful relationship with the University of Saskatchewan Ballroom Dancing Club**

Gary Ryan took on the position of club president in 1977-78. That year an unrevised club constitution (dating from approximately 1970) was submitted for Students' Union



records and the executive was later informed of the need for substantial updating and revision of the document. As it was fairly late in the 1977-78 season, the executive decided this formidable task would be best handled by the incoming club executive!

During this year, a very important social connection was established for the club. Doug LaValley informed the executive of the existence of a similar club in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. The club secretary, Karen Battistella, soon after began a correspondence with Dean Jones of the University of Saskatchewan Ballroom Dancing Club. Through this, a fruitful and continuing relationship was started between the two clubs. Initially, invitations to one another's final dances were extended and this developed into an exchange of dance routine performances as well as exchanges wherein executive members and T.A.s attended workshops held in Saskatoon and in Edmonton on various aspects of dance. This spirit of friendship and warm exchange between the clubs carries on through the present. Many who have been teaching assistants recall the antics during the road trips as U. of A. club members traveled the route to Saskatoon and home again in the name of dancing! The "Big Egg" in Vegreville and the North Battleford Bridge have stories to tell, I'm sure, of impromptu dance club photo sessions.

## **1978: Membership maximum was set. Challenges among Teaching Assistant morale. New relationship with Regina Ballroom Dance Club.**

In 1978-79 the club executive had followed the lead of the previous year's executive and set club membership at a maximum 600 students. This had been done to avoid overcrowding of the dance classes, beginner's which were held on two nights in Dinwoodie Lounge and advanced, held one night at Windsor Park School. This membership level was fulfilled and fees raised, for the first time in several years, to \$12.00 for the season. The ratio of female to male teaching assistants was a rather lopsided 2:1 that year, but Irene Heine and the executive, with Gordon Love as president, worked hard to keep up the morale and motivation among the teaching assistants, holding several "idea-exchange" sessions to get input from the demonstrators. Contact was made with the Regina Ballroom Dance Club and invitation extended to their executive and teaching staff to participate in the Winter Waltz, held this year at the Polish Hall.

## **1979: Police called to break up trouble at social event**

The 1979-80 season, under Mary Kletchko, started off well with lessons offered at the beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels, and a very healthy membership of approximately 800. The executive decided to designate the November dance party a theme "Greaser Dance" as Dinwoodie Lounge bookings didn't allow the club to hold a Christmas Dance that year. It seemed a great idea, but things got a bit sticky during the evening. Apparently, some "good ole boys" from RATT (Room At The Top, a pub on 7th

floor SUB) decided to crash the bopping and jiving at the dance club party and things started to get somewhat out of hand. The problem was that with everyone in greaser outfits, no one could tell the gate-crashers from the members! In the end the police were called to escort the fellows out and the club executive had to do some explaining to the Students' Union. As might be expected, this incident prompted the use of admission tickets presented at no charge to club members and their guests who wished to attend dance parties.

## **1980: Technique class, inter-club contacts, and a controversy over professional dance instruction. A new constitution and the Board of Directors is born.**

In 1980-81, president of the club executive was Karen Battistella. A strong student membership of nearly 1200 was taught in six hours of lessons, three classes at beginner and one at advanced level. A new "techniques" class was also tried out this year, with admission restricted to couples with previous training in the advanced class. Inter-club contact broadened this year as exchanges were initiated with the University of Calgary Ballroom Dance Club. Frank and Dagmar Romano, previously from Saskatoon, and Dolores (Rebus) Gillett, previously from our club in Edmonton, had all joined the Calgary club and set up the first contacts among the groups from all three cities.

A controversial event marred the end of the 1980-81 season. An executive member had been in contact with a studio-based dance instructor. From that association, a proposal to replace Irene Heine was presented to and approved by the executive. A group of concerned teaching assistants organized a general club meeting to discuss the matter further. The proceedings of the meeting got out of hand and resulted in a deep split between opposing viewpoints. The assembly in the end overruled the executive's decision and voted in favor of continuing with Irene as instructor.

From this fiasco, it became obvious that the terms of employment of the current instructor were not spelled out in the club constitution. As well, the club generally did not appear to have been following the guidelines of the constitution, which was itself not ratified, nor particularly useful, having been drafted more than ten years previously. In aid of this situation, a new constitution was drawn up and ratified at a general club meeting during April, 1981. A major change to the organization of the club was made in the establishment of a Board of Directors, to function in addition to the club executive. The Board was to have a maximum of 40 club members and be responsible for club policies, constitutional amendments, hiring of paid staff, and serving on committees as appointed by the executive. The first Board of Directors assumed its duties at the beginning of the 1981-82 dance season.

A number of teaching assistants from this time period have made comments regarding the tremendous amount of business brought to local pizza joints by the dance club executive and T.A.s. The strongest memory, outside of the sheer frequency of these

"meetings", is the fact that dance instructor Irene Heine refused to eat anything other than ham and pineapple pizza - do you remember what menu number that was, Irene?

## **1981: Silver Waltz Formation dance**

Karen Battistella took on the position of club president for a second term in 1981-82. It was a busy year! The club celebrated its 25th anniversary in 1981-82 and at the end of the season a lovely "Silver" Winter Waltz was held at the MacDonald Hotel. The executive brought together as dignitaries at the event a number of past presidents as well as Hughina Krucik, the original club instructor. The teaching assistants worked with Irene Heine to present a beautiful group silver waltz formation which, performed in elegant tuxedos and white gowns under black light, was a superb treat for the guests.

## **1981: Troubles with Student Group Status; 75% of the executive must be students**

While the year ended on a very successful note, the executive contended with a number of problems over the course of the year. The successful operation of a large organization such as the dance club depends on the securing of bookings made for lessons and dance parties. Regular lesson times, locations and a club schedule known well in advance are important when communicating with a very large membership. In 1981-82 the Students' Union challenged the executive of the club with non-compliance with Students' Union regulations which state that the governing body of a club must be two-thirds comprised of students. Because the dance club executive had no student members, the club was seen by the Students' Union to have neither rights nor privileges as a University club. For the club, this meant that the bookings of Dinwoodie Lounge for lessons were very difficult to make and it became necessary to hold some dance parties off-campus. As well, the club had problems in obtaining office space in SUB, space which was very important in terms of storage of the sound equipment used every week at dance lessons. Problems also arose regarding official recognition by the Students' Union of the club constitution, which had been ratified at a general club meeting in April 1981. In order to comply with Students' Union regulations and attempt to smooth relations with Students' Union personnel, the club executive was changed to include student members. Two persons on the original executive resigned, and temporary positions of Assistant Vice-President, Financial Secretary, and Assistant Social Coordinator were created and filled by students. The end of the year saw the creation of the Clubs Council Rep position. This representative would act as a regular liaison between the club and the Students' Union to hopefully avoid further problems of communication and policy.

## **1981: The "music box"**

Despite the frustration among the executive caused by the problems with the Student's Union, the dance classes carried on. The 1981-82 season was the first for the now

familiar "music box", constructed by long time club member Chuck Fannon. This mobile storage case for the sound equipment made the nightly battle of equipment transport and set-up a relative "breeze", and despite showing its age, the music box is still in active service. It is speculated too, that the music box may have inspired Tony "The Tiger" Pagnotta in his energetic and noticeable station as club D.J.!

## **1981: Liquor license?**

That year also marked a rather unusual event. Apparently, while applying for a dance party liquor license, one of the teaching assistants exchanged heated words with an A.L.C.B. clerk and was escorted from the building by a permit officer. Letters of apology from the club president were quickly dispatched, but was a liquor license eventually obtained?

## **1981: Dance club newsletter starts**

Lastly, 1981-82 marked the beginning of a tradition of dance club newsletters. Tony Pagnotta and Patricia (Baker) McMahan edited the first volume in three issues. Announcements, cartoons, and short articles on topics of interest to ballroom dancers were included in the newsletters. Tony's additional position as "official" club photographer kept him particularly busy that year.

## **1982: Spring training! Also, new computer, club constitution ratified, and New Years tradition starts.**

The 1982-83 season began with a series of spring training classes offered as an extra benefit to the club teaching assistants. At those classes, new dancers gained better knowledge and experience of steps to be taught in the group lessons, and all teaching assistants, as Irene Heine would say, "... got in some 'mileage' on the dance floor". Ron Willis was president of the club this season and he acted to set up a computer account for the club with the university's computing services. This has proven very useful to the club over the years, particularly for such recurrent tasks as generating membership lists, updating address lists of executive and teaching assistants, and revising the constitution and dance step schedule.

The Board of Directors was active in 1982-83 and held several meetings throughout the year. Club relations with the Students' Union gradually improved and the position of Clubs Council Rep was formally enstated in the constitution, which had at last been formally ratified by the Students' Union in August of 1982. Rob Lake acted as newsletter editor, keeping students informed of club activities. The executive began a tradition of collecting food hamper contributions at the Christmas Dance party and donating all proceeds from that dance to charity. This year also saw the beginning of yearly New Year's Eve celebrations.

## **1983: More spring lessons, a constitutional review, and the Board of Directors is dissolved.**

In 1983-84, Susan (Lucas) Knight became club president. The year began with a Board of Directors meeting in April 1983 where a lengthy constitutional review was completed. The five hour meeting was trying for even the most dedicated of Board members! The club again sponsored a session of dance lessons from April to June 1983 and opened them to both the general club membership and the core of teaching assistants. Westmount Community Hall had been reserved for the lessons and the club executive put considerable energy into ensuring that everything was organized and prepared for the first lesson. An enthusiastic 80 people turned out and were all set to dance when panic struck the organizers! While the dance tapes were present and accounted for, no one had remembered to bring a cassette player. The crowd was stalled while Susan ran to SUB to retrieve the club "ghetto blaster". Because SUB was closed during summer evenings, Rob Lake went to fetch another ghetto blaster. Eventually, both machines appeared at the lesson. The best laid plans...

Susan Knight was unable to complete her term as club president due to study commitments, and Rob Lake, the vice-president, took over her duties. Rob was very attentive to the requirements, requests, and whims of the Students' Union and thanks to his efforts, dance club relations with the SU became very positive.

Though the club was experiencing a successful year in 1983-84 with a membership of approximately 950, the club's Board of Directors was losing its effectiveness. A definite apathy was present among Board members who consistently neglected to attend meetings, or even be present on time. On a number of occasions, quorum was not reached, even with attending members holding proxy votes, and minimal club business was accomplished. Eventually, it was decided to dissolve the Board of Directors in favor of holding three general club meetings per year. Considerable revision of the constitution was required to accommodate this change in club structure and all board members were invited to a general meeting to accomplish these changes. A rather humorous twist to this restructuring occurred when the club president, Rob Lake, resolved to have the meeting start on time. All proposed changes were drafted in advance on overhead transparencies, and were displayed to the four members who did arrive on time. These changes were quickly ratified and the meeting closed 10 minutes after it was opened. A stunning change from the 5 hour constitutional marathon held earlier that year.

## **1983: "Pitch and Putt" golf tournament, and Darrel Davis receives "Bachelor of Social Dance".**

On the lighter side, 1983-84 saw the first "Pitch and Putt" golf tournament held among executive and teaching assistants at Kinsmen Park. This has become a summer tradition, but June 1983 was particularly memorable. Rob Lake and Stephen Kerr had

...tied the match and were into the playoff hole. Rob sunk a hole-in-one to the amazement and disgust of Stephen who dropped his club and headed for the club house shaking his head and muttering "There's no way I can play against that kind of luck!". The Winter Waltz that year was held in the downtown Convention Center where guests were unfortunately driven to rug dancing because the Convention Center staff provided less dance floor than had been promised. As well that evening, a long term club member, Darrell Davis, was presented with the degree of Bachelor of Social Dance to commemorate his tenth year with the club (he is presently working on his Masters and should graduate in 1989).

## **1984: Many firsts: annual downhill ski trip, switched to exclusive use of cassettes, created visual history, and lost money...**

The 1984-85 season got off to a rolling start with a series of spring lessons for the club membership in May and June, a first annual downhill ski trip attended by executive and teaching assistants during May, and a second annual "Pitch and Putt" golf tournament in June. Rob Lake took on the president's duties for a second year, and Jo-anne Nelson helped Rob with the newsletter. This year saw the introduction of "Graffiti Night" where "Spike and the Gang" (alias Don Lucas and teaching assistants) spun their favorite 50's tunes and taught students "greasy" dances from that era. As well, a Greaser theme dance was held in February 1985 with music provided by CKXM disc jockey George Kelso.

Several other "firsts" also occurred during this year. The club switched to the exclusive use of cassettes to provide music during dance lessons. This necessitated considerable effort by members of the teaching group who screened many records and transferred appropriate songs to tape. Use of videotaping to record special club events was introduced this year during the Winter Waltz. The dance routines which were performed were filmed and remain as visual history of the dancers in the club. The last, and the most embarrassing "first", was that the finances of the club took somewhat of a beating this year, and the club lost money for the first and only time in its history to date (as of writing).

## **1984: Dance instructor resigns**

The end of the 1984-85 season marked a major change for the dance club. To reverse a mood of apathy and low morale present among the teaching assistant core during lessons, this year's executive undertook initiatives to increase the involvement of the teaching assistants in club activities and to upgrade their dance training. These initiatives resulted in recurrent disagreements and tensions between the executive, teaching assistants, and instructor, and eventually led to the resignation of the dance instructor, Irene Heine, after 11 years of involvement with the club. A series of general club meetings were held near the end of the season to discuss the resignation. The split

created by these circumstances was unfortunate and the related conflicts not pleasant for any of the groups involved.

## **1985: Wanda Kivitt chosen as new dance instructor. Telephone answering machine acquired. Country and Western dances taught.**

The first order of business for the 1985-86 executive, headed for a third season by Rob Lake, was to get the club back on its feet and hire a new dance instructor. Advertising was done with the intent of using the club lessons in May and June as part of the screening process for the candidates. Each candidate taught a portion of the spring session. By consensus of the hiring committee, Wanda Kivitt was chosen as the new dance instructor. As well, the instructor's contract and portions of the constitution relating to the dance instructor were reviewed and updated at this time.

The dance club had a large membership of nearly 1100 in 1985-86. Fees had been raised to \$20 the previous year and were held at that. Relations with the Students' Union were consistently positive. A previously charged \$350 fee for the use of Dinwoodie Lounge for dance parties was waived. The club was also allowed by the Students' Union to show a financial profit in its bank balance, in order to regain the "cushion" for the summer and pre-season expenses routinely incurred by the incoming executive.

The club newsletter was kept alive by editor Rob Lake and Don Lucas continued coordinating the videotaping of the dance routines, including performances and general festivities at the social nights, dance parties, and Winter Waltz. The club acquired a telephone answering machine for use in its SUB office space. Dr. Myer Horowitz, University of Alberta President, attended the Winter Waltz for the first time and thoroughly enjoyed the evening. A long held tradition of the dance club, "Old Time Night", was revamped and renamed "Country and Western Night" and the dances taught were changed in favor of those performed in C&W nightclubs in the city. Guest instructors for the specialty dances included Kirk Jensen and the Silver Spur Dancers.

Lisa White, visiting from Columbus, Ohio for the summer, came in contact with the club and was inspired in the fall to form a ballroom dance club at Ohio State University. Their first year of operation attracted about 30 interested students. Could history be repeating itself...

## **1986: Teaching Assistants now selected to teach the student lessons. Grande Prairie Dance Club formed by UADC alumni.**

The current season, 1986-87, has been a challenging one. The loss of dance instructor Wanda Kivitt, who moved to Texas in the summer of 1986, necessitated a search for a replacement instructor. A decision was made among the club executive and teaching assistants, headed by club president Don Lucas, that the new dance instructor would be hired to train the teaching assistants, and T.A.s from the group would be delegated to teach the student lessons. Jake Frick and Cathy Ward were hired for this purpose, but unfortunately conflicts arose regarding the teaching approach of the instructors. Discussion between the club executive and the dance instructors resulted in the resignation of Jake and Cathy. At this time, Don Lucas, who had been instructing the Tuesday evening beginner and intermediate classes, took over the training sessions for the teaching assistants. Robert Katzell continued to teach the two beginner dance classes held on Monday nights.

The season of activities of the dance club unfolded fairly routinely with a constant eye toward the celebrations planned for the club's 30th anniversary. In the early part of the season, a downhill ski trip, indoor golf tournament at West Edmonton Mall, and a session of spring dance lessons were held. Six fine editions of the club newsletter were put together by the "sisters" Bailey - Janice and Jennifer. Club membership was a healthy 1060 and a split fee structure was introduced, with students paying \$15 and non-students \$20 for the year's membership. The loss of some of the executive to out-of-town jobs necessitated a mid-season election to fill the vacant positions. The club continued to make use of videotaping as a means for the club to maintain a record of its dancers and their performances, and as well for the performers to see how their routines looked from "out there". The club was particularly pleased to develop ties with the newly-formed Grande Prairie Dance Club, founding members of which we are proud to know as U. of A. Dance Club alumni!

## **1986: 30th Anniversary Preparations**

Preparations for the 30th anniversary Winter Waltz and reunion have demanded energy from many people. Rob Lake headed the reunion planning and search for alumni. He and his phoning committee, Patrick Collins, Marcel Bourbeau, and Linda Robertson, expect to easily take care of any surplus cash in the club account once they submit their long distance phone bills! Recording in pictures the upcoming event and putting together memorabilia from the past has been the task of Robert Katzell, Vinnie Sandhu, and Liz Forest. Hugh Mah, Heather Waldie, and Peter Wong drafted the invitations and Hugh took care of mailing the invitations and making the reunion nametags. Peggy Marsh designed the table namecards and Murray Schellenberg helped with the seating arrangements. Don Lucas, as well as generally keeping an eye on all preparations, has seen to the arrangements with the Westin Hotel to ensure a fine evening and Sunday reunion of dining, dancing, entertainment, and renewing of friendships.

Choreography and practice of dance routines has involved the time and creativity of Wanda Kivitt and much of the teaching assistant group, and their efforts should add dazzle to the evening's entertainment. Students from this 30th year will participate in the



annual Winter Waltz dance competitions, and Ken Sawyer has ensured that all will run smoothly for them, nerve wracking as the experience may be!

## **1986: Dance Club T-Shirt**

Students and alumni may also now partake in the long awaited "Dance Club T-Shirt"! The need for a club logo and t-shirt was first discussed in March 1983 after club members returned from a workshop exchange with the U. of Saskatchewan Ballroom Dance Club. The dancers in Saskatoon sported spiffy new club shirts, and it seemed only fitting for the U. of A. to follow suit. Discussion of a logo and shirts occurred with regularity according to club minutes, and increased in intensity during the summer of 1986 and subsequent dance season. In February 1987 and in honor of the club's 30th anniversary, t-shirts are at last available for purchase by club members!

## **In closing: Perspective from the composer**

Lastly I suppose, is my perspective on this grand event. As compiler and composer of this "club history", I have read minutes from more than a decade of club meetings and guidelines and history written in the 1966-69 era; I have read stories and snippets of remembrances sent in by alumni from many periods of the club's history; I have listened to events recounted by long time club members still active in this year's group; I have laughed at stories and hope to meet the people who told or featured in them; I have worried about writing about events which were not pleasant and surely carry bitter memories for some even now. Most importantly though, I have been thrilled by the consistent enthusiasm and energy expressed by people who have reflected on their time with the club. Setbacks, apathy, disagreements, and much more will always be part of human interaction, but dance and the gathering of people to enjoy it carries amazing power - it has indeed propelled this club through 30 years.

My hopes are that everyone present on March 14 and 15, 1987 will have a marvelous time at this 30th anniversary celebration. Our focus can and should be on the positive happenings from the past and on those most definitely to come in the future. We are an exciting part of history in the grand tradition of the U. of A. Dance Club!

Pat McIsaac  
Secretary, 1986 - 1987  
University of Alberta Dance Club