

The Dancing Feet

B E R K E L E Y B A L L R O O M

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IMPORTANT DATES

- June 24, 2006: Regional Dancesport Championships in Anaheim, California
- July 1-2, 2006: Regional Dancesport Championships in Seattle, Washington
- August 11-13, 2006: USA Dance National Championships in San Jose, California
- August 28, 2006: UCB instruction beings

The Berkeley Classic!



Laura Jarvis competes with Josh Von Korff in Gold Syllabus Latin.

More photos available online at ucbd.smugmug.com!

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By Pamela Behnken

UCBD has outdone itself once again. The 6th annual Berkeley Ballroom Classic was a smashing success. Our '05-'06 Competition Coordinator Alisha Woo did an outstanding job perfecting every last fine detail to pull together a ballroom competition Berkeley-style. Team members scurried around in the weeks leading up to the competition, hanging flyers, inviting all their friends, getting sponsors, dragging their partners around to practice, and finding the perfect outfit to wear.

On the morning of April 29, 2006, everyone was up not-so-bright but early, perfecting their hair and makeup in the wee morning hours before contributing toward setting up the venue. Slowly other competitors began to trickle in, until the gym was packed with competing couples from Cal Poly, CalTech, UCSD, Sacramento studios, Stanford, and Harvard. Four formation teams

joined us for the event, interspersing the regular competition with some choreographed productions.

As the day progressed, Berkeley couples continued to excel in the events in which they competed. In between they ran around learning firsthand all the work that goes into hosting a competition. The event drew a standing-room-only crowd, even after extra chairs were hustled in. In the evening, some fun dances were interjected: backwards waltz, in which couples linked arms and danced back to back; a stiff-legged cha cha, in which couples could neither bend their knees nor smile; and a newspaper jive, in which couples could not step off a mat, or later, off an 8.5"x 11" sheet of paper. Some couples solved this by having the follower simply cling to the leader's back or wrap her legs around his waist.

The champ and pre-champ level standard and Latin competitions drew a lot

of excitement from the crowd as the most advanced dancers poured all their energy onto the dance floor. The insanity continued with an end-of-night team match in which teams competing against each other in dances like the Tacky Tango, Fossie Foxtrot, No-Arms Samba, and Cross-Led Rumba. These were fun for all involved; as freshman Valerie Jaffee said, "I absolutely loved the fun events—we'd never be allowed to dance stiff-legged cha cha or the tacky tango in dancesport class."

As the night wound down, dancers from all over were exhausted but smiling. After tearing down all the decorations they had just set up that morning, team members piled into the Ballroom House for a stress-relieving night of pizza, food, dancing, and partying with members of the dance teams from other schools. Overall, the Berkeley Ballroom Classic was a fantastic way to close a successful year of dancing with a bang. Go bears!

Frolicking on the Dance Floor

By Neil Landers

“Randy, Randy, Randy!!!” the Berkeley Ballroom Team chanted as our Latin stars Emily and Randy danced their Paso Doble. Their energetic dancing caused the team to burst into a frenzy of cheering and dancing as our stars competed in the Latin championship event. The team continued to cheer until they were finally pacified when Randy blew us a grateful kiss. Emily and Randy were amazing. They were dazzling and awe-inspiring. The whole day had been just as exciting.

The Berkeley Ballroom team broke in the winter season with its first competition of the semester at the Winter Frolic. UC Berkeley dancers dominated the competition both with their dancing and with their team spirit, which filled the room and soared at each successive event, electrifying the atmosphere and making for an exhilarating experience.

The Bronze dancers had begun with two new fun (and challenging!) dances in their program, the dance born in the Brazilian carnival, the samba, and the jolly, subtle, American dance, the foxtrot. UCBD has an impressive bronze showing, with a lot of competing couples. Our top placers in Bronze were Pamela Behnken dancing with Lyell Sakaue, River Liu with Christina Jian, and Charlotte Daniels with Andy Yang.

The Winter Frolic held a team match as well. For first year dancers, this was their first experience with a team match. Fun! It was amazing to witness the Berkeley Ballroom team spirit in action. What a great feeling to be dancing with all of your team members, Bronze next to Gold, together for



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**From left to right: Stephanie, Andrea, Charlotte, Pamela, Andy, David S., Lyell, Lan, and Natasha prep outside the competition venue at Elks Lodge in Palo Alto.
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the glory of our team and the sheer fun of dancing together. Berkeley accepted first prize and the team, led by its huge banner,

“...dazzling and awe-inspiring.”

marched in a jovial circle around the floor to Spanish marching music, cheering each other on, doing the limbo under the team banner, and enjoying the feeling of excitement permeating the room as we pranced around the dance floor.

During the Latin pre-champion competition our attention was split between some of our best couples. Randy and Emily were up to their usual tricks showing their incredible energy, Donovan and Alisha were showing off their sexy Latin moves. Steve and Liz followed, vying for attention with some dips and dramatic dancing.

The best part was watching each dancers' faces as they really got into the dance and showed their groove. So much talent and too few eyes to admire it.

For Silver, Gold, and Novice the rounds were competitive. Berkeley's top placers were Dan Frank with Sharla Roberts, David Shis with Dianna Lee, John Huang with Julia Pchelnikova, and David Zhang with Cindy Chou. Our team held its own in pre-championship and championship competition too, with Steve Berkovich and Liz Rislove dancing into both the Standard and Latin finals and Emily Wilcox with Randy Wu and Alisha Woo with Donovan Sung placing well in Latin.

All in all the day made for a lot of dancing, some great team bonding, and a fantastic effort from everyone having fun and dancing their best.

EAST MEETS WEST: BERKELEY BALLROOM AT HARVARD

By Evelyn Miles

Proving that jet lag, sleep deprivation and the home team advantage are no match for our dancers, UCBD did Cal proud at the Harvard Invitational on March 10-11. Most of us arrived in Boston on Friday, but a few intrepid souls left a day early for relaxation and sight-seeing.

Arriving in Boston during an unexpected and welcome warm spell, we were greeted by our hosts on the Harvard team, piled into a restaurant for dinner, and then returned to the dorms to rest up for the next day. Our wake-up call came at 5:30—subtract three hours for the East Coast-West Coast time difference, and you'll understand what a heroic effort it was just to get out of bed, let alone dress, put on makeup, and prepare for a day of dancing! The Invitational was held in Malkin Gymnasium, a spacious and airy venue, and we quickly warmed up and were ready to go at 8



Dan Frank and Sharla Roberts
See more pictures online at:
<http://ucbd.smugmug.com>

AM for Standard rounds. The sheer number of competitors was mind-boggling. Bronze Latin alone was comprised of over 120 couples! The Harvard team did an admirable job of keeping everyone in line—literally. The backstage area was organized and spacious enough to accommodate couples warming up and those in line for rounds.

Standard was over in the afternoon, and after a short break for dinner (where we celebrated Cindy Chou's happy birthday!), we regrouped at Malkin for the Hanlon Ford Ball, which included the advanced finals as well as several first-rate performances from studios in the area. Our advanced couple, Alisha Woo and Donovan Sung, placed fifth among over twenty couples with their lovely Standard routines. Everyone enjoyed the live swing band that played into the night, providing us with all the foxtrots, jitterbugs, and slow two-steps we could manage on our tired feet. We collapsed that night to recharge for another day of competition.

Sunday was our day for Latin, which seemed impossible on already sore feet, but everyone marshaled their strength and did a superb job. Lyell Sakaue and Pamela Behnken not only placed first in Bronze Rumba and Jive and third in Cha-Cha, but walked away with the honor of best overall dancers in their level. Silver dancers Dan Frank and Sharla Roberts took best overall for Silver Standard. We were supported by several dedicated friends and family members, some of whom made the trek to Boston all the way from Colorado! For anyone who feels shy about calling out at competitions—names, numbers, any other forms of encouragement—I can assure you that far from being a distraction, it makes us smile bigger and stand straighter. Keep it coming!

Overall, Berkeley placed third in total team points, even though we only competed in two of four types of dances. Every couple made it to at least one



Dianna Lee and David Shis
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quarter-final. This is quite an achievement after long hours on the plane and the stress of being in a new environment. We finished at midday on Sunday, and after a fun lunch at Fire & Ice (try it if you're in Boston—or Tahoe!), separated to return to Berkeley or explore Boston on our own. For my part, I dragged the long-suffering James Fung to Cape Cod with me, where we enjoyed a relaxed visit to recover from our high-energy weekend.

All in all, the trip and competition was an unqualified success and went without a hitch (the minor wrinkle of Sharla leaving her costumes on the Oakland airport shuttle—quickly recovered!—notwithstanding). I'm sure everyone will want to go back next year. Lyell Sakaue put it best when he said, "Harvard was not just another competition; being able to watch amazing dancers and then compete against them really took our dancing to another level."



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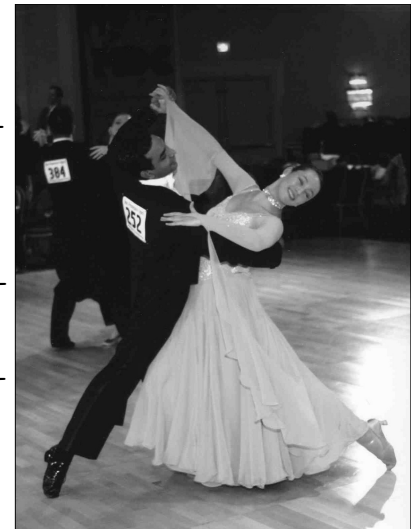
A BIG THANK YOU to:

Our professional coaches:
Tomas Atkocevicus, Aira Bubnelyte, Stephen Cullip, Silke Heleine, Jurga Pupelyte, and Vaidas Skimelis

Our wonderful DS teachers:
Emily Wilcox, Randy Wu, Yakov Bart, Dan Frank, Kevin Sinats, Cindy Chou, Donovan Sung, and Liz Rislove

Alisha Woo, a longtime dancer and an integral part of UCBD, is graduating this year. We will miss her!

Sriram Balasubramanian and Dasha Mashnik compete at the SF Open on April 2, 2006. They competed in Novice (placed 4th) and Pre-Champ. Sriram is graduating this semester. Their graceful dancing has served as an inspiration for UCBD rookies.



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Randy Wu and Emily Wilcox, two of our DS teachers and one of UCBD's favorite couples, compete at the Cal State Championships. We love you guys!