



Larrys Corner

Volume 7, Issue 6
June 2007

If you want to read dance stories they are under Headlines or Larrys Corner.

[Http://www.comedancewithus.com](http://www.comedancewithus.com) Or
<http://www.dancempls.com>

Larry L Ablin : 612-599-7856
lablin@charter.net

Barb Johnson : 612-599-9915
westcoast1@charter.net

Do you have any likes or dislikes, stories, 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.

If you would like to tell us how you became interested in dancing, write it down and give to Larry or Barb, we will add your picture with it and put it in one of the future Newsletters. If you have anything you would like to write for us, just write it up and give to Barb or Larry. I enjoy writing something for you.

Come Dance With Us

<i>Inside this issue:</i>	
Dance Floor Wax	1
Too Long Song	2
Dance Etiquette and beyond	3
Dance Etiquette at the dance	3
Dance Mistakes to be Avoided by Women	3
Dance Mistakes to be Avoided by Men	4
Dance Etiquette Dress should be suitable for dancing	4

Dance wax

One need only think back to the Pet Rock to realize that anything can be sold to anyone who doesn't know any better. That hardly qualifies a product for endorsement. The need for dance floor wax usually is a result of wearing improper boots or shoes for dancing. I have watched in horror as people in tennis shoes or old worn out boots spread every form of "wax" on the floor to try to solve a problem that really doesn't exist. For some reason, many dancers don't seem to consider dance floors in the same category as basketball courts and would be outraged to be forced to buy 'special' shoes for dancing. It's a shame. Dance shoes are light-weight and comfortable. They need extra care to keep the chrome suede sole effective but they do smooth out the differences between floors in different states of repair and care. Dance floor "wax" is not a "wax" and is a hazard to anyone who wears proper footwear to dance in. Before spreading some foreign substance on a dance floor, one might consider that, in this age of lawsuits, it might be very costly to be found guilty of contributory negligence when a dance teacher, competitor, or trained dancer hurts himself due to something being placed on the floor that does not "naturally" belong on the floor. The only question to be settled in an action like this is... "who put it there, and with who's permission?" I personally stay off of floors that have been sabotaged like this. But then, I'm not into lawsuits. Don't risk your financial future betting that everyone comes from this point of view. It is easy to solve the problem without "dance floor wax." Wear proper footwear and you too can spin like a top and dance like you want to, without endangering others. I am a professional dance teacher, I teach dance in lots of places, and I dance on all kinds of floors. I have watched people get sued for this very act. I have read insurance policies that prohibit the use of

"floor wax" and I know first hand how dangerous this can be. Unfortunately, not everyone has had the opportunity to slip and fall on a dance floor. Just remember, not everyone wears street shoes for dance. If the floor is sticky, **CLEAN IT** instead of putting more junk on it. I encourage others who have had bad experiences with foreign substances on the floor to help beginning dancers understand that the floor is not bad, it is the shoes. Most dance professionals do not prefer a fast floor or a slow floor, but would instead prefer a floor that reacts with the proper amount of speed and grab to allow PROPER footwear to adequately support the body in flight. The bottom line is that dance floor "wax" is dangerous and unnecessary. I have had to dance on grass, carpet, gym floors, etc. If you cannot dance without putting something on the floor, get rid of the rubber bottomed shoes, clean the floor or get some training. Ask yourself why don't we use silicone on the floor? Silicone is REALLY SLICK. Your dance floor "wax" is like silicone to anyone who knows how to move their own body.

Too Long Song

You hear it! That great song you've been waiting for all night. You make a mad dash for the floor with that women (or man) you've been eyeing for hours, and you throw yourself into the heat of the music. A great horn solo, conga solo, piana solo, vocal solo and . . . bass solo later, you're starting to sweat. 5 minutes pass . 10 minutes pass . you and your partner are starting to show signs of severe exhaustion . dehydration . hard to move the feet . you can barely see through all the sweat . 15 minutes pass . the song has GOT to be over soon . then another round of solos start. Yikes . what is the band thinking? After 20 minutes you're just going through the motions. You're vainly hoping that the song will just end so you can collapse in a heap on the floor. Your partner, whom you used to admire greatly, has turned into your worst enemy. Why, oh why, won't the song end! Your feet have become lead weights, and yet still . . . the song plays on!

What can you do when a song plays for too long? You DO NOT have to wait it out. Some bands like to jam, and it can last for 30 minutes or more, regardless of the dancers. When this is going on it can become an embarrassing scene for some of those dancers who keep thinking to themselves, the end is right around the corner. I've seen people sweating so much it looked like they might drown. The light is gone from their eyes, and they've become zombies. It's time to do the right thing (for both you and your partner), and end this dance.

It's hard to do - but you've got to lean over to your partner and call it quits. It's ok to say "I'm getting a bit tired", or "this is too long a song". You can make a joke out of it, crack a smile, talk about how you're getting old (maybe guys will want to stick with this one). The bottom line is that either partner can do it, IF it's done right.

For the men - you're the leaders. It's up to you to do it if you see your partner waning after 20 minutes. Be nice, be gentle, give her the opportunity to say enough. She will be so happy you had the courage to call it. What do you say? Be honest. Something to the effect of "This is a long song, would you like to break?". Then, **DANCE HER OFF THE FLOOR**. Do not just drop her and walk away. Take her in closed position, and, if possible, dance towards the edge and walk her from the floor.

For the ladies - Yes, you can do it too. However, it must be done with real flare. You've got to go the extra mile so the man doesn't think it's because of his dancing or him (yes, even if it is).

It's nice to say something to the effect of "Let's dance again later".

Good Danceable songs usually last between 3-10 minutes, with a sweet spot of 4-6 (in my humble opinion).

Dance Etiquette and Beyond

Success in a social activity requires awareness of accepted norms of behavior. The importance of dance etiquette to the social dancer can hardly be overstated. Etiquette is important everywhere, but especially in dancing, a delicate activity where unpleasantness has no place.

Dance communities tend to be fairly small, giving a nice self-enforcing characteristic to dance etiquette. Inconsiderate individuals may temporarily enjoy themselves at other dancers' expense. But they quickly develop a reputation, mostly unbeknownst to them, and become outcasts. A good reputation, as a considerate and enjoyable partner, is a social dancer's best asset.

In the following we touch on a few of the more important aspects.

Never blame your partner for anything that may happen on the dance floor. Not if you want him/her to dance with you again.

A request for a dance must be accepted under almost all circumstances. If you decline a dance, you yourself cannot dance until the end of that song.

No unsolicited teaching on the dance floor! There is a good chance this will make your partner feel small and humiliated. Not exactly a great way of encouraging him/her, or others, to dance with you.

Do not monopolize a partner on the dance floor. Dancers are polite and rarely say no to a dance, but this is no carte blanche to impose on their kindness. Dance with everyone, and let everyone dance.

On the floor, be considerate of the other couples. Exercise good floor craft; do not cut other couples off; no aerials or choreographed steps on the dance floor.

What we discussed so far is usually considered the domain of dance etiquette. Anyone who consistently violates the rules of dance etiquette will eventually be shunned in the lo-

cal dance community, so the first step towards success in dancing is to follow the rules of dance etiquette. Once we have mastered the etiquette, it is time to move beyond it and learn what else can we do to become popular in the dancing circles.

Dance Etiquette At the dance

Either the man or woman may ask for a dance

When asking for a dance, **try not to be overly aggressive**—i.e. take the hint after two refusals.

Try one's best **not to turn down anyone** who has asked for a dance. It is all right to state that one is "sitting this one out" or that one is not familiar with a particular dance. It is extremely rude to turn down one person and then accept another invitation during the same dance number.

Introduce yourself to your partner right away.

With couples of two different genders, the **gentleman always leads** the lady.

Cutting in is quite acceptable at dances but should be avoided during a song.

At the end of a dance, one should thank his/her partner for the dance and leave the partner at the "sidelines" instead of on the dance floor.

Dance Mistakes to be Avoided by Women:

Claw: this is when a woman clutches the man right arm with an iron grip. This can be painful with long nails especially in combination with the Coat Hanger.

Coat Hanger: this is when the woman does not support the weight of her own arms or body but sort of hangs off her partner as dead weight that he must drag across the dance floor.

Role reversal: Other than lack of rhythm, the most common complaint that men have: women who lead and/or don't follow the man's

lead. This faux pas will land you on the sidelines (and blacklisted) for sure unless you have stunningly good looks.

Limp wrist spaghetti arms: this is physically taxing and no fun for the man since he has put in twice as much effort to lead the woman.

Miss Sourpuss: shaking one's head, rolling one's eyes, looking bored, unenthusiastic or pissed off and ignoring one's partner all fall into this category of bad attitude. As my ballroom dance teacher once stated: "In dancing, it is the job of the woman to look like she is having the time of her life"

Dance Mistakes to be Avoided by Men

Non-Existent Lead: Ambiguous or non-existent leads are most common complaint of female ballroom dancers. It is not the job of the woman to know what steps to do. A firm lead is always appreciated since it is usually the woman that ends up looking incompetent when the man doesn't lead properly. Ambiguous leading leaves the woman thinking "What does this guy want from me?"

Egoist: "The primary job of a male dancer is to make his partner look good," It is, therefore, considered impolite to dance above the level of one's partner. If you sense that a lady is not comfortable with a certain step, avoid it. Please be sensitive to your partner's level of dance experience.

Limp-wrist spaghetti arms: Lack of frame is bad enough in women but it makes dancing almost impossible when it is the man that is guilty of this mistake.

Dictator: Men who lead by barking orders and arm-wrenching are unpleasant. Though this is somewhat rare, what is more common are men who, to various degrees, bulldoze and drag their partners across the dance floor. This is particularly unpleasant when dancing the faster dances with larger men, an experience that is akin to being slammed by granite block (remember, $p=mv$).

Pervert: Wandering hands, indiscreet stares, stalking, unwanted advances, men who circle the dance floor checking out women and the list of lecherous behavior goes on and on and on... You know who you are. You are fooling yourself if you think that we don't.

Dance Etiquette Dress should be suitable for dancing.

Ladies, in particular, should bear in mind the "dancer friendliness" of their attire (beaded sleeves that scratch their partner's faces, snagging fabrics, long trains etc. should be avoided at all costs). Gentlemen should always close their jackets or take them off before dancing.

Ideally, dress should be suitable for the occasion.

Informal: Casual attire is acceptable, but blue jeans are discouraged

Semiformal: Coat and Tie for men, dress of any length for women

Formal: Tuxedo or 3-piece suit for men and a long dress preferred for women

Personal oral and bodily hygiene is of utmost importance. If you notice that your partner is hesitant to get into the proper ballroom hold, is holding their breath, bolts from the dance floor once the dance is over and repeatedly refuses to dance with you again, take the hint.

Heavy perfumes and highly volatile hair styling products should be used sparingly since some dancers may be chemically sensitive. Strong fragrances can make even the average person woozy

Punctuality is always appreciated at social events.