

## Ten Earn Waltz Certificate *By Paul Stachour*

**H**ave you been dancing for several years or more? Do you feel that you have learned the basic figures of a dance? Do most of the figures work with most of the people you dance with? Do certain parts of some figures work with many, but not all partners? Is it not always clear why they do or do not work? And, when your dance partner asks you "What should I be doing here?" you sort-of know, but not completely? Is one of your primary dance goals to master the figures you already know, in preference to learning additional figures (but perhaps not very well)? Do you feel that if you could say the foot positions (dance-positions, alignment, turn, footwork, count, rise-and-fall, sway, body-motion) of a figure, it would help you to dance that figure better? Would you like to be dancing all-of-the-time, and not have to sit out because there are an excess of follows or an excess of leads tonight?

Well, if this is you, then you are ready to try a different kind of dance class. Two groups of us did. We have been studying and practicing all of these attributes of the dance figures in the waltz section of the DVIDA American Bronze Smooth Manual. Wait! You say. That's a dance teacher's manual. I don't want to become a dance teacher, just a better dancer. Well, back when I was a high school, in a discussion one day with my math teacher, he told me "You never really know something until you know it well enough to teach it. It doesn't matter if you ever intend to teach it, it's just that you can." I don't know about you, but for many of us, being able to explain something to someone else helps us to do it better ourselves.

Thus, after a number of months of studying and practicing under the direction of Harry Benson of Cheek-to-Cheek Dance Studio (Coon Rapids) and Greg Dye of Northern Lights Dance Club (Fargo), on April 9th, 10 of us took the DVIDA Associate (Bronze) Smooth One-Dance (Waltz) exam. Scott Anderson put us through our paces for about 3 hours. All of us were nervous; we'd never done anything like this before; we didn't know quite what to expect. It took more than an hour for each of us to dance a pattern sequence containing all of the figures twice, once as lead and once as follow. It took more than an hour as he quizzed us, both individually and as a group, often having us say one attribute of a figure as he had us dance that figure. Finally, for some of the not-so-easy figures (for example, the fallaway and box), he demonstrated to the group of us some critical aspects of that figure that we didn't understand and could not yet do, correctly.

So, did we dance the pattern-sequence perfectly? No. Did we answer all of the questions correctly? No. Did we all have great technique? No. Did we get an A+ from



*Back row (from L to R): Laura Peters, Diane Bowen, Birgit Pruess, Sandra Casper (DJ), Greg Dye. Front row (from L to R): Ed & Joyce Westfall, Edwin Aybar, Phyllis Lasher, Mary Jo Cayley, Paul Stachour.*

the exam? No. Did we all perform at or better than the required level to pass? YES! Did we learn a lot from the study and practicing? YES. Do we feel it really improved our dancing? YES.

Did we all feel good (and relieved that it was over)? Yes. We're all looking forward to receiving our "Certificate of Completion for Waltz" once the DVIDA paperwork is complete.

So, what's next for us? We've decided to do 2 things. 1) Begin studying and practicing foxtrot. 2) Continue our study and practice of waltz. When we are ready to take the foxtrot test, take the waltz test again. Maybe the next time we can get a B+. Or even an A!

If you would like to join us in our endeavor, check with either Harry or Greg. This kind of class is not for everyone, and permission of the instructor is required.

*Paul Stachour is a member of 5 dance clubs and has been dancing about 11 years. Paul is the liaison from USADance-MN to USADance-ND (Fargo) and USADance-SD (Sioux Falls). ■*

### UPCOMING DEMOS:

**Monday, May 16:** 8 – 8:30 pm at Temple of Aaron Sisterhood, 616 Mississippi River Boulevard, St. Paul – we need 2 smooth couples and 3-4 rhythm couples to dance! There will be a 20x20 portable dance floor in place. Wear your costumes and your smiles! Call or email Yvonne at 763.553.1202 or [danvman@aol.com](mailto:danvman@aol.com).