



October – November – December 2026 Newsletter

*Trust Your Professional Training and
Accreditation to NTA!*

Hello NTA Members,

There is a lot happening at NTA, and we're excited to share it with you! In this issue, we'll introduce leaders stepping into new roles, share some important changes taking place across the organization, and give you a closer look at what's ahead.

You may also notice something different before you get very far — welcome to the newly redesigned **NTA Quarterly Newsletter!** We've created a fresh look and new recurring sections to make it easier to find the news, education, resources, and stories that matter to our members.

Behind the scenes, our team has been building new tools and technology to strengthen communication with members around the world. The Dance Committee has also been hard at work updating the Dance Fundamentals curriculum, while NTA Dance Committee Faculty continue sharing the new material through workshops and training opportunities worldwide.

We hope you enjoy everything we've gathered for you this quarter. Have something you'd like to share in a future issue? Send article submissions and ideas to newsletter@ntadance.org.

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Quick Links

NTA Website

www.ntadance.org

NTA Shop

- Membership Renewal
- Music Licenses (US only)
- Order NTA Manuals

www.ntadance.com/shop

NTA Workshops & Events

www.ntadance.com/events

NTA Facebook Group (join now)

www.facebook.com/groups/NTADance

NTA Facebook page (follow now)

www.facebook.com/TheNTADance

NTA YouTube Channel (coming soon,
subscribe now!)

www.youtube.com/@NTADance

INTRODUCING: Our Newly-Redesigned Newsletter

As our Executive Committee has been meeting more regularly this year, the ideas have been flowing — including new ways to make your quarterly NTA Newsletter more useful, engaging, and easier to navigate.

Beginning with this issue, you'll see a fresh new look along with graphics identifying many of our recurring newsletter sections.

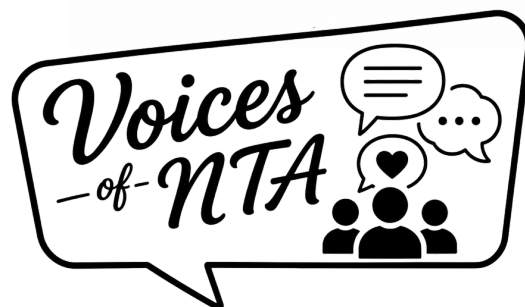
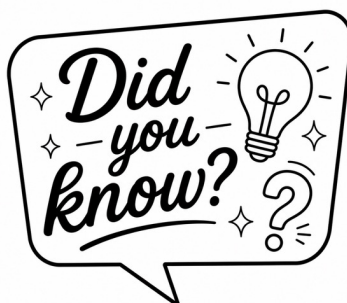
You'll still find familiar favorites like:



And earlier this year, you started to see some new sections including:



Watch for these graphics throughout this issue and future newsletters as we continue adding more NTA news, education, resources, and voices from our dance community:



Meet the New NTA

Written by Meleah Gearon, Secretary

Same roots. Broader vision. A stronger organization for the future.

This year marks an exciting new chapter for NTA.

For decades, NTA has brought dancers and dance teachers together through education, standardized terminology, technique, accreditation, workshops, and a shared love of dance. As we look toward the future, we are building on that foundation — updating our organization, expanding our leadership, strengthening our educational programs, and making it easier to stay connected with members around the world.

Here's a look at what's new.

A New Home in Colorado

On September 15, 2026, NTA completed its corporate transition from Nevada to **Colorado**, with its new home in Colorado Springs. We are establishing a stronger organizational foundation for the next chapter of NTA.

Along with our new home comes our new name: **National Teachers' Association for Line and Social Dancing (NTA)**.

The name better reflects who we are today and where we are headed. Line Dance remains an important part of NTA, but our organization, education, and membership encompass much more. NTA supports dancers and teachers across a wide variety of line and social dance forms.

A New Look — With a Connection to Our Roots

A new name called for a refreshed NTA brand.



Our new logo was designed to feel unmistakably NTA while giving a clearer picture of who we are and what our organization represents. It maintains a visual connection to the generations of NTA that came before us while highlighting something important about who we are today.

We are more than Country Western dance.

Our new branding celebrates the variety of dance styles, teachers, students, and communities that make NTA what it is.

A Full Executive Committee & Expanded Board

NTA now has a complete 10-member Executive Committee, bringing together leadership across the major areas of the organization.

We have also broadened our Board of Directors to include our



Executive Committee officers, International Directors of Events, Dance Committee members, and Zone Directors.

This expanded structure gives more of the people directly involved in NTA's education, events, and geographic leadership a voice in the organization's governance and future direction.

Better Connected

Behind the scenes, we have also been building a stronger technology and communications structure for NTA.

Our leadership team is being connected through official [@ntadance.org](https://www.ntadance.org) accounts and shared organizational systems, allowing NTA records and communications to remain with the organization and making it easier for our leadership team to work together.

For members, one of the most visible changes will simply be hearing from us more often. Watch for more regular communications, updates, announcements, and resources from NTA through [@ntadance.org](https://www.ntadance.org).

Continued on page 4.

There's More - Meet the New NTA (cont.)

Regional Directors — A New Name for a Familiar Role

Our former State/Country/Province Directors now have a new title: Regional Directors.

The new name gives us one consistent title that can work throughout our international organization while continuing the important work these leaders already do — connecting members, instructors, events, and NTA leadership within their geographic areas.

Dance Fundamentals Is Evolving, Too

The Dance Committee has been hard at work updating one of the most important parts of NTA: our educational curriculum.

The revitalized Dance Fundamentals program began rolling out in 2025 and includes:

- A new Dance Fundamentals Foundations program
- The former Dance Fundamentals 4A & 4B reorganized into three segments: 4A, 4B & 4C
- Dance Fundamentals 5 being expanded into additional program segments
- Updated training designed to strengthen the progression through the Dance Fundamentals program

The goal is to complete the full Dance Fundamentals program update by the end of 2026.

These changes are about more than reorganizing course material. They are part of NTA's continued commitment to strong foundational

education, consistent terminology and technique, and training that continues to evolve along with the dance community.

ROOTED IN OUR HISTORY. READY FOR WHAT'S NEXT.

There is a lot changing at NTA — but the heart of the organization is not.

We remain committed to improving the quality of dance and dance instruction, supporting teachers and dancers, creating opportunities to learn and grow, and connecting our international dance community.

We are proud of where NTA has been.

And we are very excited about where we're going.

Where Should NTA Go Next?

Written by Shirley Bryan, Director of Events – USA

NTA is looking ahead, and we'd love your help deciding where our next classes and accreditation opportunities should be held!

In the US this past year, NTA has brought education and accreditation programs to dancers and instructors in locations including Georgia, Indiana, Kansas, and South Carolina. Now we're ready to expand our reach and bring NTA training to more regions. **Could your community be next?**

We're looking for locations where at least **20 people** might be interested in attending NTA classes or working toward accreditation. A potential site might be a dance studio, community center, classroom with an appropriate dance floor, or even an established dance event where NTA classes could be added to the schedule.

This is where our members can make a real difference. Do you know dancers, instructors, clubs, studios, or organizations that could benefit from NTA education? Are

you connected with the “movers and shakers” in your local dance community? Help put us in touch!

We're also looking for members willing to help coordinate and promote regional NTA events. Have an idea? Know the perfect location, or the perfect person to contact? We want to hear from you!

Email Shirley at:
events.usa@ntadance.org

What a Year for NTA!

When I look back on 2026, it is difficult to describe it as anything other than a turning point for NTA.

This year has been a whirlwind of activity, growth, and change, with history being made in many areas of our organization. But what stands out to me most is not any single accomplishment. It is the feeling that NTA has found new energy and a renewed sense of purpose.

Throughout this issue, you will read about many of the changes that have taken place — changes in our leadership, our educational programs, our organizational structure, our communications, and even the way NTA presents itself to the world. Each one represents months of discussion, planning, problem solving, and hard work by people who believe deeply in this organization and what it can offer dancers and dance teachers.

Our leadership team has grown stronger and more connected. The Executive Committee is now fully staffed with talented individuals bringing different skills, experiences, and perspectives to the table. We are meeting regularly, communicating more often, and working together in ways that are allowing ideas to move forward faster than they have in many years.

We have also taken important steps to strengthen NTA for the future. New governing documents, a new corporate home, an expanded leadership structure, and other organizational changes have given us a stronger foundation while still respecting the history that brought us here. At the same time, our elections continue the important cycle of leadership transition that helps keep NTA moving forward from one generation of officers to the next.

Education remains at the heart of who we are. The Dance Committee has devoted tremendous time and energy to the continued evolution of Dance Fundamentals and the NTA Accreditation Program. Workshops, Dance Camps, training, and testing have continued throughout the year, giving dancers and instructors opportunities to learn, grow, and connect. Just as important, we are already looking ahead to new locations, new workshops, and new opportunities in 2027.

And through all of this, the heart of NTA remains our membership.

Our organization exists because of the people who believe in quality dance education, who continue learning, who teach and mentor others, who volunteer their time, and who bring NTA into their local dance communities. Membership has grown substantially over the past two years, and every new member represents another connection, another voice, and another opportunity for NTA to grow stronger.

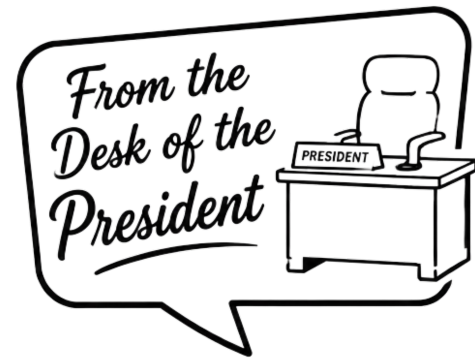
I am incredibly proud of what has been accomplished this year, but I am even more excited by what it represents. We are not simply checking projects off a list. We are building an organization that is better prepared to serve its members, preserve the knowledge and history that make NTA unique and continue evolving with the dance community around us.

There is still much more to do, and that is part of what makes this such an exciting time to be part of NTA. To our officers, directors, committee members, faculty, volunteers, and members around the world: thank you for your time, your ideas, your support, and most of all, your belief in NTA.

With pride in how far we've come and excitement for where we're going,



Debra Cleckler
President



From The Archives

Volume 1, Issue 1 – December 1986

Forty years ago, NTA published its very first newsletter. And some of the questions on those pages may sound surprisingly familiar.



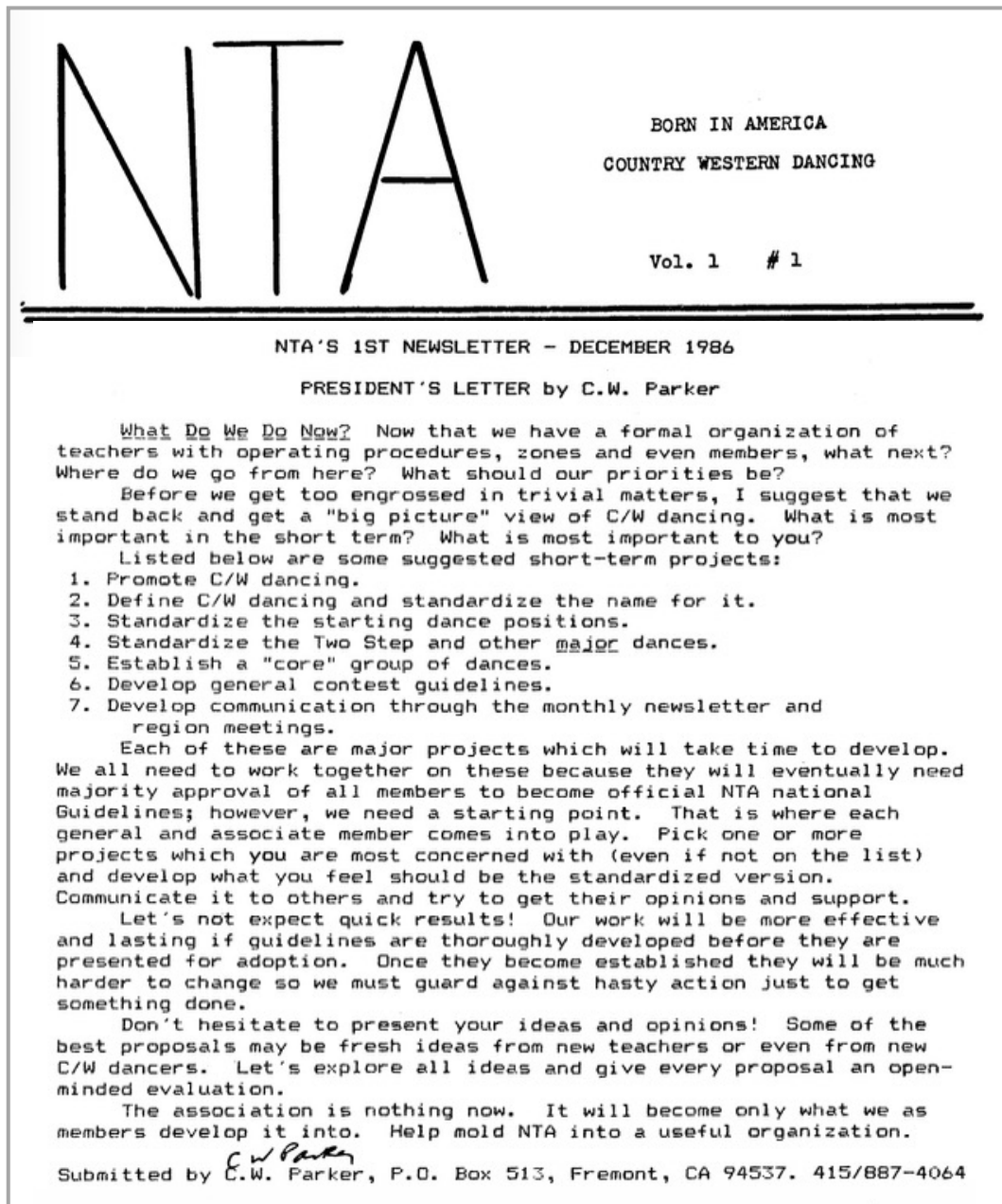
In his first President's Letter, C.W. Parker asked, **"What Do We Do Now?"** Among NTA's earliest priorities were defining Country Western dancing and standardizing its name, establishing terminology and dance standards, developing educational resources, and improving communication through newsletters and regional meetings.

Those first pages also envisioned an association that included teachers throughout the United States **and around the world.**

Today, NTA has a new name, a new Colorado home, a refreshed identity, and new tools for connecting dancers and dance educators internationally. As we move into the future, we honor our past.

Also in the First Issue...

- Results from a national survey of Country Western dance teachers
- Teacher tips on **changing partners** and keeping new dancers comfortable
- A look at different learning styles and effective teaching
- NTA's first membership report: 24 members, with a handwritten update noting **29 members across 13 states**
- Early discussions about contests, terminology, regional meetings, and dance education



We aren't leaving NTA's history behind – we're building on it.

Same roots. Broader vision. And we're bringing our history with us.

2026 Election Results: Meet the Officers

Each year, NTA holds elections for a rotating group of officer positions, helping provide continuity in leadership while welcoming new perspectives to the Executive Committee. Under NTA's staggered election schedule, the **Treasurer, Director of Advertising & Promotions, and Director of Regional/Zone Directors** were the positions up for election for terms beginning January 2027. Each will serve a three-year term.



Join us in congratulating these NTA leaders as they prepare to begin their new roles!

Incoming Treasurer: Debra Cleckler

Debra is a familiar face in NTA leadership, having served as President since the NTA Renewal Committee was formed in 2023. She has played an instrumental role in NTA's renewal and growth and brings extensive organizational knowledge to her new position.

Debra's background in corporate accounting will be valuable as she takes on responsibility for NTA's financial oversight, reporting, recordkeeping, and asset management. She is already looking at new ways to strengthen NTA's financial processes for the future.

Debra is also NTA Dance Committee Faculty and regularly teaches Dance Fundamentals, conducts accreditation training and testing, and serves as an instructor and judge at dance workshops and events throughout the Southeast and across the United States.

Incoming Director of Advertising & Promotions: Erika Harnos

Erika has served as Interim Director of Advertising & Promotions since July 2026 and will begin her elected term in January 2027. She has completed the NTA Dance Fundamentals levels 1-5, previously served as Regional Co-Director in Colorado, and was recently appointed Regional Director – Tennessee after relocating.

In her teaching, Erika focuses on connection, proper technique, having fun while dancing, helping dancers feel accomplished, and building community. While in Colorado, she taught at several venues and hosted "Line Dance Your Heart Out" in February 2026, demonstrating the creativity and ability to build excitement around dance events that she brings to NTA.

Incoming Director of Regional/Zone Directors: Betty Moses

Betty has served NTA in a variety of leadership roles over the years, first as an SCP Director for Colorado and currently as Zone Director for the US Southwest. After serving as Interim Director of Regional/Zone Directors in 2026, she will begin her elected term in January 2027.

In this role, Betty will focus on strengthening communication and support among NTA's Regional and Zone Directors worldwide. She brings extensive experience as a Colorado dance instructor and regularly travels as a guest instructor for workshops and conventions. Betty will also help introduce new tools and resources designed to better equip NTA's geographic leadership team.

Looking Forward

Please join us in congratulating Debra, Erika, and Betty on their election to terms beginning January 2027. Together, with the rest of NTA's leadership team, they will help carry NTA into its next chapter with stronger communication, expanded resources, and continued growth.

2026 NTA Events

With our newly revamped Dance Fundamentals program, we'd encourage you to check out the upcoming events for the rest of 2026. We would love to see you there!

- DFF – Dance Fundamentals Foundations (pre-DF1)
- DF# – Dance Fundamentals level number



USA

Kansas: October 11, 2026

NTA Workshop (DF 2)
Sports Pavillion Lawrence
100 Rock Chalk Lane
Lawrence, KS – USA
Mike Salerno
(faculty.mike@ntadance.org)
785-249-8269

South Carolina: October 24-25, 2026

NTA Workshop – DF Training & Testing
Long Creek Community Center
12351 Long Creek Highway
Long Creek, SC 29658
Debra Cleckler
(faculty.debra@ntadance.org)
404-398-2150

Georgia: November 7-8, 2026

NTA Workshop – DF Training & Testing
206 North Ave.
Villa Rica, GA 30180
Debra Cleckler & Julie Griggs
(faculty.debra@ntadance.org)
404-398-2150

Kansas: November 22, 2026

NTA Workshop (DF 3)
Sports Pavillion Lawrence
100 Rock Chalk Lane
Lawrence, KS – USA
Mike Salerno
(faculty.mike@ntadance.org)
785-249-8269

International

France: October 9-11, 2026

NTA Workshop (DFF, DF 1, DF 2, DF 3)
Le Gua (17) – France
Patrice Chollet
(dancecommitteechair@ntadance.org)
(faculty.patrice@ntadance.org)
0033-663-715-162

France: November 20-22, 2026

NTA Workshop (DFF, DF 1, DF 2, DF 3)
La Crau (83) – France
Patrice Chollet
(dancecommitteechair@ntadance.org)
(faculty.patrice@ntadance.org)
0033-663-715-162

Mark your calendars!

The Dance Committee and Events team are hard at work setting the 2027 schedule of NTA Events. Keep an eye on our Facebook Group for upcoming workshops in your area and the 2027 NTA Dance Camps. We'd love to see you at an event!

Building NTA's Future & Preserving Our Past

Having joined the NTA Board of Directors and Executive Committee in March – and NTA itself only a year earlier – I've had the opportunity to learn an incredible amount about this organization while working alongside some tremendously talented leaders. One of the things I've especially enjoyed this year has been helping NTA establish new technology and systems behind the scenes. After hinting at some of these changes in last quarter's newsletter, I'm excited to share more about what we've been working on!



As a 501(c)(3) organization, we've been able to take advantage of technology programs available to nonprofits, including our new Google Workspace for ntadance.org. Throughout this newsletter, you'll see new @ntadance.org email addresses for NTA Directors. We've also established shared workspaces and digital archives, making records more accessible while helping ensure they remain with NTA as leadership changes over time.

Those tools are already helping us communicate and work together differently. Our Regional and Zone Directors have new resources to share with members, and you'll begin hearing more regularly from them and from the Executive Committee. We're also adding digital tools to NTA Workshops and, beginning in 2027, plan to provide online access to our annual membership meetings so members around the world can participate virtually.

If you aren't already a member of our **NTA Dance Facebook Group** (www.facebook.com/groups/NTADance), we encourage you to join us. We'll be using the group to share updates, upcoming events, surveys, and opportunities for members to provide feedback.

One of the most meaningful parts of this year for me happened during a recent trip to Las Vegas, NV, where Debra and I spent several days with Karin Kilgus learning the systems and records behind NTA's Business Office. What began as practical training became something much bigger.

We had the opportunity to work directly with decades of NTA history – early newsletters, organizational and IRS documents, copyright and trademark records, and other original materials. For someone who joined NTA only a short time ago, there was something pretty incredible about holding that history in my hands.

That experience reinforced why our work to create digital archives matters. This isn't simply about convenience. It is an opportunity to preserve NTA's records and institutional knowledge so the work of those who built this organization remains available to the leaders who will carry it forward.

As NTA transitions its corporate home to Colorado Springs and modernizes its systems and operations, we are bringing that history with us. We are building new systems, but we are not starting over. We are building on decades of work that came before us.

There's much more in the works, but we'll keep some of that under wraps for now! We also want to hear from you. What would you like to see NTA offer in the future? Send us a note at office@ntadance.org. Your ideas and feedback will help shape where NTA goes next.

Until next time,

Meleah

Meleah Gearon
Secretary



**Honoring where NTA has been.
Building the tools to carry it forward.**



The NTA Newsletter is published quarterly and made available online. Members who do not have reliable online access may request a printed copy by emailing office@ntadance.org.

Unless clearly identified as an official NTA policy, guideline, or announcement, articles and opinions reflect the views of the individual contributor. Sharing or photocopying newsletter content is permitted except where third-party copyrighted material is specifically identified.

Want to Contribute to a Future Newsletter?

Send article ideas and submissions to newsletter@ntadance.org. Please include your name, NTA role or location if applicable.

cable, and an email address where the editor can reach you. Submission deadlines for each quarterly issue will be announced in advance.

The editor may edit submissions for length, clarity, formatting, and appropriateness for the NTA Newsletter.

Memberships run from the month they are processed. Membership renewals are accepted at any time during the year. Use the Membership Application & Renewal Form below or visit www.ntadance.com/shop to renew online.

USA members may purchase ASCAP, BMI, and SESAC music licenses through NTA. These licenses are for instructor use only and do not cover other settings where music is used.



Renewals and Changes by Email

Your membership card shows your membership expiration date. Renewal notices are sent 2 months before expiration. After renewing, you will receive an updated membership card by email. Please review your card and notify office@ntadance.org promptly if any information needs to be corrected.



Membership Application & Renewal Form

Please PRINT clearly.

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Circle One (Home / Work / Cell)

Email: _____ Phone Number: _____

United States of America Address

Street Address/PO Box: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

International Address (outside the United States of America)

Street Address/PO Box: _____

City: _____ State/Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Country: _____

Membership Type: ☐ New ☐ Renewal (Member #: _____) ☐ Junior Membership (under 21)

Membership Term: ☐ 1 Year (\$40.00*) ☐ 2 Years (\$70.00*) ☐ 3 Years (\$90.00*)

☐ I would like to receive a laminated membership card in addition to the membership card being emailed.

PayPal: visit www.ntadance.com/shop to join online (*additional fees apply): 1 Year (\$42.00) 2 Years (\$73.00) 3 Years (\$93.50)

Because there are no joint memberships, please enclose a separate form for everyone applying for a new/renewal membership.

NOTE: Membership in NTA does not indicate the member is a licensed or certified teacher. The NTA Accreditation Program is a form of accreditation for teachers to further their education in dance and dance teaching. Everyone is encouraged to go through the Program.

Please make checks payable to NTA and mail to:

Membership fees cannot be paid by checks drawn on banks outside the United States unless payable through a United States bank. Money orders are acceptable if payable in US Funds.

NTA

PO Box 50161

Colorado Springs, CO 80949

As soon as your membership has been processed, you will receive your Membership Card via email from NTA. If you are a new member, you will also receive a New Member Welcome Letter.

Teaching the Teachers: Preserving Traditional Country Western Dance Styles

Written by Karin Kilgus, Treasurer

In our last issue, we kicked off **Teaching the Teachers** by exploring two foundations of effective dance instruction: **building student confidence** and **teaching movement—not just steps**. We looked at how a welcoming environment and better understanding of balance, posture, timing, and connection help build more confident dancers. In this issue, we continue with ideas to strengthen both teaching and the student experience.

Honoring Where We Came From While Teaching Where Dance Is Going

Country Western dance has never stood still. It has grown, traveled, adapted, and changed with the dancers and communities that have embraced it. Two-Step, Waltz, Polka, Cha Cha, Swing, and the many other dances found on Country Western floors today have been influenced by geography, music, social customs, competition, and generations of dancers. Evolution is a natural and healthy part of dance. But as instructors, we also have an important responsibility: **as we teach what Country Western dance is becoming, we must remember to teach where it came from.**

This is especially important when we are **teaching other teachers**. An instructor does more than pass along a pattern. Every time we train another teacher, we are passing along dance knowledge that may eventually reach hundreds, or even thousands, of future students. What that instructor understands about timing, technique, character, terminology, and history becomes part of the next generation of country

western dancing. In a beautiful way.

More Than Preserving Old Steps

Preserving traditional Country Western dance does not mean insisting that everything must be danced exactly as it was decades ago. Nor does it mean resisting creativity or new ideas. Dance should evolve.

Preservation means understanding the foundation well enough to recognize what is being changed.

There is an important difference.

A teacher who understands the traditional character and technique of a dance can introduce variations while still maintaining the qualities that identify the dance. Without that foundation, however, gradual changes can eventually become so significant that the original character of the dance begins to disappear.

Consider Two-Step. A teacher can introduce contemporary patterns, turns, styling, and combinations, but underneath those additions should remain an understanding of timing, progression, connection, weight transfer, and the movement characteristics that make Two-Step recognizable as Two-Step.



The same principle applies to Waltz, Polka, Cha Cha, and other Country Western dances. Patterns may change. Styling may change. Music certainly changes. But the underlying principles provide continuity.

Teach the Dance, Not Just the Pattern

One of the easiest ways tradition can become lost is when instruction becomes primarily pattern based.

A student learns a sequence. That student later becomes an instructor and teaches the same sequence. Another dancer learns it and eventually teaches someone else. After several generations, everyone may know what the pattern looks like, but very few know why it is danced that way.

This is where teacher education becomes so important. When teaching instructors, we should encourage questions beyond:

“What are the steps?”

Continued on page 12.

Teaching the Teachers (cont.)

We should also ask:

- What is the timing?
- Why does the body move this way?
- What creates the character of this dance?
- Where should the weight be?
- How does the music influence the movement?
- What technique makes this figure work?

Those questions move us from simply reproducing choreography to understanding dance.

And understanding is what allows traditions to survive.

Regional Differences Are Part of the Story

Country Western dancing has always had regional influences. The way dancers experience Country Western dance in Texas may not be identical to the way it developed in California, Nevada, Arizona, Tennessee, or another part of the country.

Those differences should not automatically be viewed as someone dancing “wrong.” They are part of the history of social dance.

For instructors, regional variations provide an excellent teaching opportunity. Instead of simply saying, “This is the way it is done,” we can sometimes say, “This is the technique we are teaching, but you may encounter another version socially or in another region.”

That distinction helps teachers develop knowledgeable dancers rather than rigid dancers.

It also teaches an important professional lesson: standards and traditions can be respected while acknowledging that social dance has always contained variation.

Know the Rules Before You Bend Them

Creativity is one of the wonderful things about dance. Experienced dancers naturally begin experimenting with styling, musical interpretation, patterns, and movement. But creativity is strongest when it grows from knowledge.

There is an old principle that applies beautifully to dance: learn the rules before you break them.

An instructor who understands traditional technique can make an intentional choice to modify it. An instructor who never learned the technique may simply be passing along an error.

That distinction becomes particularly important when teachers are training teachers.

We should encourage instructors to ask themselves: Am I teaching a variation intentionally, or am I teaching it because this is simply how someone once showed it to me?

Sometimes that question alone can lead to valuable discussion, research, and professional growth.

Teaching a New Generation

Today's students are learning differently than dancers did twenty

or thirty years ago. Videos, social media, workshops, competitions, online instruction, and rapidly changing music expose dancers to an enormous variety of styles and ideas.

That presents both an opportunity and a challenge.

New dancers can see more dancing than any previous generation but seeing more does not necessarily mean understanding more.

This is where trained instructors remain essential.

Our job is not merely to show students what is popular today. It is to give them enough knowledge to understand what they are seeing. When students understand the foundations of Country Western dance, they can appreciate both traditional and contemporary interpretations.

We are not asking younger dancers to choose between tradition and innovation.

We can give them both.

Teachers Are the Bridge

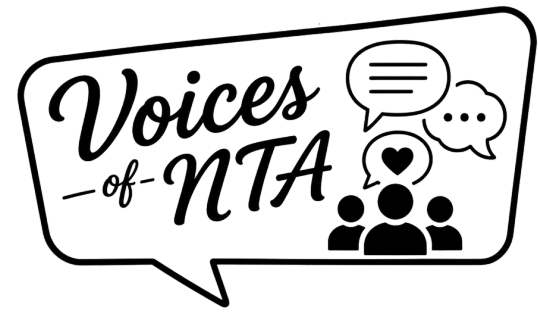
Every generation of dancers inherits something from the generation before it.

Someone taught us our first basic step. Someone explained timing. Someone corrected our posture, frame, footwork, connection, or lead and follow. Someone introduced us to a dance we had never experienced before.

Continued on page 14.

Mentoring

Written by Letha Blackford, Regional Director – Missouri



What Does It Mean To Be a Mentor?

A mentor is a trusted counselor, teacher, supporter, role model, advisor, and friend. Mentoring can be part of nearly every kind of learning. It is both a personal and professional relationship that develops over time as the mentee and/or the mentors needs change.

In a broad sense, a mentor is someone who takes a special interest in helping another person grow and succeed. A mentor's knowledge, behavior, encouragement, and example can leave a lasting impression on the mentee.

The Mentor Who Shaped My Dance Journey

When I think about my dance history, there is one person that comes to mind. He is not famous in the news-making sense but very important in shaping my dance confidence and inspiration and I will always regard him as a mentor: Don Walker. Don Walker was the first instructor I had for learning couples dances – two-step, east coast swing, triple step, etc. He encouraged me to mentor other dancers and develop my own style and to aspire to be the best dancer I could be.

Mentoring programs in the workplace are beneficial. There is

also a lot to be said for having a mentoring program in your dance club or dance classes. Mentoring is how I became an instructor in our local dance club. In 2025, I lost my mentor. There are many times since he passed that I ask myself "What would Don think? How would he teach this? Who am I going to go to for more knowledge, more technique?"

It's almost been a year, but I still think he is going to walk through the door at Midwest Country Connection Dance Club on Sunday nights.

If you have a mentor you hold in high regard, pick their brain as much as you can. You never know when it will be your last time to do so.

What Makes a Good Mentor?

What are the signs of a good mentor? A good mentor acts as a coach – always challenging you and inspiring you with the expectation that you will do your best. A good mentor builds your confidence by sharing knowledge and providing constructive feedback. They are patient, understanding, accessible and helpful. A good mentor recognizes the student's abilities and tailors mentoring to each student's needs. A good mentor wants their student to perform to their best – they want them to succeed in whatever their endeavors are.

Helping New Dancers Find Their Courage

One of the advantages of having a mentor is they help build confidence. If you have someone in your dance class that has never danced before, a mentor is a great way to make them more comfortable without singling them out in front of a large group.

A mentor is a great way to decrease the intimidation factor. Many new students don't feel comfortable asking questions in front of a large group. They don't want the attention and may not be comfortable asking questions or may not know the questions to ask. If they don't ask questions, they are not able to move on with their dance. As an instructor, I want my students to succeed and keep coming back. A mentor is a great way to make that happen. It gives that student the feeling of personal service – that someone is taking their time to help them.

When Mentoring Comes Full Circle

There are rewards involved with mentoring. It's great to see someone you have mentored succeed. Just seeing the "ah" factor when that mental light bulb goes on – that is very satisfying. It's also a confidence builder for the mentor.

Continued on page 14.

Teaching the Teachers (cont.)

As teachers, we eventually become that person for someone else.

And when we teach other teachers, that responsibility becomes even greater.

We become a bridge between generations.

Our responsibility is not to freeze Country Western dance in time. It is to preserve its foundation while

allowing it to continue growing. We can respect the dancers and teachers who came before us while encouraging today's instructors to explore, create, and inspire.

Because preserving Country Western dance does not mean keeping it exactly the same.

It means making sure the next generation understands what makes it Country Western dance in the first place.

Teaching the Teacher Tip

The next time you teach a familiar dance or figure to another instructor, add one question to the lesson, "Do you know why we do it this way?"

If the answer leads to a conversation about timing, technique, history, musicality, or movement, you are doing more than teaching a step.

You are preserving the dance.

Mentoring (cont.)

Sometimes we surprise ourselves with our teaching ability and the knowledge we have to share with others. Mentoring is how I got involved in teaching. I started out "helping" those I saw struggling with a couples dance. Maybe they just weren't getting the concept of quick, quick, slow, slow or how to do a triple step. It's a great feeling to have the ability to help someone one-on-one and see their progression through their struggle. Mentoring

gave me the confidence to stand in front of a class of 40+ students and pass on my dance knowledge.

When I first started dancing, I never would have thought I would be teaching dance. But here I am going on 20 plus years of teaching and still loving it. Mentoring played a huge role in my success. I'm always on the lookout for the next mentor, the next coach and guide, that person who is comfortable on the dance

floor and voluntarily shares their knowledge with others. The person that just needs a nudge to take their dance experience to the next level – being a mentor!

Look around in your classroom. Is there someone there that has the potential of being a great mentor? Do what you can to encourage them to share their experience and knowledge with others.

The NTA Mission Statement

The **National Teachers' Association for Line and Social Dancing (NTA)** is a nonprofit, international dance education organization dedicated to improving the quality of dance and dance instruction. NTA supports and promotes dance education and social dance through educational programs, workshops, publications, standardized terminology, current technique, styling, and professional development opportunities for dancers and dance teachers alike. Recognizing the influence and value of many dance forms, NTA maintains a strong foundation of core knowledge while supporting the continued growth and evolution of dance.

Would You Make a Good Regional Director?

NTA is looking for enthusiastic individuals interested in volunteering as **Regional Directors**. Regional Directors represent NTA in their local areas, connect members with NTA leadership, and help share the education, programs, and opportunities NTA has to offer.

Could This Be You?

Our Regional Directors are passionate about dance, believe in NTA's mission, and want to strengthen dance education in their communities.

Ask yourself:

- Do you believe in NTA and the importance of quality dance education?
- Have you participated in NTA Accreditation Training and continue to practice what you've learned?
- Are you passionate about proper technique, terminology, and safe body mechanics?
- Do you enjoy connecting with other dancers and instructors?
- Is there currently a Regional Director vacancy in your state, province, or country?

If this sounds like you — and you meet the requirements below — we'd love to talk!

Regional Director Requirements

Regional Directors must:

- Maintain an active NTA membership throughout their term.
- Be an active instructor of line dance and/or couples/social dance.
- Have begun NTA Accreditation Training with Dance Fundamentals Foundations (or Dance Fundamentals 1 if training began prior to 2026) and be either accredited or actively working toward accreditation.

Regional Directors serve one-year terms. Zone Directors serve two-year terms.

What Does a Regional Director Do?

Regional Directors help connect NTA with their local dance communities by:

- Serving as a point of contact for members and helping answer questions.
- Keeping members informed about NTA news, programs, workshops, and opportunities.
- Contributing dance-related articles to the NTA Newsletter and encouraging others to contribute.
- Holding informal regional meetings in person or online to share NTA information and connect members.
- Introducing dancers and instructors to NTA and encouraging membership.
- Staying connected with the Zone Director and Director of Regional/Zone Directors and providing updates on regional activities.

Help Us Grow NTA

Our Regional Directors play an important role in bringing NTA's mission directly into local dance communities. We're looking for enthusiastic people who want to get involved, build connections, and help make NTA stronger.

Could one of them be you?

If you're interested in serving as a Regional Director, or simply want to learn more, contact Betty Moses, Director of Regional/Zone Directors, at directorofdirectors@ntadance.org.

We'd love to hear from you!

NTA Takes Dance Fundamentals to the World Dance Showdown

Written by Debra Cleckler, President

NTA brought Dance Fundamentals training and accreditation opportunities to the 2026 World Dance Showdown, held August 27–30 at the Century Center in South Bend, Indiana. Nearly 1,000 dancers were registered for the weekend, with participants traveling from across the United States and beyond. NTA attendees represented states from California to Florida, and as far as Italy.

Representing NTA throughout the weekend were Dance Committee Faculty Debra Cleckler, Mike Salerno and Betty Moses, along with Secretary, Meleah Gearon. Letha Blackford, Regional Director – Missouri, was also in attendance.

A Full Weekend of NTA Education

Throughout the weekend, NTA offered Dance Fundamentals training from Foundations through the advanced levels, along with a Meet & Greet, choreography workshop, and accreditation testing.

Participation was strongest in the foundational and lower-level programs, with as many as 20 dancers participating in individual DFF through DF 3 sessions. Upper-level workshops were smaller, allowing more focused time with those participants.

In all, approximately 105 people participated in NTA sessions during the weekend, including the Meet & Greet.

That participation reinforced something we are already considering as we plan future Dance Camps: there continues to be strong demand for foundational and lower-level Dance Fundamentals training. We expect to emphasize those programs while continuing to offer upper-level workshops when there is enough advance interest.

From the Classroom to a New Dance

One of the most fun moments of the weekend came during our “Choreograph a New Line Dance!” workshop. Participants Kate Fehr, Krissy Bourdo and Julie Garber worked together during the class to create “Before You Accuse Me,” a 48-count, one-wall, High Beginner line dance to Eric Burdon’s Before You Accuse Me.

The session ran a little longer than planned so we could film both a demonstration and teach video. It was a great example of what can happen when dancers move beyond learning existing choreography and have the opportunity to create something together. You can check out “Before You Accuse Me” on CopperKnob now:

<https://www.copperknob.co.uk/stepsheets/87F8TMC/before-you-accuse-me>



Two New Dancers Begin Their Accreditation Journey

Two first-time accreditation candidates completed testing during the weekend, and both successfully passed. Between them, testing included DFF, DF 1 and DF 2 competencies.

The weekend also brought new interest in NTA membership and educational resources. New members joined online during the event and we sold out of all Terminology books and Manuals brought to the event. NTA bags, candy and other promotional materials were shared with attendees.

Looking Toward the Next Dance Camp

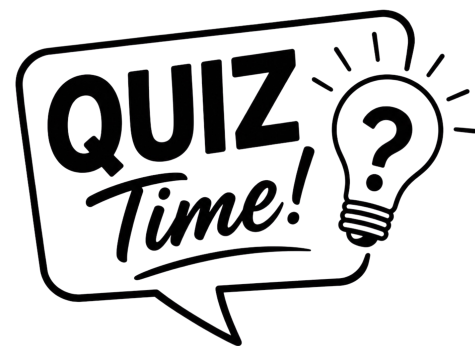
We extend our appreciation to World Dance Showdown directors Dale and Tanya Curry for welcoming NTA to the event, and to everyone who attended a workshop, stopped by to learn more about NTA, purchased educational materials or began working toward accreditation.

Next up is Ft. Wayne Dance for All, March 4–7, 2027, where NTA will continue bringing Dance Fundamentals education and accreditation opportunities to dancers and instructors.

Technique True or False?

In this issue's **Quiz Time**, we're putting your dance technique knowledge to the test! We've identified some common technique questions dancers encounter. How well do you know the mechanics behind the movement?

Check True or False for each statement below!



Weight Changes

Technique Question 1:

When executing a Back Rock Step – shift your weight back into the heel of your back foot, then shift your weight into the ball of the front foot on the recovery step.

Check one:

True  False 

☐☐

Technique Question 2:

On a Back Coaster Step, the first step is back on the ball of the foot. The second step is also back on the ball of the foot and placed beside the first step. The third step is forward ball-flat. All 3 steps take place using a Pendulum Motion which keeps the shoulders in place while the feet go back.

☐☐

Triple Step Patterns

Technique Question 3:

When executing any triple step, it involves 3 weight changes and is counted 1-2-3.

☐☐

Technique Question 4:

There are a variety of triple step combinations – two of which are the Wizard Step (also referred to as the Dorothy Step) and the Sailor Step.

☐☐

Answers can be found on Page 22.

The New Dance Fundamentals Program

A Step Towards the Future

Written by Patrice Chollet, Dance Committee Chair, Zone Director
– Western Europe, Regional Director – France (Île-de-France)



A Bit of History

The NTA training & accreditation program has been on-going for more than 30 years and continually evolves:

Before-2002

Before 2002, there were only Dance Fundamentals, Line Dance I, and Line Dance II levels. In 2002, the program evolved to separate basic technique applied by both line and couples dancers (Dance Fundamentals) and specific couple lead & follow technique (School Figures). At that time, there were only three Dance Fundamentals workshops: DF I, DF II, and DF III.

2008-2010

In 2008, DF IV was created, focusing on dance styling and in 2010 DF V (music recognition) was launched.

2017

The five DF levels were updated in 2017, including splitting DF IV in two parts (DF IV-A and DF IV-B) because teaching 12 music rhythms in only 3 hours was a challenging endeavour that left room for improvement.

Purpose of this Project

Last year, the Dance Committee decided on a complete refurbishment of the Dance Fundamentals program with a two-pronged approach:

1. Revamp, rationalize, and enrich the existing workshops.
2. While the current program focuses on the technical aspects of dancing, there is a wide gap around the teaching skills required to become a better instructor.

This program is equally aimed at developing dancers' skills as well as providing instructors with a wealth of resources to facilitate their teaching in class.

Achievements so Far

The new Dance Fundamentals (DF) program encompasses 11 workshops (augmented from the 2017 revision of 6 workshops):

- **DF Foundations (DFF):** Basic concepts of dance technique to help dance safely and with good attitude
- **DF 1:** Simple figures and patterns
- **DF 2:** More complex and syncopated figures and patterns
- **DF 3:** Turning technique and lots of turns
- **DF 4A, 4B and 4C:** Styling of 15 dances (Charleston, ECS, Hustle, Polka, WCS, Cha Cha, Mambo, Rumba, Samba, Night Club, Rolling 8, Triple Two, Two Step, Waltz)
- **Dance Music Fundamentals (DMF) Core:** Fundamental elements of music for dancing
- **DMF 5A, 5B and 5C:** Identifying the 15 rhythms of music in order to know how to style dances accordingly

Continued on page 19.

The New Dance Fundamentals Program (cont.)

We are now focusing our efforts on developing a new workshop about best practices for teaching choreographies with sound, safe technique in a friendly atmosphere.

As a complement to the DF training program, an accreditation program is offered whereby NTA Dance Committee Faculty evaluate dancers on their acquisition of the competencies taught in each workshop.

We hope that this brand-new set of workshops will improve the dancers' and instructors' experience and play its part in the enhanced services NTA is working to provide as the organization continues to advance.

NTA Dance Camp Returns to Ft. Wayne in 2027!

Mark your calendars for March 4–7, 2027: NTA is returning to the Ft. Wayne Dance for All at the Grand Wayne Convention Center in Fort Wayne, Indiana, for another NTA Dance Camp.

Ft. Wayne Dance for All is a four-day dance event featuring workshops, social dancing, competitions, and special activities for dancers across a variety of dance styles. NTA is excited to return in 2027 with another NTA Dance Camp.

A Great Place to Experience the New Dance Fundamentals Program

The timing couldn't be better. With NTA's revitalized Dance Fundamentals program rolling out, Ft. Wayne will give dancers and instructors an opportunity to experience the updated curriculum in person while building their technique, terminology, and foundational dance knowledge.

The Dance Committee is currently developing NTA's 2027 Dance Camp schedule. We plan to offer NTA Dance Fundamentals workshops and accreditation testing throughout the event, giving dancers and instructors an opportunity to train, learn, and work toward accreditation during the weekend.

The exact workshop lineup, NTA Dance Committee Faculty, accreditation testing schedule and registration details are still being finalized. Watch for the full NTA Dance Camp schedule as we get closer to March!

NTA Meetings at Ft. Wayne Dance for All

This event will also bring NTA leadership and members together. During the event, NTA will hold its **Annual Board of Directors Meeting** as well as our **Annual General Membership Meeting**.

That makes the weekend more than an opportunity to train and dance — it will also be a chance for NTA members to connect, hear what is happening across the organization, and be part of the conversation about where NTA goes next.

March 4–7, 2027
Grand Wayne Convention Center
Fort Wayne, Indiana

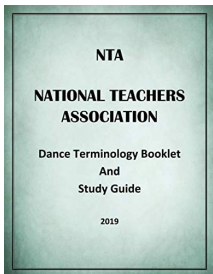
Event information and registration
www.ftwaynedanceforall.com

Ft. Wayne Dance for All 2027 VIP Pass: \$115 before January 1, 2027; \$130 beginning January 1. Workshops are included with the VIP Pass.

NTA Publications

You can purchase the Dance Terminology Booklet and the Teaching Manual & Syllabus by mailing in the order form below, with payment, or by purchasing online at www.ntadance.com/shop.

Dance Terminology Booklet and Study Guide

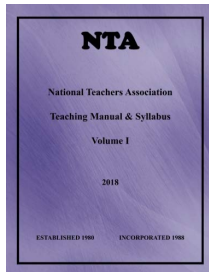


The Dance Terminology Booklet has 80 pages of detailed content including old and new terminology, graphics demonstrating foot and arm placement, music terminology and structure information, and couples dance guidelines including rhythm

calls, counts, timing, and weight changes.

This resource is instrumental in completing the NTA Dance Fundamentals Accreditation Courses.

Teaching Manual & Syllabus Vol. 1



The Teaching Manual & Syllabus Vol. 1 contains 300 pages of detailed instruction and guidance. There is a brief history of social dance, floor alignment illustrations, dance alignment and technique, dance position illustrations, as well as suggestions for

lead and follow positions.

The first section includes dance information important to all dancers – line, partner, and couples. The remaining sections will interest couples' dancers with School Figures – Level 1 & 2.



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Please Note: Any orders shipped from NTA are non-refundable. You can also purchase online at www.ntadance.com/shop via PayPal.

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As a Dance Instructor, Why Would I Need to have Liability Insurance?

Written by Julie Griggs, Vice President

As dance instructors, line or couples, we don't necessarily feel that we have a need for liability insurance, especially if we are not working in a studio. It is amazing how something that seems as innocuous as instructing line or couples dance can potentially expose an instructor to a claim.

Liability insurance is important for dance instructors because teaching involves physical activity, shared spaces, and direct interaction with students. An accident can potentially lead to a claim against you or your business.

"Seriously," you ask? Yes, seriously. "Why," you ask? Here's why!

Why Consider Liability Insurance?

Protection against student injuries. A student could slip, fall, collide with another dancer, or suffer an injury while following your instruction. General liability insurance commonly addresses certain bodily injury claims arising from covered business operations.

Help with legal defense. Even if you believe you weren't responsible for an injury, defending yourself against a claim can be expensive. Liability insurance may help pay covered legal defense costs and damages, subject to the policy's terms and limits.

Protection beyond the dance floor. A claim might involve a student injury, damage to property

at a rented venue, or another incident connected to your classes or business operations.

Venues may require insurance.

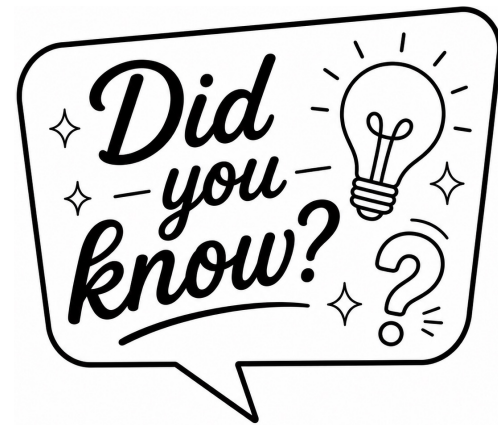
Community centers, dance halls, senior centers, gyms, and event organizers may require instructors to provide proof of insurance, and some may ask to be added to a policy as an additional insured. K&K Insurance, which offers coverage specifically for dance and fitness instructors, addresses additional insured requests as a common part of instructor coverage.

A waiver isn't necessarily a substitute for insurance. Having students sign a liability waiver may be useful as part of your overall risk management practices, but instructors should still consider whether appropriate insurance coverage is needed for their particular activities.

Know What Your Policy Actually Covers

A dance instructor should look closely at what type of liability coverage a policy actually provides.

General liability generally addresses bodily injury and property damage arising from covered business operations. Professional liability — sometimes called errors-and-omissions (E&O coverage) — addresses certain claims arising from professional services or allegations of negligent instruction.



These aren't necessarily interchangeable. Specifically ask an insurance professional whether your policy covers:

- Dance instruction and injuries to students while participating
- Classes held at rented or off-site venues
- Workshops, events, etc.
- Assistants or substitutes
- Property damage at facilities where you teach
- Any equipment you regularly transport or use for your business
- Activities involving minors, if you teach children or teenagers

Coverage, exclusions, limits, and requirements vary by policy. Look beyond simply buying something called "liability insurance."

The important part is making sure the policy actually fits the students, activities, locations, and services involved in **your** teaching.

What About Coverage Limits?

As instructors, we all have different needs based on where we teach, the number and ages of our students, the size of our classes and events, whether we employ others, and the requirements of the venues we use.

Continued on page 22.

As a Dance Instructor, Why Would I Need to have Liability Insurance? (cont.)

One commonly seen general liability structure is **\$1 million per occurrence / \$2 million aggregate**. Insureon reports those as the average general liability limits among dance instructors who purchase policies through its platform. That is useful as a point of reference, but it is **not a universal recommendation** for every dance instructor.

The amount and types of coverage appropriate for you depend on your actual exposure and contractual requirements. If you teach large classes, work at multiple venues, conduct major events or workshops, have employees or

other instructors, or have contracts requiring specific coverage, your needs may be different.

When getting a quote, be sure to ask whether the policy covers bodily-injury claims by students while they are actually participating in your dance classes. Also ask the insurer to identify any exclusions involving participants, dance or exercise activities, or instruction.

That answer may be much more important than simply choosing the lowest priced policy.

Cover Your Ass(ets)

One negative incident can have a lasting impact on you and your finances. As instructors, our circumstances are different, and there is no single insurance package that is right for everyone.

Be smart. Ask questions. Read what is actually covered. And if you don't already have insurance, consider talking with a qualified insurance professional about whether coverage makes sense for your teaching situation.

After all, it never hurts to make sure your ass(ets) are covered.

This article is provided for general educational information and is not legal, financial, or insurance advice. Coverage, exclusions, limits, availability, and legal requirements vary by policy and location. Consult a qualified insurance professional about your individual needs.

Sources consulted: Insurance Information Institute (Triple-I); Insureon, *Dance Instructor and Teacher Insurance*; K&K Insurance Group instructor insurance information.

Quiz Time Answers *(from pg. 17)*



Technique Question 1: FALSE

In Back Rock Steps, never allow the weight to settle into the heel of the back foot. Instead, keep the center (core) over the forward part (ball) of the foot and allow a hip release as the weight is transferred to (only) the ball of the back foot.

Technique Question 2: TRUE

In a Back Coaster Step, the direction is: Back-Together-Forward. The parts of the foot are ball, ball, ball-flat. The step includes foot positions moving through 4th, 1st, and 4th, using a pendulum motion.

Technique Question 3: FALSE

A Triple Step involves 3 weight changes to 2 beats of music and is counted 1& 2.

Technique Question 4: TRUE

Both the Wizard Step and the Sailor Step are triple step combinations, each counted slightly differently. The Wizard Step is counted 1, 2& while the Sailor Step is counted 1& 2.

NEW: NTA Zone and Regional Directors

NTA's geographic leadership structure has been updated to better reflect our current membership and international reach. Our former State/Country/Province (SCP) Directors are now known as **Regional Directors**, giving NTA one consistent title for these important local leadership positions worldwide.

Find your Zone and Regional Directors below — and watch for more communication from them in the months ahead!



Europe

Zone: Central Europe

Zone Director – Central Europe

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Enigen U/A, GERMANY

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Regional Director – Czech Republic

Ota Tom Dvorak

Pisek, CZECH REPUBLIC

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Regional Director – Germany (South)

Annelies Gimpel

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Regional Director – Germany (North)

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Zone: Western Europe

Zone Director – Western Europe

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Regional Director – France (Centre)

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Regional Director – France (North)

Sylvie Carnoy

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Regional Director – France (West/Normandy)

Lydie Bayo

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Zone: Western Europe (cont.)

Regional Director – France (Southeast)

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Regional Director – France (Southwest)

Jeremy Soupart

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Regional Director – France (Île-de-France)

Patrice Chollet

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Regional Director – Italy

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Zone Director – US Southwest

Betty Moses

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Regional Director – Colorado

Tracey Crafton

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Zone: US Central

Zone Director – US Central

Mike Salerno

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Regional Director – Illinois

Jessica Schwaninger

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Letha Blackford

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Zone: US South

Zone Director – US South

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Linda Vaughn

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Samantha Joedicke

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Regional Director – Tennessee

Erika Harnos

Portland, TN

rd.us.tennessee@ntadance.org

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dance education organization supported by dance professionals who generously contribute their time, knowledge, and expertise. NTA promotes high-quality dance education through progressive learning, standardized terminology, current technique and styling, educational programs, workshops, publications, and accreditation activities.

Membership benefits include opportunities to connect with dancers and dance teachers around the

world, exchange knowledge and teaching ideas, access educational reference materials and study guides, participate in NTA programs and events, and stay connected through NTA communications and social media. US members may also have access to discounted music licensing opportunities. NTA accreditation programs currently include **Dance Fundamentals** and **School Figures** curricula.

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Full page, 1 issue = Member Price \$100.00 | non-member price \$125.00

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