

TANGO PASSION

**Tango Society of
Rochester**

Your best and only source of Argentine tango in Rochester, Minnesota

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From under the President's desk....
by Jeffrey Salisbury

Argentine Tango In The Times We Live.

I've been thinking a lot lately about the global state of affairs – and the crossroads where we find ourselves. Earlier this week I read an up-lifting article entitled "Stage Set for Mass Extinction of Animals" where the premise was that the planet is on the verge of a sixth mass extinction. The five others occurred earlier during the Earth's 4+ billion year history when ¾ of species disappeared following some global environmental upheaval or a meteoric catastrophe raining down from the sky. Of course, this time our precarious situation is a result of our own exploitation of the only home in the universe that we know. This reminds me of a declaration on this subject by a celebrated philosopher and environmentalist: (Pogo, 1970) '*We have met the enemy and he is us*'.

Unfortunately, the warming environment is not the only harbinger of uncertain times. The worldwide economy appears to be operating as a global shell game with governments printing money - to buy their own bonds - in order to buoy public confidence in the global economy. Didn't we just learn when the real estate bubble burst that a fantasy economy based on imaginary value leads to a vanishing equity under the very roof, which we live?

Two years ago a Tango friend we all know told me – "buy gold, seal it into PVC pipes, and bury it in the back yard". While I should have listened to this sage advice, I failed to act. Gold is now at around \$1450 an ounce, up by nearly 40% in value in the past two years. Today, my Tango friend has a new dance studio in his back yard and I only have moles raising their spiny heads from freshly unearthed mounds in mine. And then I should have bought Apple in 1995.



Shoes

by Elaine Case and Bill Wiktor

In mid-March we went to Argentina with our daughter and son-in-law (Laura and Gabe) and our two good friends Alan and Jolene. We met Laura and Gabe in Mendoza where they were joining us from 5 days of hiking in Patagonia. If you love Argentinean wines – or if you just want to experience the people, culture and geography of Argentina we highly recommend a visit to Mendoza. After exploring Mendoza and visiting many wineries we flew to Buenos Aires with Alan and Jolene as Laura and Gabe returned home to St. Paul.

Buenos Aires is a wonderful city and we found it to be true to its title of "the Paris of South America". We explored the many different sections of the city including the upscale Recoleta, the harbor area Puerto Madero, Plaza de Mayo, Palermo, La Boca and of course, San Telmo – home of Argentine Tango. The highlight of our visit may have been around Tango. Bill and Elaine had brushed up on Tango with Jim Geroux before our trip and Alan and Jolene joined in for some introductory lessons. That was enough to make us confident that we could join in. Our first Tango experience was going to a choreographed GalaTango show at La Ventana. Complete with an Argentine traditional steak dinner at a venue that definitely gave you the idea you were in a small Parisian bistro, the show was fantastic!

Elaine plowed ahead the next day getting the other 3 to commit to a Tango lesson and attending a real milonga. In addition, she dragged Bill to "Comme il Faut" the premier tango shoe store in the world. Housed in a small upstairs apartment type venue on the Rue des Artisans, Elaine went crazy over shoes. In every color, every style all emerging from hundreds of white non-descript shoe-boxes. The sales person would just continue to bring out tall stacks of boxes for Elaine and three other shoppers. Despite our not talking Spanish it was clear from her sheer delight and pointing at styles/colors the kind of 'unique' shoes she wanted to find. Three pairs (vs. the one she had promised herself) and at

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from the President...cont...
from the President...cont...

Last week I visited a Buddhist Temple and sitting cross-legged on a cushion I listened while the Monk chanted a low-toned rhythmic meditation. He then spoke of spiritual salvation through self-awareness, identification of one's individual failings, and the committed task to cast them off one-by-one until the burden of this cycle is lifted from one's very being. Given so many that I carry, I asked the Monk just how one might prioritize one's failings to give a starting point on which to focus such an effort. He laughed and told me to "just pick the worse one and start there".

My mother taught me to always find a positive side to all that comes to meet you down the road of life. Our recent Valentine Nuevo Tango at the Salem Glen Winery immediately comes to mind. It was a beautiful evening, and in such a fine setting with a warm reception and an exceptional hard wood floor. The sound system was tuned to the practiced ear and Dj Pablo put together an evening of Nuevo Tango music that was a delight to dance to and a refreshing assortment of many separate and distinct styles of tango - everything that has happened with the tango since Ronald Regan was president. Dancers, familiar and new faces, took the floor throughout the evening, and several came just for a set as another important dance venue in town that evening was also on their program. Add to this a sensory flight of fancy provided by the local informal wines of Salem Glen and a tasteful cheese plate with fruit to add to the perfect combination of character and variety. Earlier in the day and later the next, Tango aficionados were treated to the "Essence of Tango", "Fundamentals and Rhythm", and "Connection and Communication" in the sensational workshops of Agape Pappas and Raul Cabral.

In these uncertain times I expect that while mankind will muddle through the apocalyptic threats of the day and a wavering economy, relief will always be found at an Argentine Tango Milonga held on any romantic evening.

Jeffrey L. Salisbury
TSOR President

Exploring Argentine Tango as a Ballroom Dancer

Christine Miller

At first glance Argentine Tango seems overwhelmingly different from ballroom styles of dance. Dancers seem more serious or intense, they dance 3 dances together (a tanda) versus one before moving on to a new partner and there doesn't seem to really be patterns to learn and study. This article discusses some of the techniques that I have found to be transferable and aspects to be conscious of to get the most out of transitioning into Argentine Tango dancing from the Ballroom world.

First there are many traits of a good ballroom dancer that work just as well in

Argentine Tango. For example, it is essential that both dancers have good balance in any partnership dancing. Argentine Tango requires forward poise just like rhythm and Latin dancing styles.

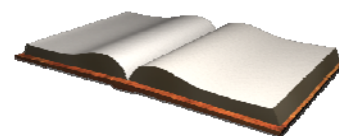
The problem is that some dancers take forward poise too far and then end up leaning on and using their partners for balance. Over time potential partners will avoid dancing with you if you do this. While there are a few steps or techniques used in advance dancing where the leader takes the follower off balance intentionally, for most social dancing the key is to keep your posture up with your hips under your shoulders so you are holding up your own weight and balanced while connected to your partner.

Another similarity is that in all partnership dancing there are roles to be played and held to - one person leads (usually the man) and the other follows (usually the woman). The leader has to be thinking ahead to what they will want to do next and the follower needs to be very patient and wait without trying to predict or guess at what the leader will do and then once led maximize the movement requested to make the dance look good. When either person forgets their role the dance ends up awkward and frustrating for both people.

The difference that has been most challenging for me is the connection. In close embrace, Argentine Tango dancers connect at the chest. This can seem quite awkward, especially for us Minnesotans who were raised to keep a good amount of personal space around us. With practice, dancers will find that much communication is expressed through this connection. In addition, I am used to making sure that my shoulder blade is rolled down and back to fill out the leader's right hand. While the leader is

sometimes connecting to the shoulder blade, they regularly take this connection away to give the follower room to ocho or move more freely through the back. I have also found that I need to be careful to not try to create too much connection with my right and the leader's left hand. In ballroom, this connection can assist in ensuring that we are dancing in our space and not getting in each other's way, but in tango, this will distract and reduce chest connection. Keeping my right elbow more relaxed is crucial to maintaining proper connection. Another difference is the general atmosphere of the social dances. At a social ballroom dance leaders and followers openly ask each other to dance and may carry on a friendly conversation during the dance. At an Argentine Tango Milonga, the invitation to dance may be nonverbal and is more consistently from the leader to the follower. During a tanda the leader and follower may not have verbal conversation because of the amount of thinking and concentration needed to have a quality dance and stay tuned into the connection.

As someone who primarily dances ballroom, Argentine Tango has been a challenge that has produced hours of frustration and a few, amazing, albeit fleeting, tango moments. With careful practice and remembering the differences and similarities to the other forms of partner dancing, I have found my level of frustration is fading and Argentine Tango is becoming more comfortable. Whatever you do in your life, I hope you will join me in expressing yourself through dance. Happy dancing.



The TANGO DICTIONARY....
Learn the Language of the dance
you love.

“Amauge”

To fake

“Lapiz”

pencil

Shoes cont...

least an hour later we left with Elaine full of remorse – did I buy too many or did I buy too few? This quote from the store owner says it all:

“ no woman needs more than one pair of shoes; but when it comes to woman and shoes, the word “need” doesn’t make sense”

Anyway, having gotten all the information from our fantastic and knowledgeable concierge, Elaine signed us up for – a lesson with one of the dancers from La Ventana and a recommendation for a milonga that amazingly started at 10:30 pm vs. the traditional midnight. Regarding the lesson, it was terrific. Our male instructor started out with the basics. Unlike lessons we’ve received in the U.S., he taught us a pattern of eight step. For the man – back, side, forward, forward, forward, into the cruzada, then forward side. For the woman – forward, side back, back, cross, back, side. He drilled this for awhile then explained that as we progress we don’t need that ‘structure’ and that Tango is not a structured dance. However, that’s how they teach new dancers in Argentina at the beginning. He then broke us into two groups and focused on where each couple was and what they needed. He’d take a break now and then to talk about how a milonga works and how the dance will progress.

It was time for a fabulous dinner at La Brigada in San Telmo, known for Tango and then on to the milonga at Confiteria Ideal on Suipacha in the capital area. The décor of the Confiteria Ideal was ‘old world’ and charming. The milonga was held on the second floor of the building which had high ceilings, large chandeliers, plenty of tables and a reasonably large dance floor. We watched for awhile and found the milonga to be very typical of those we have here in Rochester – with dance ability being varied and frequent mixing of partners. Ironically, Elaine met a woman she had met earlier in the day – shopping for the tango shoes. After a few brief words, Elaine found that she had the Argentinian men in a queue to dance. She obliged the gentlemen for the three dance sets (tanda), before Bill decided to try a spin on the dance floor. We enjoyed the music (clearly mixing the tango, milonga, and vals styles), a bottle of wine and each others company.

As we departed at 12:30am we realized that the nightlife was just getting started in the downtown area. However, we decided to call it an evening as the ‘tourists’ had another full day of sightseeing the next morning.

Overall, Argentina was a beautiful and charming country. Enjoyable weather (late summer), good wine and gracious people. Well worth the trip ...and considerations for future travels.



Bill and Elaine tango with their instructors in Buenos

**Wanted : Your Thoughts!**

We’ve got the space and you’ve got the ideas! What would you like to see printed here? TSOR Newsletter is looking for passionate tango dancers who want to share their thoughts with Rochester! Any subject : food, music, shoes, etc... What makes you think tango? Articles or ideas can be submitted to the editor at : dahldance@msn.com

To be, or to dance.

Jeff Salisbury

She lived for the dance, as we all did, but for her it was more a purpose. When we were young we watched the more experienced ones, concentrating on the way in which movement translated a deeper meaning. Learning how a step, a turn, a flourish could excite those observing with us, draw us to the space she occupied, focusing our attention on her meaning. It wasn’t the allure of her distinctive perfume - the fragrant essential oils fresh from the garden, nor was it the light fine powder that she used to transform her very substance to that of an ephemeral spirit. It was more her manner, the way in which her movement insisted our notice. Did she have a Lead? Or was it her intent to guide us to the origin of her interest? The more she moved, her patients with it’s antithetical eagerness, her need to drive a consensus of attention, the more we were drawn. She was telling us something of central importance to our very being. A way, a reason, a feeling of expectation. If we could only decode her meaning. She would leave for a moment, and in her short absence we would look attentively but without specific purpose. Her return refocused us to her dance - was she flirting? She was more insistent now, more vigorous in her movement. Our excitement increased with each circuit of the room. And slowly, but surely as a whole we began to understand her purpose, her meaning, as it dawned on us - the direction to our reward. A scouting honey bee’s dance points the hive to the nectar of Spring’s bounty.



Tango Passion staff

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The editor reserves the right to alter any contribution to reflect considerations of content, style, or space.

E-mail: dahldance@msn.com to comment or contribute stories and photos.



2011 TSoR Board:

Jeff Salisbury, President
April Dahl, Vice President,
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Amy Steinkraus, Secretary
Committee Members: Kyra Anastasidou, Maren Johnson

2011 Future Events:

- **TSoR April Study Group & Practica** Sunday, April 17th, 2011
Study Group at Dahl Dance Center 5 pm—6 pm **TSOR members only**
Practica— 7 PM to 9 PM—**Open to all** Location: TBD
- **TSoR May Milonga** Saturday, March 6th, 2011
8:30 PM—9:30 pm (lesson), 9:30 PM to 12 AM dancing
Location: **Sonte's**, 4-3rd St SW, Rochester.
Cost: \$10 (non-members), \$7 (TSoR members)
- **TSoR May Study Group & Practica** Sunday, May 22nd, 2011
Study Group at Dahl Dance Center 5 pm—6 pm **TSOR members only**
Practica— 7 PM to 9 PM—**Open to all**
Location: TBD
- **TSoR June Milonga** Saturday, June 4th, 2011
8:30 PM—9:30 pm (lesson), 9:30 PM to 12 AM dancing
Location: **Sonte's**, 4-3rd St SW, Rochester.
Cost: \$10 (non-members), \$7 (TSoR members)
- **TSoR June Study Group & Practica** Sunday, June 26th, 2011
Study Group at Dahl Dance Center 5 pm—6 pm **TSOR members only**
Practica— 7 PM to 9 PM—**Open to all** Location TBD
NO JULY MILONGA _ HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY!



Our Members

Names: Don and Rose Sundermeyer-Prohaska. We've been married for 12 years.

Hometowns: We live on a farm outside of Kasson, MN (about half way between Rochester and Owatonna).

Occupations: Don is a Morgan horse breeder and Rose is a Project Manager.

What made you decide to start dancing tango? We discovered Tango while taking random dance lessons as a way to exercise.

What has been your favorite tango experience so far? Setting up a Tango practice floor in our house. We'd been taking lessons for 6 months and didn't seem to be making much progress. Didn't have anyplace to practice at home (house is fully carpeted). One day Don came home with a 12 x 10 piece of linoleum and put it in the middle of our living room. Works perfectly as a cushioned dance floor that is attractive – our friends love the look of it!

How would you encourage another couple who was new to tango?

Probably by suggesting 3 things:
1. Search for an instructor / venue which matches your learning style. Different people learn different ways. Different instructors have different styles. It is important to match the two.
2. Remember to have fun while you are learning - don't be self-conscious. An instructor once told me - "there are no mistakes on a dance floor - just a newly invented dance step". Remembering that helps during all those times when we try something new and it doesn't quite work out :/). Anybody who knows how to dance has been where you are at. Anybody who doesn't know how to dance probably didn't recognize the mistake you made anyhow.
3. Remember to practice between lessons - and use what

you practice.... i.e., go to dances. Tango can be done to a lot of different music. A person doesn't have to be at a formal Milonga to dance Tango. If the music feels right - TANGO!

What do you hope to learn/work on in your own dancing in the next year?

We are taking tango lessons at the Cedar Ballroom in Owatonna. Our goal is to flow in oneness with each other and the music; and to become comfortable enough with the form to not only be able to improvise, but to be able to relax and not concentrate so hard while dancing :/)

