

Ballroom Dancing Lessons Provide Fun, Great Exercise

By Eric Fish

"Slow, slow, quick, quick, together."

These are among the commands from Lee May every Wednesday night as he hosts free ballroom dancing lessons on the first floor of Community Hall from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. The lessons, which began in May and conclude around Labor Day, teach about eight of the 16 ballroom dances. Mr. May teaches it with the help of Alice Huang, who just finished her first year on the University of Michigan Ballroom Dancing Team.

After taking ballroom dance lessons from a friend in 2003, Mr. May joined the Ballroom Dance Team and danced competitively for about three years. Now back on Mackinac Island, he decided to channel some of his free time and his hobby into teaching.

"I just like to do it for fun," he said. "This is a great place, a great opportunity."

The lessons, he added, are also good preparation for dancing at Grand Hotel to their live orchestra.

The lessons are open to anyone, from novice to expert, and

don't require a dance partner. Mr. May teaches a different dance each hour, taking participants slowly through the basics steps, then adding music, a quicker pace, and a dance partner. Along the way, he will instruct the dancers about proper posture and technique to aid them in their rhythm.

"The main thing about dancing is you have a lot of fun and it's great exercise," he said. "Those are the top two things about ballroom dancing. And the third thing, actually, is you make a lot of new friends."

Class attendance varies, but it is typical to have five to 10 people show up, including several regulars. He notes that dancing is becoming increasingly popular owing, in part, to fashionable television shows like Dancing with the Stars.

"It's becoming a big phenomenon around the U.S.," he said. "Dancing studios are getting a lot more people coming in. It's being advertised more, which is great."

Throughout the course of the summer, Mr. May plans to teach the waltz, fox trot, tango, quickstep, rumba, cha-cha,



Lee May and Alice Huang (far right) display the proper posture for the Tango as participants watch. Mr. May hosts free ballroom dancing classes every Wednesday during the summer from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m.

samba, and jive. He said he also plans on teaching fun dances like the salsa and hustle.

"It's always good to use for any situation, wherever you are," he said, including wed-

dings. "And when you say, 'I know how to ballroom dance,' people are pretty impressed."

Legality of Segways Discussed by Council

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In addition, the High Wheelers were given permission to park their antique cycles in front of the Stuart House from June 28 to July 1.

County Commissioner Calvin "Bucky" McPhee was

introduced by Mayor Margaret Doud, and Tourism Bureau Director Mary McGuire Slevin was also on hand.

Mayor Doud said she received a letter from the International Lilac Society thanking the City for its hos-

pitality during their stay two weeks ago, and also praised Ms. Slevin on a successful Lilac Festival.

Council's next session will be a special meeting regarding the 2007 millage Wednesday, June 27 at 6 p.m. on the second floor of Community Hall.

Concert Will Be Sunday at Ste. Anne's Church

The Grand Rapids Catholic Central High School Capella Choir will perform Sunday, June 24, at 7 p.m. at Ste. Anne's Church, singing a cappella masterpieces of the sixteenth century, contemporary sacred pieces, and contemporary popular music.

The Capella Choir is a select group of singers from the choral department of Catholic Central High School in Grand Rapids. The choir has traveled to Europe and has performed for Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI.

4-H Program Teaches Riding Skills

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"The thing I most enjoy is seeing the kids canter with their horses," she said. "It's so unbelievable for their self-confidence when they realize they can control an animal like this."

Cantering is when a horse is running, faster than a trot.

Teamwork and cooperation are also taught.

"The camaraderie that these girls experience is absolutely great," Mrs. Penney said. "They're all out there learning the same things, and doing it all together. One thing is for sure: They are having a blast out there."

Leanne Brodeur has taught riding lessons since she was a teenager, borrowing horses from Jack's Livery Stable and Cindy's Riding Stable.

"They were very kind for letting me do that, but the only thing that was hard about it

was the fact that the horses would get done after working all day, then I would take them and make them work up here in the park, and it wasn't the most pleasant thing in the world," she said.

After nine seasons at Mission Hill, Ms. Brodeur can say that she is thankful for the situation she has now.

The Mackinac Island Horsemen's Association started with rented and borrowed horses at the stable, and has now purchased several.

Mackinac Island Carriage Tours purchased the property several years ago, and lets the organization continue to use it.

"It's worked out really well," she said. "It's not a moneymaker, and it was never meant to be. Carriage Tours bought the barn, but they went ahead and let us stay there. It's been really great, and I enjoy being a part of all this."

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