

The Banneker Grapevine



Newsletter of the Banneker Ballroom Dance Club of Washington, DC

March 2018

President's Message

By Brenda Manley



Happy Spring 2018! The last few years have seen many progressive changes in operations at the Banneker Ballroom Dance Club.

More than 20 persons have joined Banneker this year, and we continue to add new members weekly. Which is why there is a BIG push for class members to remember to wear their name badges during class.

Socials have evolved from a lively potluck party to a ripe catered affair, with popular DJs spinning the music. The February *Mardi Gras* social hosted one of the largest crowds ever.

Over 30 Banneker members came out to help celebrate our *Dance Team Appreciation* at Hand Dance Fridays' Western party in January. A "Howdy-partner" good time was had by all.

Can't remember what's happening at Banneker from week to week? Check your email for the new monthly publication—*Banneker's Bulletin Board*.

And everyone loves our Spring Gala. The next one is on June 10th and promises to be an elegant, fun-filled evening of music, dancing, dining and entertainment. I hope to see you there.

We now have Banneker T-shirts we can proudly sport around town, and during class every second Tuesday of the month.

My second term as President of the Banneker Ballroom Dance Club is coming to an end. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with the leadership team, its members, friends, contractors, and those who have unselfishly served as a consultant to me over my two terms as president. I offer my sincere gratitude to all who have toiled with me to make Banneker a destination for ballroom dancers.

Banneker is stronger than ever, and we have attentively documented our progress and processes as a means to assist the Club as it brings in a new Executive Board July 1, 2018. Yes, Banneker is headed in the right direction, so let's keep it moving, and...

When you have a chance, I hope you choose to dance!

2016-2018 EXECUTIVE BOARD

Brenda Manley - President
 Cecelia Dade-Winfield - Vice President
 Felix Theodore - Treasurer
 Deryck Chase - Assistant Treasurer
 Candace Thomas - Secretary
 Carl Carlton - Assistant Secretary
 Eddie Witten - Member at Large

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In Support of Black Writers: Hurston/Wright Dinner

Submitted by Jeanne Fox-Alston

The event was the Legacy Awards ceremony of the Zora Neale Hurston/Richard Wright Foundation, which exists to “discover, mentor and honor” Black writers, in the United States and around the globe. Three awards are given annually to the best books by Black writers in five categories – college writers, debut fiction, fiction, nonfiction, and poetry.

At the podium, reciting a poem, and being honored, was one of my idols, Dr. Haki Mudhubuti (formerly known as Don L. Lee) a Chicago-based educator and founder of the Third World Press. Listening to the poem, I was transported back in time to college, where I spent as much time reading the poetry of Mudhubuti, and his contemporaries, as I did reading the books for my classes. The other 2017 honorees were Congressman (and author) John Lewis and Dr. Carla Hayden, first woman, and African



Honoree, Dr. Haki Mudhubuti displays his Hurston/Wright Foundation award alongside a poster of the award's namesakes.

American, to serve as the Librarian of Congress.

It was the poets of the Black Arts Movement who spurred me to read as much black fiction and nonfiction as I could find in the ensuing years which gave me a broader, more insightful and nuanced understanding of our world and times. Over time, I have become a multitasker, with one eye on television while speed reading news stories. I know what is going on in the world, but perhaps I am not spending enough time to absorb the why and the how.

As I listened to the descriptions of all of the nominated books, I was reminded anew of the importance of supporting Black writers. While their work is often solitary and lonely, they gift us with books that question, provoke, enlighten, inspire and/or share important truths.

The Power Of A Smile

Submitted by Jody Roberts

Most of us have probably heard Do we ever think about **The Power of a SMILE**? I am that person who has given it some thought.

I was scheduled to attend a training in downtown Washington, D. C. for my job. I deliberately state that it was downtown because I live in Wheaton, Maryland; was working in Suitland, Maryland, at the time; drove to work daily; and had the benefit of free parking.

The training was all day, from 8 o'clock am to 4:30 pm. On the day of the training, I rode the Metro to training and arrived back in Wheaton around 5 o'clock pm. Wheaton Metro has the distinction of having the longest set of single-span escalators in the Western Hemisphere (I digress). Upon returning to Wheaton, there were two moving escalators - one up and one down; the



Jody's smile can light up anyone's day!

middle escalator was stationary. This was rush hour and there were plenty of commuters in line to board the UP escalator. I wanted to keep moving so I chose to *walk up* the middle “stationary” UP escalator. I was nearly half way up and I asked myself, “What was I thinking?” There are so many more steps than I ever imagined!

Just when I thought I wasn't sure I could make it, a gentleman on the other UP escalator (just) **SMILED** at me. I eventually made it to the top—admittedly, a little out of breath—and upon reaching the top, I pondered the thought that the **SMILE** I just received, from the gentleman on the other escalator, as the **POWER** I needed to push me to the top.

Don't ever underestimate “The Power of a Smile.” **Just Smile!**

“The Hustle”

Written by a Washington, D.C. Native
Submitted by Deborah Grimstead

At our Annual Holiday Gala last December, the Banneker Ballroom performance team danced to the 1975 Grammy Award-winning song “The Hustle.” Did you know that “The Hustle,” a Gold single that sold over a million copies, was written by DC-native Van Allen Clinton McCoy?

Van McCoy was born on January 6, 1940 in Washington, D.C., and learned to play the piano from his mother when he was young. He sang in his church choir and, as children, McCoy and his brother gave concerts for small gatherings. McCoy was the writer, music director, and lead singer in the doo-wop group, The Starlighters, which performed at the Howard Theater. They released a 45-rpm single called “The Birdland,” which was a popular dance of the late 1950’s.

A graduate of DC public schools, McCoy left Howard University after two years to begin a serious music



The Banneker Dance Team performs the Hustle to Van McCoy’s “The Hustle”

career in Philadelphia, and then in New York. Before winning the 1975 Grammy Award for Best Pop Instrumental Performance, McCoy enjoyed years of success as a songwriter and producer of hit music for other recording artists. He worked with Jackie Wilson - “I Get the Sweetest Feeling,” 1968; Gladys Knight & The Pips - “Giving Up,” 1964; and Brenda and the Tabulations - “Right on the Tip of My Tongue,” 1971. Other artists included Aretha Franklin,

David Ruffin, Peaches & Herb, and The Stylistics, just to name a few.

In 1979 at the age of 39, McCoy died suddenly of a heart attack. The prolific and internationally successful musician, record producer, arranger, songwriter, singer, and orchestra conductor has over 700 music copyrights to his credit. “The Hustle,” with its distinctive flute melody, is regarded as a landmark in disco music.

Dancing Makes You Smarter

Submitted by Karen H.

Watch out there now! Studies conducted by Stanford University and *Psychology Today* indicate that dancing can actually make you smarter. These studies of individuals between 60 and 80 showed that dancing improves your memory and slows the cognitive decline in our brains as we age. This allows us to keep more active brain cells and allow our neurons and synapses in our brain to fire as we learn. This helps those connective fibers to form and grow and, as a result, make us much smarter.

Individuals who danced at least three to four times a week saw a steady progression in improved memory. Those individuals were 65 percent less forgetful, based on their before and after brain scans, than before they started dancing. Dance does not have any rules. Those who danced showed less memory loss than those who did not dance, or did other activities. Although

movement has been shown to be good for all ages, some forms of exercise can be limiting. In addition to dance, the following exercises, practiced on a regular basis, could make your brain stronger, and you smarter:

- Learn new things
- Play memory games
- Meditate to decrease stress
- Engage in exercises for your brain and body
- Eliminate sugar; eat healthful greens; eat foods high in antioxidants
- Visualize to increase your memory.

Keep these exercises as a part of your regular routine and, as in the song by Joshua Aaron, “Dance Like David Danced” your brain will slow its deterioration as it gets stronger, and...**You Get Smarter!**



Dancing Classrooms

Submitted by Cecelia Dade-Winfield



One of my greatest pleasures is to volunteer with Dancing Classrooms, a program designed to teach ballroom dance to fifth grade students. In addition to learning dance skills, the students reap the benefits of building cooperative skills, self-confidence, social graces, and teamwork. I recently visited Hendley Elementary School in Southeast Washington, D.C., where I worked with approximately 60 fifth graders, teaching them the Merengue and Waltz.

Paris is Beautiful in Winter

Submitted by Brenda Manley

During the month of February I had the pleasure of visiting Paris, France. I found Paris to be beautiful in the winter, and the temperatures in Paris were about the same there, as they were in DC. An added treat was that it snowed in Paris while Larry and I were there. It was the largest snow accumulation in the French capital since 1987, six inches, according to Meteo France. That was the day we decided to visit Sainte-Chapelle.

Most people want to see Notre Dame Cathedral, however, upon learning that we were going to Paris, a co-worker recommended that we visit Sainte-Chapelle. I immediately added it to the itinerary.

Sainte-Chapelle is a jewel of high Gothic architecture and stained glass windows. It housed the Royals from the



Brenda inside Sainte-Chapelle in Paris

10th to the 14th centuries and was also home to the relics of the Passion of Christ. The most famous of the relics housed there is the *Crown of Thorns*, which was acquired by the Royals in 1239. One of the 15 stained glass windows illustrates the tale of the discovery of the relics to their arrival in France. The story of mankind from Genesis through to Christ's resurrection are depicted on the other 14 windows.

Standing in the sanctuary of Sainte-Chapelle was truly awe-inspiring. Not only was it a pious religious experience, but I also felt an uncanny sense of experiencing the esoteric nature of the continuum of the unfolding world.

Are you planning a trip to Paris? I recommend visiting Sainte-Chapelle!



Club Calendar

March 2018	April 2018	May 2018	June 2018
6, 13, 20** Class: Foxtrot 27 Class: <i>Line Dance Review</i> **Business Meeting: 8:15	3 Class: Introduction to Bachata 10, 17, 24 Class: Rhumba	1 Class: Salsa Review 8 Class: Tango Review 15 Class: Merengue 22 <i>Personal Coaching and Assessment with Michael</i> 30 Class: Waltz Review	5 Class: West Coast Swing <i>Elections!</i> Sun 10 : <i>Annual June Gala @Martin's Crosswinds</i> Summer Break See you in September!
Class Times 7:00 pm – Introduction 7:50 pm – Open-floor Dancing 8:15 pm – Intermediate		Class Location 6310 Chillum Place NW Washington, DC 20011 National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) Union Hall Second Floor	
Check our online calendar for updates at www.bannekerballroomdance.com			

Birthdays!

January	February	March
Cindy Brewer Carl Carlton Genie Chisholm Nobuko Contee Christine Davis Kathy Deboe Lori Dendy Horatia Fagan Vangy Franklin Robert Jones Shermaine Jones Tanya Jones Bonnie McCoy Clarence Nelson Elaine Powell Saundra Rogers Bruce Romano Eleanor Stewart Larry William Reggie Wingfield Eddie Witten	Fran Alves Patricia Bolt Robert Bowles Leon Bowser Claude Correll Elaine Gunter Reginald Handon Glenca Kande Roland Kave Andree Moore Sharon Ogunfiditimi Yvonne Rogers Timothy Smith Sharon Walton Jerry Whitfield John Wolf	Drexel Agee Valerie Brooks Lovie Carolina Constance Creasey Andi Cullins Eve Dickey Tina Frazier Margaret Green Michael Gunn Karen Hammer Veronica Leonard David Nelson Patrick Smith Valencia Smith Peter Taylor Nora Wheatley William L Woods
April	May	June
Jacqueline Adkins Diane Blount Reginald Boone Plater Campbell Marie-France Dongmo Cynthia Edwards Angela Fifer April Floyd Constance Hinds Angela O'Davies Shern Stewart Paula Waters Anita Williams	William Banks Joyce Bowles Melvin Caldwell Deryck Chase Ronald Crockett Anthony Curtis JoAnne Joyner-McNear Lawrence Lanier Silvia Moody Cindy Price Gumbs Roma Candace Thomas	Gwellnar Banks Albert Lee Brock Frances Brock Stewart Fitzgerald Jeanne Fox Alston Judith Fykes Kaye Henson James Jackson Karl King Robert Robinson Mary Terrell Felix Theodore Loren Walker Angela Walker-Suttles Daryl Watson Betty Wilkins Marilyn Williams

Newsletter Committee

Betty Wilkins, Eddie Witten



Contact Us

Banneker Ballroom Dance Club of Washington, DC

Post Office Box 91901

Washington DC, 20090

202-256-7218

Website: Bannekerballroomdance.com

Facebook: facebook.com/bannekerballroomdance

Email: Banneker_info@bannekerballroomdance.com



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Post Office Box 91901

Washington DC, 20090