

# The Banneker Grapevine

Newsletter of the Banneker Ballroom Dance Club of Washington, DC

April 2019

## President's Message

By Candace Thomas



**W**e're coming to the close of another banner Banneker season. This has been a year of continuity amidst change. I want to thank the Banneker board for all of their hard work and support. Specifically Brenda Manley, Vice President; Deryck Chase, Treasurer; Shermaine Jones, Assistant Treasurer; Bonnie Allen and Mary Duarte,

Secretary; Cecelia Dade-Winfield, Assistant Secretary; Carl Carlton, Member-at-Large, and Bob Jones, Ex-Officio. Special mention definitely goes to Jeanne Fox Alston for producing this publication. Jeanne has applied her considerable journalistic skills to this newsletter. Betty Wilkins and Eddie Witten also have assisted. We would not be able to enjoy the "Grapevine" without their time and dedication. Banneker members are blessed to have such a dedicated group that is willing to give of their time as board members while also handling many of the other obligations required for Banneker Ballroom

Dance Club of Washington DC to continue to grow and thrive.

I also want to use this President's Message to thank all the people who work to make Banneker everything that it is. The board members take on additional tasks in addition to functioning in their official capacity. Deryck opens and closes on the nights that we have class, Cecelia manages the Dance Team, Carl has served as the DJ at socials and Bob Jones handles a lot of the paperwork needed to ensure that our tax status is in good order.

Hospitality on the nights that we have class is facilitated by Cynthia Gould, Margaret Green, Lori Dendy and Pauline Hazel. Cecelia and Marilyn Williams are again co-chairing the Gala Committee. They and the Gala Committee members--Hazel Mebane, Janice Leek, Jody Roberts and Pauline Hazel--are primarily responsible for what we enjoyed at the December Gala and what we anticipate enjoying in June. The Gala Committee is assisted by Betty Wilkins and Joe Jackson. Of course, we couldn't have successful galas without the support of the many members and friends who commit to buying a table and bring friends and families to our flagship event so that they can learn about ballroom dancing in general and Banneker specifically, furthering our mission in the community.

We also couldn't have classes without a venue. The National Association of Letter Carriers graciously allows us to utilize their building for classes, Dance Team practices and meetings for far less than it would cost at most other venues. Over the past year we've practiced the Samba, Bachata, Tango, Waltz, Rhumba, Foxtrot and Salsa at this wonderful location. Based on attendance at classes, the dances and our instructor, Michael Sims, were a hit. We've also had four wonderful Socials and the December Gala.



### 2018-2020 EXECUTIVE BOARD

Candace Thomas – *President*  
Brenda Manley – *Vice President*  
Deryck Chase – *Treasurer*  
Shermaine Jones – *Assistant Treasurer*  
Mary Duarte – *Secretary*  
Cecelia Dade-Winfield – *Assistant Secretary*  
Carl Carlton – *Member at Large*  
Robert Jones – *Ex-officio*

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## An Apology for Slavery?

By Deryck S. Chase

A few years ago, I wrote an article detailing how I used Ancestry.com to find out what I could about my ancestors. At that time, I learned that I was 94% West African and 5% British European.

I was recently contacted (through Ancestry.com) by a 4th cousin from Wales. He was excited because he discovered that we had about eight relatives in common and wanted to look at my family tree.

He made his family tree available to me. It was filled with the names of his Welsh ancestors going back past the 16th century.

I explained to him (in case he hadn't noticed my picture) that I was the descendant of Caribbean slaves and that I was probably the descendant of a relative who owned slaves in the Caribbean area.

After doing some research, he sent this to me:

*Hi, Thanks for getting back to me. I'm already suspicious about my 6th great-grandfather, William Blathwayt (1649-1717). That sounds like it might tie up timewise? From Wikipedia: "He did much to promote trade in America and the Caribbean, promoting the slave trade and benefiting*



William Blathwayt



Deryck S. Chase

*considerably from gifts and bribes received in connection with his office (as was the usual practice in his day)" AND "after 1685 became the secretary of the*

*Privy Council's committee on trade and foreign plantations—in effect, colonial under-secretary." Very pleased to know about my cousin from Guiana but also embarrassed and ashamed! Any other names from your tree that could help?*

*Best wishes, Kelvin*

I noted his apology, but I told him that he was not responsible for what happened centuries ago. But then a horrible thought occurred to me. This man profited from the enslavement of my African ancestors but, like Kelvin, I carry his DNA. Should I, too, be apologizing for his deeds?

## A Moving Story

By Brenda Crockett

Last spring, my husband, Ron, told me that he wanted us to downsize and move to a place with no stairs by the end of the year. I thought he had lost his mind! We had been in our four-bedroom, three-level house for 40 years and I couldn't begin to imagine how we would make such a transition. I agreed with the concept, but hoped that he would move the time frame to 2019 because I am a great procrastinator. However Ron began to press forward on Operation Move.

Within weeks, we had selected a real estate agent. The next step was clearing out our basement recreation room. It was storing everything that had been moved from the upper levels when we had parties and guests, as well as all of the things we no longer used. Our grandchildren (and their parents) were coming to visit in July from Ottawa,



Brenda with her husband and son.

Canada, and I wanted the children to be able to play in the recreation room. And so the excavation work began. It took us a month, and the help of four ladies from a downsizing company, to return our basement to a functioning recreation room. It was tiring work, but worth the effort to see our grandchildren roller skating and playing games downstairs.

After our children left, including a son visiting from Los Angeles, we had just 45 days to get rid of anything that we did not want to move. Between September 19-21, the movers loaded and unloaded the contents of two moving vans, including 178 boxes, into our two-bedroom apartment. The wonderful ladies who helped us with our basement unpacked over half of our boxes. I felt like I had been on a forced march since August.

The good part was that our real estate agent was able to arrange for contractors to repair anything that needed be done before putting our house on the market. He then staged it for showing to prospective buyers. The house went on the market in mid-October and we accepted an offer a week later. We closed in November, in time to meet the deadline Ron had established back in March.

Since the start of the year, we have been leisurely unpacking the rest of our boxes while physically recovering from downsizing and moving and bringing our stress levels down.



## Practice Self Love

By Shermaine Jones

It's hard not to compare ourselves, whether intentionally or not. It's easy to forget that everyone is showcasing the best aspect of their lives. We don't see the everyday struggles that each of us experience but don't share. This can bring us down and make us question ourselves, our status and our appearance. In the spirit of expressing our love to others, why not show

ourselves the same kind of love? Let go of poor self talk and practice self love.

Take time to celebrate your strengths and your own unique beauty, health and successes without comparing yourself to others. Focus on what matters most: loving yourself and family. Practice self care like pampering or reading or expressing gratitude. Enjoy some family-friendly fun or just give yourself and loved ones a big HUG and celebrate your worth.

## Our Dance Journey

By Carl Carlton

My dance career began in 2004 when I began taking private hand dance classes in Baltimore with Figgy Jones and Linda Allen. During the year and a half that I studied with them, I watched various couples practicing classical ballroom dancing during breaks. They reminded me of all of the times I had watched Fred Astaire and Ginger Rodgers glide across the dance floor in movies.

Then, in 2007, while dancing at the Eclipse in Washington DC, I observed a gentleman doing ballroom dancing in the midst of a floor full of hand dancers. His name was Gino Campbell, and when I asked him about his dancing, I learned that he taught a style of ballroom dancing called "Greystone." I studied with him for the next two years.

I met my partner, Bonnie McCoy--now my wife--in 2010, when we both attended a dance. Bonnie had taken hand dance lessons with Al Johnson in Baltimore and then salsa lessons with Lewis Neal. After Bonnie and I danced together for a year, we realized our mutual desire to become better dancers.

I introduced Bonnie to Greystone, and as we danced it at several affairs, others began to ask us if we would teach it them.

We attended Banneker Ballroom's Spring Gala in June 2011, and became members of Banneker that fall,



Bonnie and Carl performing at the December 2018 Gala.

furthering our dance education under the instruction of the brilliant Stan Kelly. That same year, we also studied classical ballroom dancing with Bill Davies of New York. In 2012, while on a cruise, Bonnie and I met met Calvin Seibert, aka "Mr Smooth," of Detroit, and assisted with several of his Urban Ballroom workshops.

Since then, Bonnie and I have been a part of Banneker's dance team that performs at the galas and other events. We have also led and instructed classes for the marriage ministry at Wayland Baptist Church in Baltimore. It's been our privilege to help many couples prepare for their first dance at weddings.

## Banneker Ballroom Dance Club History

By Mary Duarte

Ballroom classes began at the Banneker Recreation Center after WWII. Other places where the organization has practiced over the years include the gym at Fort Lincoln Elementary School and the Letter Carrier's Express Lounge.

Ballroom dancing grew in popularity in the 1950's due to influence of the first major black ballroom dance studio in D.C., the Dunbar Dance Studio. It was at the old Dunbar Hotel at 15th & U Streets. NW, and the Frederik Loren Interracial Dance Studio was at the same location. When these two studios were dissolved in 1954, the instructors went to other venues. Stan Kelly opened the Inspiration House on Columbia Road, Tony Texiera taught at Cardoza High School and Joe Brooks opened a studio on Capitol Hill.

In the beginning, the Banneker Galas were held at the Banneker Recreation Center. They later moved to the Fort Lincoln Center; Water's Caterers on Nebel Road in Rockville, MD; La Fontaine Bleue, and the Richmond Wedding Salon on Varnum Street in Mt. Rainer. MD.

### TRIVIA:

"Hardening of the attitude starts long before hardening of the arteries!"

# Star Light, Star Bright Gala





## January

Ron Ashford  
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 Carlton  
Saundra Rogers  
Bruce Romano  
Betty Smalls  
Eleanor Stewart  
Reggie Wingfield  
Eddie Wittten

## February

Fran Alves  
Patricia Bolt  
Leon Bowser  
Claude Correll  
Elaine Gunter  
Reginald Handon  
Glenca Kande  
Andree Moore  
Sharon Ogunfiditmi  
Yvonne Rogers  
Timothy Smith  
Sharon Walton  
Jerry Whitfield  
John Wolf

## March

Drexel Agee  
Valerie Brooks  
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

Jacqueline Adkins  
Diane Blount  
Reginald Boone  
Plater Campbell  
Marie-France Dongmo  
Cynthia Edwards  
Angela Fifer  
April Flayer  
April Floyd  
Constance Hinds  
Angela O'Davies  
Anita Williams

## May

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

## June

Gwelinar Banks  
Albert Lee Brock  
Frances Brock  
Stewart Fitzgerald  
Laceenis Fordham  
Jeanne Fox Alston  
Judith Fykes  
Kaye Henson  
James Jackson  
Karl King  
Mary Terrell  
Felix Theodore  
Angela Walker-Suttles  
Daryl Watson  
Betty Wilkins  
Marilyn Williams

## Club Calendar



### April 2019

2, 9, 16, 23: Salsa  
30: Social

### May 2019

7: Waltz  
14: Waltz  
21: Merengue  
28: Line Dance (Diane Brooks)

### June 2019

4: Cha Cha  
9: June Gala

### 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

### Contact Us

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### Newsletter Editor

*Jeanne Fox-Alston*