

# SMOOTH DANCERS' SILVER ANNIVERSARY

*Celebrating a Quarter Century of Dancing  
Pleasure by Thriving California Group*

BY VICTOR ZELLER

One Sunday evening back in the year 1937 a group of contest dancers, all staunch partisans of "smooth" dancing, were gathered around the bandstand of the ballroom on Lick Pier in Santa Monica. They were watching the distressing spectacle of contest prizes being handed out, one after another, to the jitterbug maniacs. This was not unusual for the period. Jitterbug had hit the country like a plague. With each gyration its free-swinging exponents seemed to fill an entire ballroom with a madness that seemed weirdly heathen.

But there were a few who remained immune to the craze and who felt that something should be done to preserve the institution of *real* dancing. This year we are celebrating the Silver Anniversary of the organization which was created in that antijitterbug mood, and readers of *Ballroom Dance Magazine* are in-

vited to reminisce a bit with me about the quarter century of pleasure which the National Smooth Dancers have brought to many lovers of the best in ballroom dancing.

It was Glenn Helper who first suggested, to Archie McKenzie, the idea of organizing a club for "smooth dancers. The notion caught on fast, and in a few weeks some 40 of the best dancers in the Los Angeles area had signed up. On that original roster were, in addition to Helper and McKenzie, such names as Horance Dunn, Oliver Tucker, Bill Barrell, Walt Reynolds, Charles Provin, Tommy Young, Larry Hartzell, Rudy Martin and Jack Jackson — all gentlemen, if you will notice. (It was not until 1939 that the ladies were admitted as official members, and by 1942 they were allowed to hold the offices of secretary and treasurer.)

When the first by-laws were drawn up, eligibility for membership was somewhat rigid. An applicant had to have won at least three major contests, had to be an American citizen, had to have a reputation for integrity in his own dealings and the proper respect for dancing partners, had to own (or be willing to purchase) a tuxedo and a white suit and, of course, had to be an advocate of smooth dancing. Two formal dances a year, were then on the calendar. These were staged at the Jonathan Club, the Riverside Country Club and the Los Angeles Breakfast Club. Dues in those days were 15 cents a month, with an initiation fee of 25 cents. Membership was limited to one hundred, and the result was a constant waiting list.

During the war years of gasoline short-  
(Continued on page 24)



1957 contest scene at Oakland convention, hosted by Lake Merritt Chapter.



Ted Streshinsky

William D'Albrow escorts Esther Mattix, 1958 Queen, to throne at NSD convention hosted by San Francisco Chapter.

Smooth Dancer trophy winners of 25 years ago, Herman Bodendorfer and Katherine Sorenson. Maestro beaming approval in background is Rudy Vallee.





*Silver Cup Award Competition July 10, 1937, at Pasadena, during Smooth Dancers' first year.*



**Left:**

*Foxtrot and All-Division winners of competition at 1960 convention in Long Beach were Paul & Juanita Birkett.*

**Far Left:**

*Carmen Carlos and Vincent Scillato in a 1956 NSD competition. They were representing the San Diego Chapter, onetime sponsors of a memorable annual gala, the "Dancing Cavalcade."*

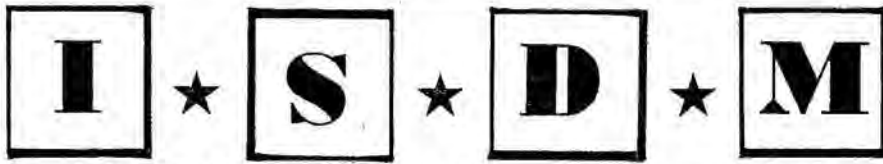


**Left:**

*1951 photo of Eleanor & Victor Zeller on the dance floor of the Figueroa Ballroom in Los Angeles. Author of the accompanying report, Mr. Zeller joined the NSD with his wife 17 years ago.*

**Far Left:**

*Ray Bradford, 1962 President of the Los Angeles Parent Chapter of the NSD.*



INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF DANCING MASTERS  
(An American Non-Profit Organization)

ANOTHER SCOOP FOR OUR MEMBERS!!!

**JUST FOR THE RECORDS** Strict Tempo of course

VICTOR SILVESTER ★ JOE LOSS ★ PHIL TATE

**DAN MARK IMPORT CO.**  
2010 Oak St. Burbank  
California

FOR ALL IMPORTED EUROPEAN STRICT TEMPO RECORDS!  
RECORDS! RECORDS! and DANCE BOOKS TOO!!

By arrangement with the above firm  
Special discount to all our Members!!  
**WRITE FOR BROCHURE NOW!**  
INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF DANCE MASTERS  
1422 11th St., Santa Monica, California

**SMOOTH DANCERS** (Cont'd from p. 5)

ages, blackouts and other difficulties, activities of the NSD were necessarily curtailed. All treasury funds at the time were utilized to purchase gifts for members in service camps and hospitals.

After V-J Day, in October of 1945, a gala revival took place. The club was reorganized by Oliver Tucker and Jack Jackson, who summoned together as many champions of the "smooth" cause as could be located. In short order the club was again going strong. That was the year my wife and I joined. We have been members now for 17 years — and have loved every year of it.

In 1947 came the next major step forward, which was incorporation, and on that task Virginia Crawford, Ruth Tucker and Verna-deen Buck spent many hours of work. In November of that year the State of California recognized the organization under its official title, the National Smooth Dancers, Inc. Support for club principles now began to come from territory well beyond the confines of Greater Los Angeles. Today we have 11 chapters: in Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco, Fresno, San Jose, Fallbrook, Oakland, Lakewood, Santa Monica, Visalia, and a new chapter in the San Fernando Valley.

Membership is now approximately one



Betty Bradford of South Gate, Calif., is this year's reigning NSD Queen.



"Tales of South Seas" show put on by members of Starlitter Chapter, Lakewood.

**WHAT WENT WRONG?**

Igor Stravinsky and George Balanchine's latest collaboration NOAH AND THE FLOOD



in the August issue of DANCE MAGAZINE

Send me **DANCEMAGAZINE**  NEW  RENEWAL  
For:  1 YR. — \$6.00  2 YRS. — \$11.00  3 YRS. — \$15.00  
 Teacher  Professional  Student  PAYMENT ENCLOSED  BILL ME  
(Add \$1.00 per year for South America and foreign)

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ Zone \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_  
**DANCE Magazine 268 W. 47th St. New York 36**



*Typifying the Smooth Dancer's program of dancing plus a rounded social life is this 1952 outing to Catalina Island.*



*Memo Bernabei, Windsor Records headliner who is especially popular with So. Calif. dancers, stars on the bandstand at the 1962 NSD convention in L.A.*

this year's accomplishments are George Reed, Editor of *Dance Whispers*; Bill Smith, Convention Chairman; Hal Dodds, Publicity Chairman; and, of course, the 1962 President, Ray Bradford.

President Bradford assures us that the 25th Anniversary Convention will be fabulous. The new Crystal Ballroom in the Thunderbird International Hotel is reported to be "the most beautiful ballroom to be constructed in Southern California in the past 20 years." With meetings, parties, contests and five full dance sessions, most Silver Anniversary conventioners anticipate only a few hours' sleep during the gala 4-day schedule.

Finally, Mr. Bradley adds, "You'll find friendly hospitality, good dancing and plenty of fun from August 31 through September 3 with the Smooth Dancers at El Segundo in Sunny California!"

thousand. As a result of its activities the NSD has been able to contribute funds and gifts to numerous charities and causes. Members of the chapters are always looking forward to the next "Dance of the Month," as well as to the state-wide gatherings. Most important of these, of course, is the yearly convention held on the Labor Day week-end.

We feel that one of the most effective showcases for good dancing have been the regular contests and the work of the precision dance groups within the several chapters. Our members regularly "bring down the house" when they demonstrate in ballrooms or on TV.

In 1950 our own little monthly publication, *Dance Whispers*, was begun. Material is contributed by all club branches, and thus all Smooth Dancers are kept posted about events past and present and about ideas for further promotion of better dancing.

We are always looking to the future. It has long been the vision of many to break out beyond the borders of California and establish a nation-wide club. Since its reorganization and incorporation in 1947 the NSD has forged ahead and has become the best known group of its kind in the country. The success so far has proved that we have the right foundation, the right ideals and the right people behind them. The future is without boundaries!

Lawrence Welk, an honorary member of the NSD, has said that in his travels throughout the United States he has seen no better dancers than ours. An especially hopeful omen for the days ahead is seen in the fact that so many of the younger generation have expressed a desire "to learn to dance as the Smooth Dancers do." Happily, Rock 'n' Roll has not infected all our young people.

The National Smooth Dancers are proud to have been able to show the rest of the world how much fun it is to be able to dance well and how much dancing accomplishes for those who want to acquire valued friends and a more worth-while social existence.

Among the many who deserve credit for

## DANCE INSTRUCTION

### ILLINOIS

McQueeney's English Style Ballroom Dancing  
*Simplified Slow & Quick Rhythm*  
Write for beginner's teacher course  
Suite 1657—53 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago

### KANSAS

Domme Academy of Arts  
1035 Topeka Blvd. Central 5-2051  
Topeka J. M. Domme, Dir.

### MASSACHUSETTS

The Curry School of Dancing  
350 Commonwealth Avenue  
Boston 15

Harvey Gordon Ballroom Studios  
*Social Dancing—Teachers, Adults, Children*  
Main Studio — 10 Central Ave., Lynn

### NEW YORK

Alex & Mona Desandro  
Hotel Anxonia, B'way at 73 St., SU 7-4657  
Specialize in "International Style." Studio  
air-conditioned and open all summer.

Rob & Doris Studio of Ballroom Dance  
68-30 Springfield Blvd.,  
Bayside 64, L.I. BA 9-5327, HA 8-1239

Byrnes and Swanson  
846 Flatbush Ave.  
Brooklyn 26 BU 2-7383

Donald Sawyer  
406 Buena Vista Road  
New City, Rockland County NE 4-2855

Lucie Elin — International Stylist  
Examinations — Competition — Adjudicating.  
Teachers easy approach to Int'l Style.  
123 Valentine Lane, Yonkers.  
YO 5-2547 — GR 6-1158

Arthur Murray Studio  
11 East 43rd Street  
New York City

Phillips Dance Studios TR 7-3808-9  
2375 B'way, NY 24, N.Y.  
50 E. Fordham Rd., Bronx, N.Y. LU 4-2988  
534 Flatbush Ave., Bklyn, N.Y. BU 4-6388  
89-28 Merrick Blvd., Jamaica, L.I. RE 9-4010

Helen Wicks Reid School of Dancing  
29 Bayview Ave.  
Port Washington, N. Y.

YMHA—Adults Ballroom Classes  
John Clancy Instructor  
Lex. Ave. & 92nd St., NYC 28 AT 9-2400

### MICHIGAN

Marie Oliver Dance Studio  
406 David Broderick Tower  
Detroit 26

### OKLAHOMA

Kotche's School of Ballroom Dancing  
416 N. Hudson, Oklahoma City  
Our 34th Dancing Year

### WASHINGTON

Ed Long Dance Academy  
Featuring  
The Latest Steps & Style  
16234 NE 29th Bellevue