

The Banneker Grapevine

Newsletter of the Banneker Ballroom Dance Club of Washington, DC

April 2019

President's Message

By Candace Thomas



We'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*

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 2 An Apology for Slavery
- 2 A Moving Story
- 3 Practice Self Love
- 3 My Dance Journey
- 3 Banneker Ballroom History
- 4-5 Banneker Ballroom Gala Photos
- 6 Birthdays

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

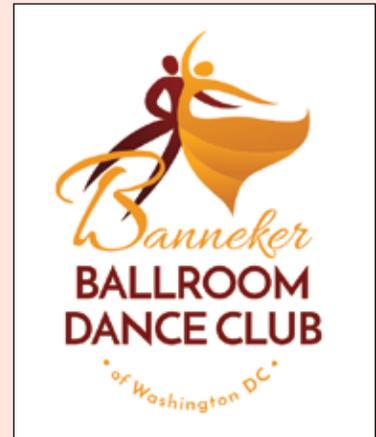
May

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

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