

Volume 4

dttda

**INSIGHTS**

the e-zine for dance team directors

February 2006



**APRIL 26-29, 2006**

**DTDA NATIONAL CONVENTION**

MARK THE DATE!



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## Top Ten Reasons to be a NASDT Member

1. Looks great on things like job applications, resumes, college applications, etc.
2. After TAKS!!! – You deserve a break.
3. Learn some great choreography to take back to your team for Spring Show, try-outs, or other special performance.
4. New, lower price for two-night stay.
5. Meet other dancers from not only your area, but all over Texas and the United States.
6. Special performance opportunity for friends and family on Saturday morning.
7. Have an opportunity to earn a scholarship.
8. Represent your school.
9. Stay in a REALLY nice hotel.
10. Did I mention you get to miss school?

**Hey directors,**

Maybe it has been a while since you last brought girls to convention or maybe you never have, but there is no better time than now to reconsider. We are offering two packages this year to help keep costs down. Also, remember this is a great experience for your girls to have. For more information, check out the National All Stars link on the website.

I hope to see you and your dancers at convention,

Nell Stortz  
NASDT Chairperson

## February President's Perspective Bright Lights on Broadway

I hope all of you enjoyed your holidays and have started the new semester off with a refreshed mind and are well rested. I'm sure you're all busy getting ready for contest season, basketball games, and spring shows. I want to wish you all the best of luck on a successful second semester.

I wanted to remind everyone to visit our website at [www.dtda.org](http://www.dtda.org) and register on line for the 27th Annual DTDA Convention that will once again be held at the Renaissance Hotel in Richardson, Texas on April 26-29. After you have registered, make sure to submit your nominations for the Top Ten Directors and Lifetime Honorary Member. While you are on the website, please check your personal information in the virtual notebook and notify us with any corrections so that we may keep your information updated. You will also find a list of workshops that have been confirmed.

Before you know it April will be here and the convention will be upon us, so make sure to register early and make those hotel reservations. Don't forget to register your top dancer(s) for the National All Star Drill Team. We also have an incentive this year to bring some new friends with you to convention. If you can refer 3 people to attend DTDA convention that did not attend last year you will receive a \$50 gift certificate to use in the exhibit hall with the vendor of your choice. Remind them to write your name on the registration form as the person who referred them. We are hoping to see many new faces this year! Please join us in Richardson, April 26-29th.

If you need any additional information or have any questions, please go online or call us at 1-800-695-6910. We will be happy to help you.

Good luck throughout your Contest Season and Spring Shows! Be sure and stay in touch!

Michelle McGaughy  
President DTDA, Inc.

## Director Spotlight Shines on Sandy Morton



Sandy Morton is the Cedar Hill H. S. Highstepper Director. She is currently in her 28th year of teaching and directing. Sandy has chartered dance programs for Red Oak and Kaufman High School and chartered the Drill Team Program for Gladewater High School Honeybears.

In addition to directing the Honeybears, she has also directed the Bryan Shy-Annes, Red Oak Hawkettes, Kemp Stingerettes, Kaufman Lionettes, Terrell Tigerettes, Duncanville Showstoppers, DeSoto Dance Company and Mansfield Summit J.V. Jewels. In addition to dance, she has taught English (English I-IV; English 7th &

8th grades) for over 20 years, was the Department Chair for Teen Leadership programs at Duncanville Freshman Center and was the lead teacher for Teen Leadership program for DeSoto Freshman Campus. Sandy has taken over 100 students to speak at M.B. Flippen's Teen Leadership training seminars, entitled, "Capturing Kid's Hearts."

Sandy has educated many peers and students in dance education and has won many awards. She was honored by having her name placed on the Rosa Park's "Wall of Tolerance," she was named Duncanville High School Freshman Center 2000 Teacher of the Year and was named DTDA Top Ten Drill Team Director in 1996, 2000, 2003 and 2005. Sandy was also nominated for Honorary Lifetime Achievement in 2005.

Sandy has served on the Executive Board for Drill Team Directors of America as the Notebook Chairperson in 1988, Secretary in 1989, 1990 and 1991 and served on the committee for National All Star Drill Team 2005. She has served on TDEA Awards Committee for Scholarships in 2003 and 2004 and on the All State Drill Team Directors Committee in 2005.

Sandy is a Certified Judge through DTDA Levels I-IV. She is a Staff member and adjudicator for Showtime International, Inc and is an adjudicator for Danceline. She has judged line and officer try-outs all over the state. She also has judged the "execution" portion of the H. S. State Dance Championships in Oregon state for three years. "It was quite an experience," Sandy said. She is also an adjudicator for the Miss Texas Teen Pageant – Talent Competition.

She has taken teams to Walt Disney World for more than 12 years to perform with Magic Music Days. Her teams have competed in the Contest of Champions in Florida and were awarded 1st place in Novice Jazz. They have received numerous awards in competition for team and officers, such as Sweepstakes, Super Sweepstakes, Best in Class, Best in Category, Gussie Nell Davis Award and the Denard Hayden Award. Sandy said, "My team has been quite successful in the past years with competition. They won national champions at the MA competition in San Antonio two years ago. I am excited to work with such a talented group of young ladies." Her team has also performed in the Miss North Texas Pageant opening number.

Sandy has been married to Charles Brad Morton III for 31 years. Brad is also a professional educator. He presently teaches Algebra and Geometry at Ennis High School. Sandy said, "He is my best friend and mentor." They have a son, Ryan Bradley Morton who is 14 years old. Sandy said, "Ryan is truly our gift from God, we waited seventeen years to be blessed with a child."

## Recipes for the Busy Director

Here is an easy and delicious recipe for those times you just don't feel like cooking!

### Chicken Casserole

Ingredients:

- 3 lbs. Chicken
- 1 can Cream of Mushroom Soup
- 1 can Cream of Chicken Soup
- 1 can Cream of Celery Soup
- 4 oz. Pieces and slices of Mushrooms
- 12 oz. Sharp cheddar cheese

#### Instructions:

Boil chicken in salted water. Let chicken cool then bone and dice. Put layer of chicken in pan. Mix together: cream of mushroom soup, cream of chicken soup, and cream of celery soup. Pour mixture over chicken. On top of the mixture, put the pieces and slices of mushrooms. Grate the sharp cheddar cheese and put on top of the casserole. Bake at 350° until bubbly (usually about 30 minutes). Serve over Minute Rice if preferred.



Cedar Hill Highsteppers  
2005 - 2006

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# Technique Tips

## Debra Oldroyd

For the dancer, successful execution of movement is of the utmost importance...or is it?

Proper alignment is necessary to the successful execution of the movement skills we require of our dancers. As teachers with the opportunity to see many dancers it is evident that the tendency to dance with bad habits need to be attended to. Often, simple posture is a challenge! Giving corrections in the dance class should include daily emphasis on proper alignment.

Promote alignment through the use of technique exercises. The releve is a valuable tool which can be used daily to address this. As dancers rise to releve, encourage them to find their center of balance with nose placed above toes, shoulders and arms relaxed but supported, and "energy" radiating from the center out through the limbs. In this position, they should be able to feel the relationship between the rib-cage and the rest of the body, primarily the spine. As the spine supports the upper body, the rib cage hangs on the spine, and the arms may also hang relaxed or extend to a comfortable 2nd position. The dancer should feel a strong, supported center instead of the stiffness represented in a ribcage that is "held up". This is when the dancer inflates the lungs, opens the ribcage and assumes a position similar to a military "attention. Often the movement required will be executed while holding, or limiting the use of breath. A balance exercise in the warm-up as well as at the end of the class will reinforce the alignment that is necessary for successful execution of movement.

It seems a greater challenge to achieve alignment as movement in plie is required. In a traveling step, allowing the ribcage to open changes the initiation point of the movement from the abdominal center to the chest. Movement that is difficult to control will be the result. If the dancer cannot maintain torso alignment, they begin to make balance adjustments throughout the body. Usually the ribcage begins to jut forward and the dancer may counter the balance shift by pushing the pelvis back, arching the lower back. Now the alignment challenge is multiplied as the lower body becomes involved! You can help your dancers learn to drop the body's center of weight closer to the floor and maintain alignment by using flat back exercises in the warm-up.

Observe as the dancer lifts both arms to the ceiling. As the arms reach vertical, see that the ribcage remains closed, breathing is even, and the shoulders are relaxed. The flat back should initiate by a bend at the hip socket. The lengthening of the gluteus and hamstring muscles allow the body to fall forward to the 90 degree position. Many dancers initiate this movement from the spine, tightening the muscles around the spine and ultimately overworking them to maintain the arch. It is the abdominal muscles that should actually do the work, and the closer the torso gets to the 90 degree angle, the harder they work. The standing dancer should at the 90 degree angle, be looking at the floor. This lengthens the spine and creates a relationship between the spine and arms as they are extended toward the wall opposite. During the entire range of motion whether done standing or sitting there should be no variation in the torso or the head. The engaged abdominals will prevent the weight of the body from shifting into the heels (standing) or "sinking" the pelvis under (sitting). Of course the flat back done sitting does not achieve a 90 degree angle, but the same principles apply. Reinforcing the initiation point of the movement using the flat back exercises will help the dancer achieve and maintain alignment.

Teach your dancers that the spine supports the torso, and that finding balance points using releve will help them to achieve alignment. Use flat back exercises to help lengthen the muscles around the spine and strengthen those in the abdomen. As you observe your classes, there will be many other opportunities during which you can address and reinforce alignment. Sometimes dancers come to us with bad habits. Through technique exercises we can address this fundamental element and strengthen the individual, and help them achieve the successful execution of movement.

## Exhibitor Spotlight- J R Engraving

Liz Hofstetter and her husband founded JR Engraving over 15 years ago. Their goal was and is to offer the very best customer service when it comes to engraving plaques and trophies. As the engraving business grew, the formation of the school recognition gifts developed. Friends, Beth Freeman, who at the time was Drill Team Director at Plano Senior High, and Linda Hayes, who was Drill Team Director at Plano East Senior High School, were long time customers of JR Engraving. They wanted to recognize the achievements of their drill team members with something more than the plaques and trophies. They were looking for a special gift to give the recipient that would always bring back warm and fond memories of their days on the drill team. With this in mind, Liz looked for a different line of recognition awards and developed a line of "engrivable recognition gifts" which has become the main line of JR Engraving.



Frequently when Liz visits with a Drill Team or Cheerleading Director she discovers that the Director's have actually received an engraved "trinket box, picture frame, or key ring" from when they were a member of the drill or cheerleading team. They typically express how much they adored the gift and how much it means to them. Now these "Directors" want to do the same for their team members.

JR Engraving has partnered with schools all over the United States to aid in the purchase of special items for dance and cheerleading teams, school booster clubs, band and other school/ clubs organizations. Many dance directors, coaches, teachers and other school staffs have purchased personalized gifts from JR Engraving to recognize their well deserving students, teams and staff. Whether it is a gift to recognize a person's dedication to a program, fundraising products for the booster clubs, or a gift of appreciation for a team captain and team members, JR Engraving has the ideal gift for any occasion, while continuing to offer the highest quality merchandise and the very best customer service.

Our goals are to continue to add new gift items for our customers; we are always looking for something different and unusual for those special recognition awards. This year, JR Engraving is pleased to announce the addition of many new promotional product lines which include items such as personalized pens, notebooks, silicon bracelets, calendars, lanyards, coffee mugs, stadium seats, stadium cups, and much more.

If you are looking to give someone "special recognition", Liz would like you to visit JR Engraving's website [www.jrengraving.com](http://www.jrengraving.com) for a few ideas and suggestions; or give her a call at 972-985-1528 to discuss your ideas.

# The University of Texas

Walking around campus at The University of Texas has been anything but normal after the school's football team clenched the NCAA National Championship title at the Rose Bowl in early January. The energy surrounding the school has been nothing less than awe inspiring. For the UT Dance Team, winning the Championship was just what the team needed to put them in the mood for a spring season full of performances and perhaps most importantly, the shot at their own National title.

Commonly referred to on campus as "Texas Dance", the UT Dance Team has had no such chance in the past few years. The past four years have consisted of rebuilding and restructuring. Once just a performance group who danced at small campus events, put on a spring show, and made their own costumes, the team has grown into a nationally competitive squad full of energy, talent, and power both on and off the dance floor. The 2002-2003 season was full of unfulfilled promises, cancelled practices, and embarrassing performances. It seemed that every idea the team had was shot down, and that there never really was an opportunity for the group to show off its talent. The next two years became a rebuilding process of revamping the team's style, cutting the team down to make it more manageable, and fishing for any type of opportunity that would allow the team to show off its increasingly more diverse group of dancers.

Texas Dance started the 2005-2006 school year with a fresh outlook and energy like they had never had before. The fall season, comprised of parades and pep rallies, fine arts showcases, and a new partnership with the Women's Basketball Program, went incredibly well. The senior leaders were ecstatic with the team's growth, the energetic new members stepped up the overall performance level to new heights, and the Recreational Sports Program, who oversees the team, was impressed to say the least.

Starting off the Spring semester as National Champions has set The UT Dance Team over the top with excitement and drive to be the best. Over break the team received their bid to the National Dance Alliance Collegiate Nationals competition in Daytona, FL in April, which is a far cry from the few regional appearances the team had been able to make in the past few years.

Texas Dance has never been to a national event before, and having the opportunity to represent the NCAA Championship School is an honor which the team could have never in its wildest dream imagined just a few years ago.

With all of their newfound energy, Texas Dance is sure to continue growing into a squad that is soon to have a nationally known presence in collegiate dance. They are constantly seeking out new talent and are forever in search of new team members who share their same vision for becoming nothing less than the best.

To learn more about the UT Dance Team, please visit [www.utexasdance.com](http://www.utexasdance.com) or contact Director Brooke Carpin at [brookecarpin@mail.utexas.edu](mailto:brookecarpin@mail.utexas.edu).



## FROGS

Once upon a time there was a bunch of tiny frogs.... who arranged a running competition. The goal was to reach the top of a very high tower. A big crowd had gathered around the tower to see the race and cheer on the contestants.... The race began.... Honestly: No one in crowd really believed that the tiny frogs would reach the top of the tower. You heard statements such as: "Oh, WAY too difficult!!" "They will NEVER make it to the top." or: "Not a chance that they will succeed. The tower is too high!" The tiny frogs began collapsing. One by one.... Except for those, who in a fresh tempo, were climbing higher and higher.... The crowd continued to yell, "It is too difficult!!! No one will make it!" More tiny frogs got tired and gave up.... But ONE continued higher and higher and higher.... This one wouldn't give up! At the end everyone else had given up climbing the tower. Except for the one tiny frog who, after a big effort, was the only one who reached the top!

THEN all of the other tiny frogs naturally wanted to know how this one frog managed to do it? A contestant asked the tiny frog how he had found the strength to succeed and reach the goal? It turned out.... That the winner was DEAF!!!! The wisdom of this story is: Never listen to other people's tendencies to be negative or pessimistic.... because they take your most wonderful dreams and wishes away from you -- the ones you have in your heart! Always think of the power words have. Because everything you hear and read will affect your actions!

**Therefore: ALWAYS be... POSITIVE!**

**And above all: Be DEAF when people tell YOU that you cannot fulfill your dreams!  
Always think: I can do this!**



# "MIRROR, MIRROR, ON THE WALL" ---

## DEALING WITH STUDENT EATING DISORDERS

Billie Ann Mitchell, MS, ED, RN,  
Health Education / Wellness Promotion

I had the pleasure of presenting information regarding eating disorders to a group of TDEA members at the Houston convention in January. What was most evident in the comments from the educators is that this issue continues to be a frustrating, frightening, and growing concern for all of you who work so closely with young women (and, increasingly, young men). According to the NEDA (National Eating Disorders Association), approximately 10 million females and 1 million males have been diagnosed with anorexia nervosa or bulimia nervosa. Approximately 25 million more are struggling with binge eating disorder (BED). These statistics do not include all of the "silent" victims! (NEDA 2002)

"While eating disorders may begin with a preoccupation with food or weight, they are actually complex conditions that arise from a combination of long-standing behavioral, emotional, biological, and social factors, all of which must need to be addressed for effective prevention and treatment." (NEDA 2002) In the article "No One To Blame," (Newsweek, December 5, 2005), anorexia is described as a disease that is cross-cultural and cross-gender, affecting people as young as nine years old, and appears to be increasing in the middle-aged population as well. There is some research which has demonstrated that anorexia often runs in families, and that "many anorexics appear to have elevated brain serotonin, which may be linked to feelings of anxiety and obsessional thinking," which are trademarks of this disorder.

Not to be dismissed lightly, anorexia can ultimately lead to heart failure, osteoporosis, renal failure and overall weakness, while heart failure from electrolyte imbalance, tooth decay, chronic bowel problems, possible rupture of the esophagus, and depression indicate potential consequences from bulimia. Binge Eating Disorder (BED), also known as "Compulsive Overeating," is another category of eating disorders which has been linked to obesity. BED involves uncontrolled, impulsive, or continuous eating beyond the point of feeling comfortably full. (NEDA 2002) Sporadic fasting and repetitive dieting can also be present in BED. The main difference between Anorexia Nervosa/ Bulimia Nervosa and BED is that the latter does not include compensatory behavior such as purging, laxative abuse, or excessive exercise.

While many educators have heard repeated presentations on the signs and symptoms of eating disorders, it seems that few receive valid information regarding PREVENTION and TREATMENT! What can you do to help prevent these disorders to begin with, and how do you proceed after you have identified a student in trouble? Know your resources in your school and in your community, including physicians, nurses, psychologists, sociologists, counselors, and your fellow teachers, who can present various aspects related to these conditions in courses such as health, nutrition, biology, psychology, sociology, physical education, etc. Be proactive in enlisting the support from your male coaches and instructors who are becoming more aware of these issues as more young men are diagnosed with what was only recently considered to be a "girls' problem."

Be aware of relevant organizations in your area and on the web. Encourage your school administration and your community health agencies to provide information and education regarding these life-threatening, but preventable, curable, diseases. As dance educators, you work more intimately with your students on a daily basis than most other teachers; therefore, it is not surprising that you may very well know your students better than their families and closest friends. It is also not surprising that many of them perceive you as mentor and role model. Your intuition, your input, and your willingness to intervene when necessary are just like the ad for Mastercard--priceless! An important note of caution from NEDA: Even though you may be your students' first line of defense, "Don't take it upon yourself to become a student's therapist, savior, or victim!" Instead, guide the student and her/ his family to the appropriate professional resources.

Please be aware that National Eating Disorders Awareness Week (NEDAW) is scheduled for February 26th – March 4th, 2006. The theme is "Be Comfortable In Your Genes." If you care to sponsor a program, seminar, or event in your school or community for that week, please contact NEDA website @ [info@nationaleatingdisorders.org](mailto:info@nationaleatingdisorders.org) for materials and information.

### WEB RESOURCES

ANAD: National Association Anorexia Nervosa & Associated Disorders

LFED: Lifelines Foundation for Eating Disorders (WACO, TX)

NEDA: National Eating Disorders Association

Please feel free to contact me if I may be of assistance: Billie Ann Mitchell, MS, ED, RN, Health Education / Wellness Promotion  
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