

Clark: Beyond the classroom Dancing with Penn State

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life, they will really understand it." She compared that with her attitude toward Spanish. Understanding the tenses in Spanish, she realized, wasn't enough for her. She had to make it a part of her life and immerse herself into the Spanish culture to really understand its people, culture and language. "Education is not a game," she said. "It's about changing yourself." Clark has been teaching Spanish classes for several years. In 2004, she received the award for

mentioned. She lives with her husband and two children, while her two oldest have moved out. Some classes she has taught include Spanish, Hispanic culture, Latin American literature and political identity, magical realism, and "bananas, coffee and water: text and politics of the commonplace in Latin America."

Besides being interested in Spanish, Clark has several other hobbies. Being an ecologist is one of them. Even for her home, she uses solar-powered energy. Being able to create her own energy at home is something

in Mexico, called the Zapatistas, how to make films. It is called the Chiapas Media Project. The group in Chicago will be coming to Penn State Harrisburg on March 21 where Clark will lecture on the project and actually show a film created by the Zapatistas. The event will be open to the public.

Another one of her hobbies include playing the violin, flute and piano, which she has been playing since she was five years old. She still plays the piano and flute.

One of the craziest acts Clark has done is chasing a purple bus in Georgia because she thought the Indigo Girls were in it. She was with her daughter and was wearing an Indigo Girls shirt. She saw the purple bus, and got so excited that she told her daughter to follow the bus, while she pulled at her shirt to show the folk singers how much she loved them. When the bus finally stopped, she was embarrassed to learn that the bus was actually a group of tourists.

Clarke would like for people to view her as warm, compassionate and intellectual.

Clark's favs:

1. **Food:** Roast Chicken, anything Penn. Dutch
2. **Drink:** Water because its good for you
3. **Sport:** She likes to go cross country skiing. She hates to watch sports.
4. **Music:** New age, Celtic with world pop influences, Classical, Space music, Folk. She does not like the "really hard stuff" like Rap and Rock. She enjoys political statements in her music.
5. **Places to travel:** Maine, Mexico, Europe, England, Canada and Puerto Rico

she really desires. With all the energy-saving tactics Clark uses in her house, she said that she and her husband are "greening the house."

Knitting is also one of her interests. She knits clogs, sweaters and scarves that she gives as gifts. She has also knit items for breast cancer as therapy. Painting and water coloring are also one of her hobbies.

Even though teaching is her passion, Clark said she would love to work in a developing country where she could "really, really" make a difference and "right a wrong."

"It's better to actually do something for people than to just give them money," said Clark.

She would really like to involve herself in study abroad projects. A group of people in Chicago taught an indigenous group of people

Excellence in Teaching from Penn State Schuylkill, where she taught prior to coming to the Harrisburg campus. And even before that, she taught at both the Schuylkill and capital campus at the same time because they were merged together. Once they separated, she taught at either campus.

Both campuses, she explained, have their advantages. It would be unfair to choose her favorite, she said in her soft-spoken tone.

"Each campus is unique and different in its own way," Clark said. The commute to either campus was "not too bad," she said.

Clark calls Lebanon County her home, even though as a child, she moved several times. But she was able to experience different neighborhoods that way, she

By **MARIAM ELHADRI**
Staff Reporter
MUE117@PSU.EDU

was "basically" free and she was getting a gym credit for it, she could not resist.

Instructor Deborah Davis was very excited to bring this course over to PSH. She has been ballroom dancing for thirty years and teaching for twenty of those years. Davis started out during the disco/hustle scene. She received the ISTD, the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing. She has been teaching non-credit courses at HACC for eighteen years, and credit courses there as well for the past three years.

Davis loves teaching dance to "promote an activity and the young that they can enjoy their entire lives." She explained that in Europe, children

the students have picked up on the dances.

The students' enthusiasm about the course was just as energetic as their movements and motivation. Of the twenty-five students, ten male, fifteen female, most believe the best part of the course is getting out on the floor and learning the moves. Burchill particularly enjoys the Tango and the Hustle as her personal favorites.

Nguyen stated about the mood of the class and said, "At first we were all kind of shy and did not know how the pairing up would work since there were twice as many girls in the class than guys. Now, we have gotten to know each other and we take turn dancing together. While we wait for a partner,

we practice by ourselves or with each other. We have a lot of fun, laughing together when we make mistakes or accidentally step on each other's feet."

Both Nguyen and Burchill plan on continuing their ballroom dancing elsewhere after this semester ends. Professor Davis offers discounts to any of her students that are looking for lessons at her studio.

Professor Davis projects the future ballroom dancing program at Penn State Harrisburg to expand. With its popularity this semester, she is looking into adding another section next spring, and hopefully eventually offering the course throughout the entire year.

If you are ready for a fun exercise experience, and to take a break from traditional academic courses, consider this ballroom dancing course as part of your schedule for Spring 2008. Can't fit that in your schedule? Get a part of the dancing scene at Davis's studio, Ballroom Break, and learn dances including Swing, Latin, Smooth, Hustle, Theatrical, Country and Western, Jazz, Ballet, and American and International style dances. Visit www.ballroombreak.com for more information.



Photo by **MARIN BENDORITIS**/Capital Times

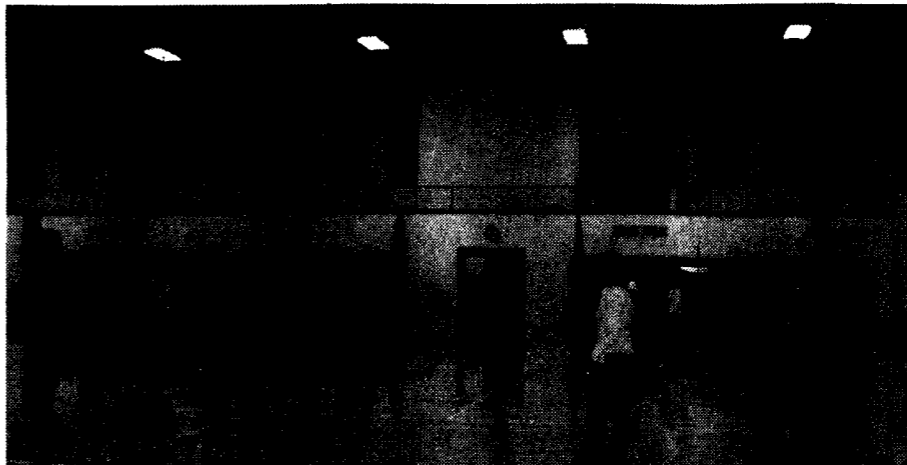


Photo by **VICTORIA HENNIGAN**/Capital Times

program. Only one section of this class is offered, during the spring semester only, and it filled to capacity during scheduling week.

According to Penn State's schedule of courses, this is a course designed to provide students with basic dance skills and an understanding and appreciation of ballroom dance.

Along with the gym credits, ballroom dance student Victoria Nguyen stated, "I think when Dancing with the Stars showed on TV, more and more people have become interested in ballroom dancing and I guess what is one reason that this class caught my eye."


Another ballroom student, Bethany Burchill, has always wanted to learn to ballroom dance; since it

learn ballroom dance at eight years of age. It has great benefits including social skills and exercise. A twenty-minute ballroom dance session equals twenty minutes of an aerobic exercise. She said it also is a great stress reducer, connecting the mind and body, and can help greatly with patients of Alzheimer's disease.


For her students at PSH, Davis teaches an introduction to Ballroom Dancing and Rhythm. The dances they will learn include the Fox Trot, Waltz, Tango, Swing and Hustle. She will also give history lectures on each dance in which students are quizzed on. A typical lesson would consist of the characteristics of a dance, warm-ups, and incorporating into the dance. She is impressed how quickly

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