

DANCE

Step, sway and swivel at Sangria's Sky Club

Think your salsa's hot?

Then grab your heels and head for the dance floor Wednesday at Sangria's Sky Club in downtown Royal Oak.

If you can step, sway and swivel better than other salsa dancers in the club, you might win a trip to Puerto Rico or one of several other prizes.

Elaine Marrero, owner of Troy Dance Studio, starts a series of dance competitions on Feb. 7 during the club's weekly Latin Dance Party. The competition — and free lessons in Latin, rhythm and tango — will continue every Wednesday night.

Lessons

"I'm trying to give people who don't know how to dance, the opportunity of taking free dance lessons. So, whenever we play any type of music other than hard rock music that you just jump around to, they'll be educated in social skills and etiquette of the dance floor," she explained.

"I'm not really trying to create a competition of who's better. It's more for people to enjoy themselves and to show what they've accomplished."

She also hopes to unify and generate good will among dance instructors by inviting them to judge the weekly competitions.

They'll choose winners each week for a month. Those dancers

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Dance instructor

will compete in a semi-final held during the fifth week of competition. Semi-finalists who advance to the sixth and final week of salsa competition will win prizes.

"While we do the six weeks of salsa competition, I'm also going to give free lessons in cha cha."

When the salsa competition ends, Marrero will sponsor a six-week cha cha contest. While couples show off their cha cha skills, she'll teach the hustle, preparing dancers for the next competition.

"It's getting the people to be able to go out there and dance and say, 'Man, I accomplished this. I didn't know how to dance last week and now I'm entering a competition.' And they'll be rewarded."

Marrero will exempt contestants from Latin Dance Party's weekly \$5 cover charge, which entitles participants to free lessons at 8:15 p.m. and dancing

to salsa music during the evening. The contest will start at 11 p.m. Every contestant will walk away with a token gift — either a pass to a future Latin Dance Party, a T-shirt or music — and finalists will win dance scholarships, show tickets and other prizes. Top winners will pack their bags for a vacation in Puerto Rico.

"It is a competition but I want to make it comfortable for everyone, too."

Marrero, a world salsa dancing champion, graduated from Troy High School in 1982 and lives with her husband in Rochester Hills. She began teaching free lessons twice a week at Sangria last year, in addition to her regular classes at Troy Dance Studio. Dancers tested their skills in salsa, merengue and tango on Wednesday Nights, adding Argentine tango to the mix on Thursday nights.

"When we started about 80



STAFF PHOTO BY JERRY ZOLNERT

percent of the people were Latino. Now it's about 50 percent. We're trying to attract different nationalities."

Attire

She suggests that women wear shoes with heels and a comfortable skirt for Latin dancing.

"There's nothing more beautiful than a lady with a skirt. It's sensual and it moves more," she explained.

A confident attitude is even more important than dance attire.

"Dancing is all from the heart. It's being out there and just having a good time. You'll leave having learned something and you'll enjoy the evening."

She also plans to teach salsa and Argentine tango lessons, at 8:25 p.m., with dancing from 9 p.m. — 2 a.m., on Thursdays, starting Feb. 15 at Crazy Moe's, in Pontiac. The cover charge will be \$5.

"We'll have something a little different there, too. We're going to have Spanish Karaoke. We'll have live entertainment. All through the evening we'll play variations of music."

Where to dance

Marrero said Volcano Grill in

Cheek to

cheek:

Marie Fox

and Arif

Abassi

dance the

Argentine

tango during

Latin

Dance night

at Sangria's

Sky Club in

Royal Oak.



Stepping out: Elaine Marrero leads a salsa dance lesson at Sangria's Sky Club in downtown Royal Oak. Marrero owns the Troy Dance Studio.

Discover 'Routes to Roots' at JCC video series

The Jewish Community Center of Oak Park will show a double feature, part of its ongoing Yiddish/Jewish Video Series, beginning at 12:45 p.m., Monday in the Jimmy Prentiss Morris Building, 15110 10 Mile Road, Oak Park.

The first movie, *Routes to Roots: A time to Gather Stories*, follows genealogist Miriam Weiner's 1992 tour of Poland and Ukraine.

With the help of Polish and Ukrainian archival officials, the tour participants, which included Holocaust survivors, accessed previously "off limits" materials, enabling them to track down ancestral homes, burial places and in one case, a lost relative.

In the second video, Jewish genealogist Arthur Kurzwil shows how to trace family history, using his own experience as a step by step guide. He visits

Ellis Island and other significant sites while demonstrating how to acquire relevant records and historical documents.

Each video is in color and runs about 29 minutes.

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the Star Southfield Theatre complex on 12 Mile Road, west of Telegraph, also plays Latin music on Saturday nights, although she doesn't teach free lessons there.

And Brick House, 7759 Auburn, Utica, offers tango dancing on Sundays twice monthly.

Sangria's Sky Club is located at 401 Lafayette, south of 11

Mile and just west of Washington, in downtown Royal Oak. (248) 543-1964.

Crazy Moe's is located on Saginaw at Pike street in downtown Pontiac. (248) 322-5550.

Volcano Grill's phone number is (248) 372-0100 and Brick House is at (810) 323-9500.

Visit Troy Dance Studio's Web site at www.troydancestudio.com.

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SAVE THE LAST DANCE

PG-13 For some material, including language, some smoking, and some alcohol.

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