

SPORTS



Monday nights are hopping at KLM Lodge, where the Hinsdale Parks and Recreation Department offers ballroom dancing. The activity spans the generations, from newly engaged couples to those in their 80s, instructor Mark Harvey said.

Dance the night away for a great workout

By Polly Rix
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Glide around the dance floor in a waltz or foxtrot for an hour and burn about 204 calories.

Pick up the pace and move to "The Hustle" or line dance

to "Achy Breaky Heart" and that same 150-pound person will burn 304 calories.

Ballroom dancing is an excellent workout, said Nick Troy, recreation services manager in the Hinsdale Parks and Recreation Department.

Just look at how much weight the participants who have competed on the popular television show "Dancing With the Stars" have reported losing, he pointed out.

For the past several years the Hinsdale park department has offered ballroom

dancing.

"It's a unique class — we seem to have that 15 to 20 people we need," Troy said of the offering for beginners.

The second floor of The Lodge at Katherine Legge Memorial Park is the perfect setting. Two sessions, a class for beginners and another one for more experienced dancers, are being held this winter on Monday evenings.

"It's a wide range of people — it's got to have something to do with the 'Dancing With the Stars,'" Troy said.

Dance instructor Mark Harvey said every time a movie such as "Dirty Dancing" or a television show based on dancing appears, the interest in learning how to dance rises.

In Hinsdale Harvey limits his beginners class to the waltz, the foxtrot, the swing and a "little bit of polka." Once dancers move into the advanced classes, they begin to work on the Latin dances, which are more complicated.

Harvey who has been dancing since he was a small boy and came close to danc-

ing professionally, said he loves to share his passion for dancing. His grandmother owned the Garrett Dance Studio in Villa Park, a business his mother eventually owned and renamed the Garrett-Harvey Dance Studio.

"It's good steady exercise without being over the top," Harvey said.

Hinsdale residents Ning and Wuk-Phi Li are four-year veterans of Harvey's park district class.

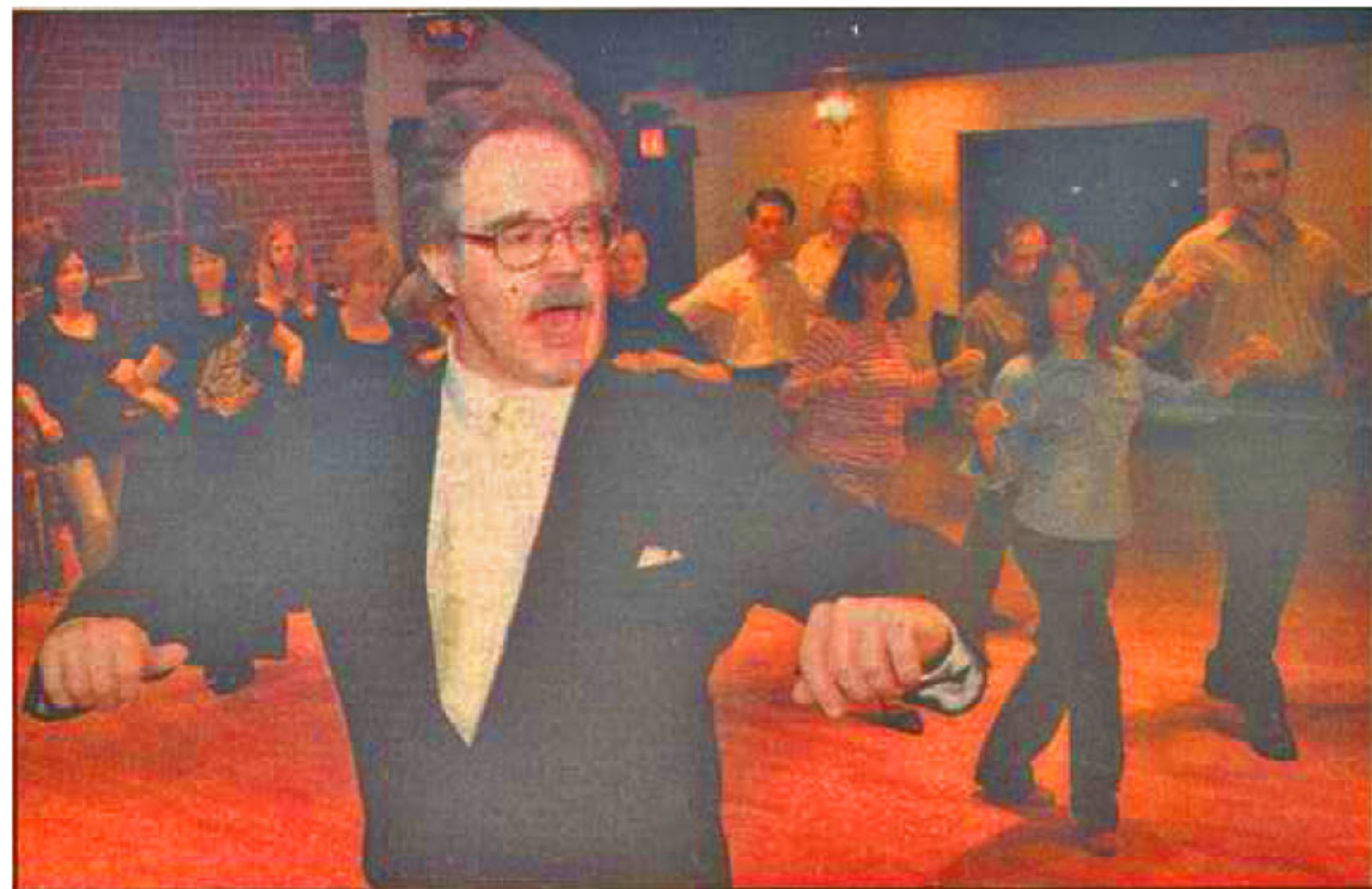
The couple always had enjoyed dancing but never took classes or knew how to dance more formally, Ning Li said.

"We knew that the park district had a ballroom dance program in the park," she said of Katherine Legge Memorial Lodge. "We decided to walk over and take a look."

What they found was a delightful atmosphere that convinced them to sign up, she said.

"Since then we have continued every Monday," Ning

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Harvey leads Monday's advanced dancing class in a step called the twinkle break.

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Li said. "We think it's good exercise, especially in the winter."

During that time they have moved from the beginner classes to advanced, enrolling for each of the three sessions the park district offers every year.

She has now loves the waltz. She even has a chance to test her skills at the Willowbrook Ballroom in Willow Springs at the close of each session, when Harvey arranges for the class to take a field trip.

"We think it's good practice and it's kind of a test for us," Ning Li said. "We enjoy it very much."

Hinsdale Realtor Diana Ivas also enjoys ballroom dancing — and her favorite dance is the cha-cha, partly because of its versatility, she said.

A former dance and fitness instructor at Oak Park-River Forest High School, she not only dances but likes to teach others how to dance as well.

In the fall of 2006 Ivas held a client appreciation night with an evening of ballroom

dancing instruction at The Community House.

"People just loved it. I enjoyed teaching because I hadn't taught for years. I even have had people ask me 'Are you going to do that again?' " she said.

Dancing has many benefits beyond physical fitness, said Ivas, who recalled the time she spent as a ballet dancer learning her steps.

"Dancing is very good for your memory — you have to remember steps with ballroom dancing," she said.

"Plus, it's good for your posture and your confidence."

"The other thing you get from it is enjoyment and you can do it with your spouse or significant other," Ivas added.

Park district classes offer a great learning environment, as does the Willowbrook Ballroom.

"One of my clients gave his wife a gift certificate for ballroom dancing classes at Willowbrook Ballroom for Christmas," she said. "They teach different dances each night of the week."

Harvey encourages anyone

who is interested to attend one of his beginner classes.

"Try one," he said. "If you like it, then you sign up."

There is no reason to be intimidated with the idea of grand dancing, he added.

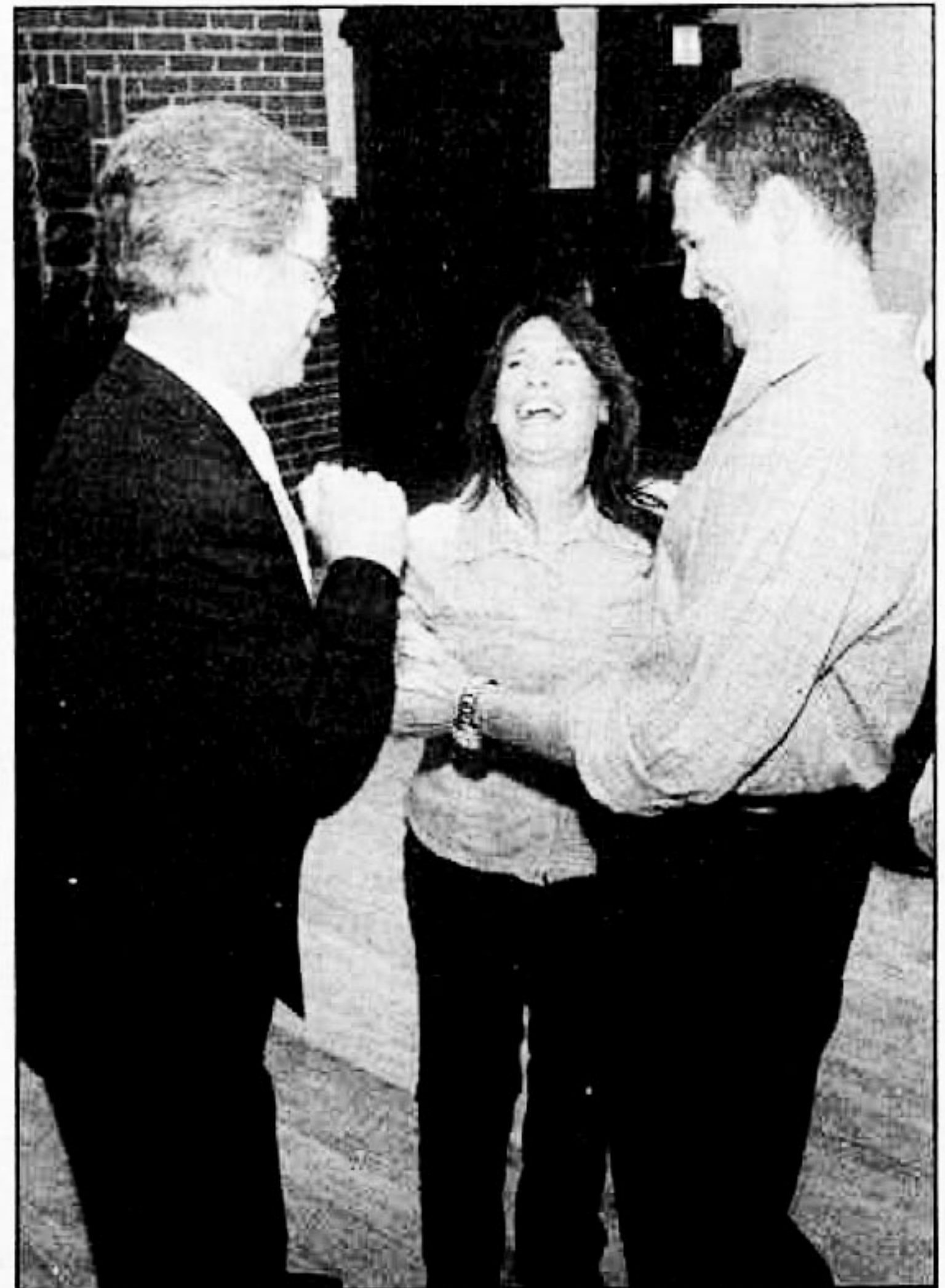
"Ballroom dancing that regular people do is not the same as 'Dancing with the Stars,'" he said. "It's not all that big and showy. People (watch) 'Dancing with the Stars' or dancing competitions on TV — that's not really what people do when they go out and dance."

Over the years Harvey has found women are the ones who initiate signing up for the class — but men are the ones who insist on attending each session.

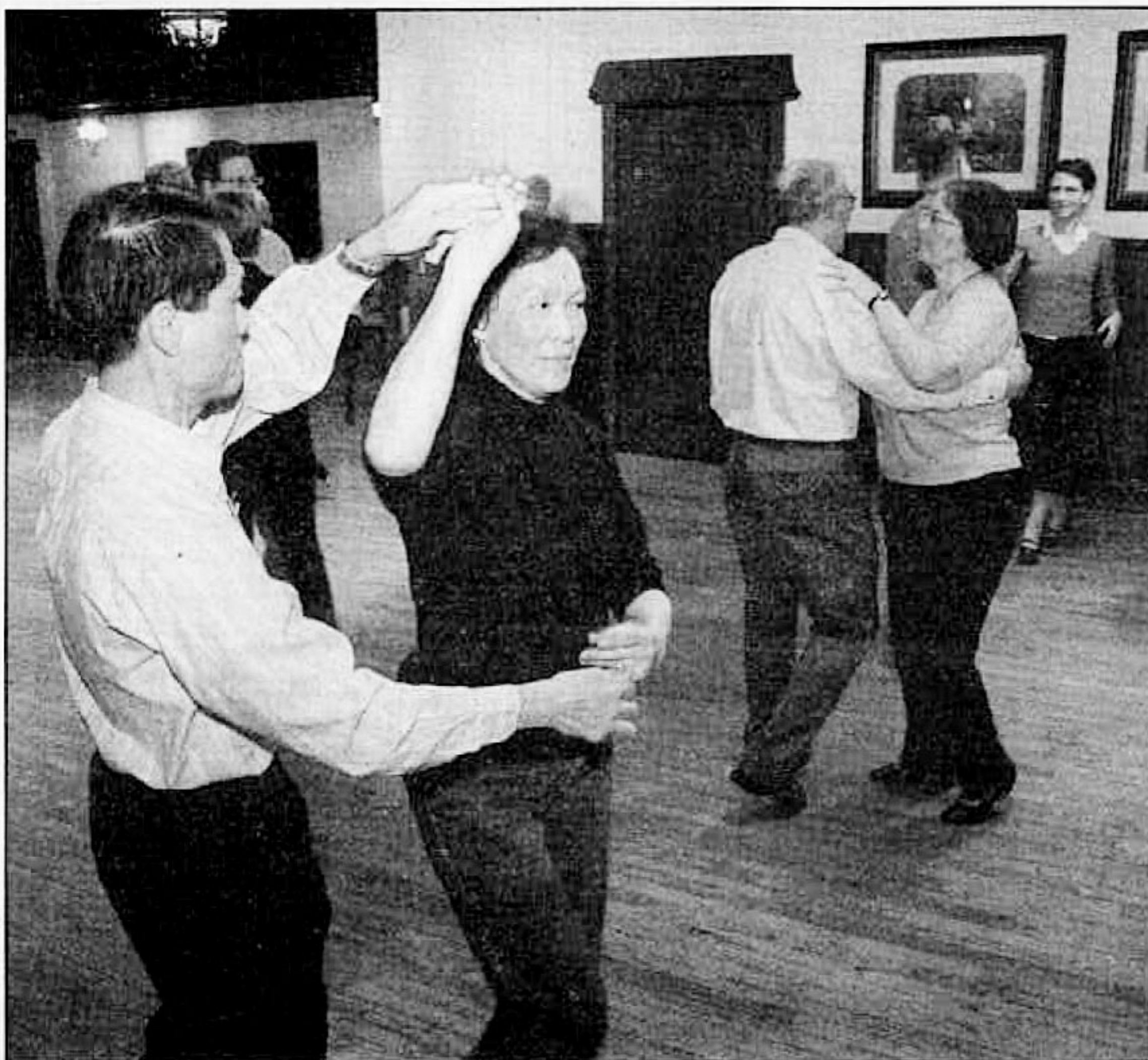
"If we can get them in one class, the guys are like 'This is not that bad,'" Harvey said.

Often near the end of the session, the woman is more likely to be tired of attending and might suggest skipping one week.

"The guys can be like — 'No, no, no, we have to go. We might miss a step,'" he said.



Harvey offers Janet and Victor Casini some tips.



Ning and Wuk-Phi Li of Hinsdale have taken several sessions with Harvey through the park district. "We love the music," Ning Li said. (Jim Slonoff photos)

Burn baby burn

Dancing not only burns calories, it can be a terrific aerobic workout.

Ballroom dancing generally refers to any number of partner dances.

Competitive ballroom dancing often is called DanceSport. The International DanceSport Federation, an international governing body for amateurs, has been working to include DanceSport in the Olympics.

Here's how different types of dancing measure up on calorielab.com. The amount of calories burned all are based on the participant weighing 150 pounds.

Dance	15 min	60 min
Ballet, modern, twist, jazz, tap, jitterbug	65	258
General dancing (including Greek, Middle Eastern, hula, flamenco, belly, swing)	60	238
Ballroom, dancing fast	77	306
Fast Ballroom (disco, folk, square, line dancing, Irish step dancing, polka, contra, country)	60	238
Slow Ballroom (waltz, foxtrot, slow dancing, samba, tango, mambo, cha-cha)	34	136
Traditional American Indian dancing (including Anishinaabe jingle dancing)	77	306