

PLAID NEWSLETTER

February!!!



I always like the month of February. It is difficult to spell, it revolves around love, it is significantly short for a month, and most importantly it contains my birthday!!! (February 20th, FYI!) Oh, and Michelle's birthday as well! (February 13th)

Birthdays aside I still love this month, and you should too! This February, we have further information on the Recital! (See Pg. 2) We also have some fun dress-up weeks coming up. (See Pg. 3)

February is the month where we begin to set up the St. Patrick's Day shows! Sign-up sheets for these shows will be posted in both studios sometime this month, so be sure to register for the ones you can make it to! There are a lot of shows and we need all the dancers we can get.

Also, February is only 4 months away from SUMMER!!!! Keep your eyes and ears open for upcoming summer events. We have begun preparing them and will have more information after the Recital.



What's in This Issue

Pg. 2 – News and Updates
 -Recital Reminder
 -St. Pat's is Near!
 -IDBC Workshops

Pg. 3 – Articles
 -Irish Dance Poems
 -Dress for the Holidays

Pg. 4 – Health and Fitness
 -Tips to Better Dancing



"If there ever comes a day when we can't be together, keep me in your heart, and I'll stay there forever." -Winnie the Pooh-

News and Updates



Recital Reminders

Just a reminder that the PLAID Recital is quickly approaching! Michelle sent out an e-mail on January 22nd stating that some families have not yet expressed if their children will or will not be participating in the recital. If you have not answered with a yes or a no, please do so ASAP so we can finalize the Recital's roster. You can respond in person or via e-mail to michelle@larsonirishdance.com. Information regarding the Recital, including rehearsal dates and times, are listed below:

The show is Sat Mar 10th at 2 and 6:30. It will be a long day.

The fee is \$40 to participate per dancer payable to IDBC. The fee includes all costumes, a T-shirt, and a program book (**may be one per family**)

Rehearsals will be during regular classes, as well as the following rehearsals:

-Feb 4th and 18th- Champions in *Capone*, *Fusion*, *Children of Lir*, *Sailors*, and *Finale* must attend this rehearsal in **Glendora** starting at **10:30am**.

-Mar 2nd and 3rd- This is a run-through of the entire Recital. **The first half of the recital will be on the 2nd. The second half will be practiced on the 3rd.** (More details to come)

-Mar 9th- Dress rehearsal at **Cal Poly Pomona** at **4pm-8pm**. (More details to come) Please arrive **at least 30 minutes before** so we can begin rehearsal at 4.

St. Pat's is Near!

The start of February holds a lot of pressure for Irish Dance schools. Next month will be March, the "show month," and February is when all the planning and scheduling is done.

We always have a great deal of shows throughout March and will be posting sign-up lists in both studios for these shows. Please sign up for any shows you will be available for as we need as many dancers as we can get. Thanks!



IDBC Workshops

As mentioned in previous newsletters, the IDBC will be holding workshops to raise money for the 8-hand team going to Ireland this year. The first of these workshops has been announced via email.

The workshop is on February 11th from 10:30a-2:30p at the Fullerton Studio. All Beginner and Intermediate dancers are welcome to sign up for a fee of \$50 per dancer. (checks made payable to IDBC)

This workshop will focus on fine-tuning dancers' technique, as well as drilling their dances to help them remember their steps. Sign-up sheets will be in both studios, and it is advised that dancers bring their own snacks and lunch.

Articles

Poems by PLAID Parents

After publishing the poem written by the Perry girls, my mother reminded me of two other poems written by parents within PLAID. This one, written by Teresa Linehan, won the 2005 Christmas Feis poem competition:

My Favorite Things
(The new and improved Irish Dance Version)

Slip jigs are graceful with beautiful twirls
Hornpipes have loud stomps and high bouncing curls

Sequins on satin and glitter on gold
Bright neon orange is never too bold.

Trebles and tiaras meet rhinestones and reels
Joy, sorrow, nervousness everyone feels
We never know what the next dance may bring
So always bring duct tape, the most important thing.

Teachers who push us with new steps and styles
Judges who crush us then lift us up miles
Parents who drive and complain on the way
"What is it now that we have got to pay?"

When the knee pops
When the wig drops
When I'm about to scream
I simply remember to take one more chance
For I'll always love, Irish Dance!

This next poem was written for fun by Jennifer DeLeon:

Tippity-tappity,
Miss Michelle Larson, she
Teaches us Irish-y
Rhythms and strides.

What is so odd with this
Tom-jiggy-foolery,
Is that our hands have to be
Down at our sides!

Dress for the Holidays



The month of February has one of the best holidays: Valentine's Day! PLAID is celebrating this by decorating the studios and giving its dancers an opportunity to show off their love for Valentine's Day.

During the week containing Valentine's Day (Monday the 13th - Thursday the 16th), the dancers are encouraged to wear Valentine's Day attire. This includes shirts, socks, hair accessories, you name it! So long as what they wear does not inhibit their dancing, or the dancing of others, it will be acceptable.

Also, on the days of the 20th - 24th, dancers are allowed to wear Feis shirts or other Irish dance attire.

So get festive! Plan your attire and show it off in the coming weeks!



Health and Fitness

Tips to Better Dancing

We dancers all want to perform our best. We work hard at class and practice our steps until we can do them in our sleep. But we dancers can also be a bit lazy (myself included). Small things like stretching before and after practice or keeping up with stamina training can make an immense difference on our dancing.

I wanted to remind everyone about some of the more obvious things we dancers need to do, but tend to forget about or push aside. Here is my list:

Be sure to stretch! Fortunately in class, our instructors remind us to stretch before they let us on the dance floor. What we need to remember is that stretching is very important. It prevents injury and improves flexibility, but still we tend to put minimal effort into our stretching. Give it your all! And be sure to stretch **AFTER** class as well. Stretching a “warm,” or recently used muscle, is the best way to permanently increase its flexibility.

While in class, **give it your all!** If we put 100% into our dancing every time we dance, our bodies will grow accustomed to performing at that level. This means when we get on stage and get those butterflies, all we have to do is rely on our muscle memory to perform at 100%.

Be sure to **listen to your body!** Sometimes this is tough to do. We work so hard all the time and never want to give up a day of practice that when we feel a pain in our leg we choose to dance through the pain instead of giving our body a break. I know I personally have done this many times. I still carry the bandages for my shins in my dance bag just in case they act up in the middle of class.

Typically, taking a day off of dance when our body is sore or tired is better than becoming injured and missing several days, or even weeks of class.

Remember to eat! I’ve said this before in January and I’ll say it again, **OUR BODIES NEED FUEL.** Without some food in our bellies, our bodies will be tired. This will affect our strength and can lead to injury. Be sure you get enough protein, carbohydrates, and other essential nutrients.

Be sure to **stay hydrated ALL DAY!** This goes hand-in-hand with the previous tip. It’s not enough to chug water at dance. Our bodies need a large amount of water to stay healthy. Be sure to drink water while at home, at school, and with meals. This will improve your strength as well.

One of the biggest struggles for us Irish Dancers is **maintaining strong stamina.** Since Irish Dance puts a strain on the body similar to sprinting for the duration of the dance, the best stamina training is Irish Dance itself. Running through your dances, all three steps, will make it easier to finish strong.

For stamina training, champion level dancers run through their entire dance twice or even three times in a row. The idea behind this is if they can make it through their dance three times in a row, then one time on stage will be no problem.

Other stamina training is helpful as well. I personally go biking, but things such as running and hiking can also help. I would recommend not doing anything too “high impact,” such as running, on a dance class day.

Take these to heart and your dancing will improve!