

Santa Barbara Dance Alliance:

Having a Ball

By **Erin J. Smith** / CASA

BALLROOM DANCE IS ALL THE RAGE AGAIN, and Santa Barbara Dance Alliance knows how it's done.

At the *Dancers' Ball*, Santa Barbara Dance Alliance's annual fundraiser, guests got to strut their stuff for a good cause. "Dance is a fun, joyful way of letting go of steam," said Julie McLeod, Executive Director of Santa Barbara Dance Alliance. "When our work becomes all too serious, we need a chance to play."

The event was held at the Montecito Country Club and attendees were treated to a dance class with Derrick Curtis, a local dance teacher and long-time Board Member. Music by DJ Mike Loeza kept everyone on their toes.

Couples were joined on the dance floor by locally based competition dancers who also performed at the event. Hector and Avital Sanchez of Just Baila danced a rumba while Daisy Ramirez and Bob Taylor from the Arthur Murray Studio performed a waltz.

Proceeds from the *Dancers' Ball* go toward scholarships for talented

and financially needy dance students. A silent auction with over 100 items inspired donors, and Emcee John Palminteri revved up support for scholarships. "It's so great to see everyone out supporting the arts community," said McLeod. "I see my role at this time as fostering and nurturing dance, a most important expression, in these hard times." Scholarship students are nominated by their teachers and undergo an audition process before a panel of judges. Over the past five years, Santa Barbara Dance Alliance has awarded 85 scholarships of between \$500 and \$750 each to deserving youth in Santa Barbara County for use toward their dance studies.

SB Dance Alliance is a service organization focused on promoting dance and dance education in SB County. In addition to *Dancers' Ball* and the scholarship program, SBDA presents year round performances, community events, and master classes. For more information, call 966-6950 or visit www.sbdancealliance.org.



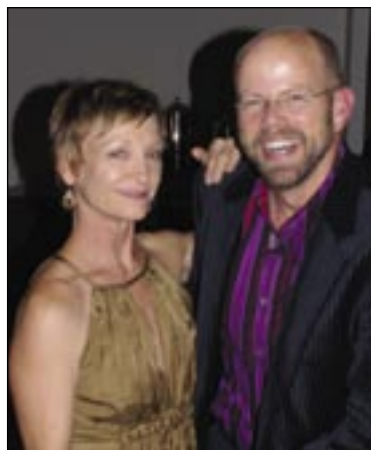
Lawrence Lowenschuss, Dawn Luu, Alana Tillim, Matt Grover, and Steven Lovelace



Beverly Iles, Derrick Curtis, and Patrice Ryan



Lance Jones and Jonatha King enjoy a waltz.



Mindy Horwitz and Gary Clark



Robert Taylor, Daisy Ramirez, and Javier Ochoa



Hector and Avital Sanchez of Just Baila