



JAMES MILLER | FOR BUSINESS FIRST

Yuval Flicker, left, dances with Melissa Kennedy at a recent dance sponsored by TangoOSU at Pomerene Hall.

IT'S LIKE FLYING

Life, love and drama unfold in the tango

BY TONY GOINS | FOR BUSINESS FIRST

It doesn't come naturally, but when you know what you're doing, dancing the tango can be like flying. Nine couples dance nearly chest-to-chest, holding their legs backwards at a rakish angle to leave room for their dancing feet. The partners' steps should interlock like clockwork - ideally, the man should step right into the spot her foot just left.

While avoiding their partner's larger male feet, each woman attempts to follow his lead. Not only must the man lead his partner in a certain direction, he must communicate through subtle shifts of his weight. In this beginners' dance group, the miscues lead to a lot of mumbled apologies.

Then organizers Yuval Flicker and Lucia Bortoli demonstrate, and they make it look easy.

Flicker and Bortoli are advisers to TangoOSU, an Ohio State University club dedicated to promoting tango. The partners teach milonguero (or close embrace) tango, a dancehall form that's more improvisational than the heavily choreographed version often seen in contests. Although TangoOSU is a sanctioned student activity, adult nonstudents can sign up for \$40 a quarter.

One man trying to get the hang of it was Paul Fairbanks, an OSU business major, who came to the class along with his wife Anita, a recent graduate who works in the mental health field.

Anita had taken dance classes before,
SEE DANCE, PAGE B12



COURTESY KYJEN

Keep your pet amused with mentally stimulating toys like these from Kyjen.

PETS

TOYS

New designs for pet toys meet the needs of animals and their owners.

Jo Johnson, owner of Posh Pets in the Short North, says that pet toys fall into two categories: enrichment and entertainment.

Enrichment toys keep pets occupied by encouraging animals to use their brains rather than chewing the furniture, says Johnson. She warns that a bored dog is a destructive dog.

Johnson carries a line of enrichment toys from manufacturer Kyjen. The plush Hide-A-Bird, Hide-A-Squirrel and IQube come in different sizes and cost between \$9.95 to \$16.95. All three encourage the dog to stick its muzzles inside and root around inside of the cube, birdhouse or tree stump to find the tiny toy birds, squirrels or other objects inside.

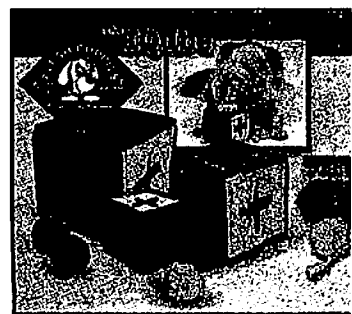
Pets need visual stimulation, too, so Johnson sells the Pet Sitter line of DVDs that show movies of mice and birds (for cats), rodents and dogs (for dogs) and birds (for birds).

Sue Meigs of the DogWorks Cats2 in German Village recommends the Everlasting Treat Ball by Triple Crown. The ball is made out of soft but durable material, says Meigs. It takes work to remove the treat inside and keep the dog occupied.

Mike Dagne of Moochie and Co. also recommends the treat ball as well as the Busy Buddy Twist 'n Treat by Premier, a two-disk treat container that screws together. Owners can adjust the tightness of the halves to challenge their pets.

Susan Bing, president of Trixie + Peanut in New York City and former Columbus resident has seen a lot of success with parody toys - plush take-offs on the Wall Street Journal, and soft and chewy versions of cell phones and iPods.

- LESLIE BIRDWELL, for Business First.



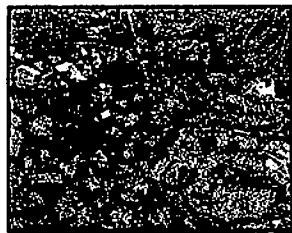
COURTESY K

Make your dog work for his fun and

GARDEN

WINTER PONDS

no matter how small this winter pond is, you need to know how to care for it. No matter how small or how hungry they look – don't feed the fish. Garden fish are fairly common, but many are not hardy. In Ohio, you can be wondering how to take care of your fish during the winter. Brian Quigley, assistant manager at Byerly's Aquarium in Columbus, advises homeowners to leave the fish food in the tank. Most fish can make it through the winter pond around 30 inches deep, Quigley says. They simply survive under the ice. Water fish such as goldfish and koi survive the winter pretty well, though homeowners may want to keep other tropical fish indoors – if you haven't already. Installing a fountain or waterfall through the winter isn't necessary, Quigley said. The pump may freeze and fish use up energy swimming against the current. Homeowners with larger ponds should consider using a kettle heater, said John Reiner, president of Oakland Nursery Inc. in Columbus. A kettle heater is a U-shaped device that floats in the pond and warms the surrounding water. It won't melt the whole pond clear, but it will open a space in the middle of the pond. That open space prevents the ice from expanding against the sides of the pond, which can damage a pond, whether it's lined with plastic or concrete. A thick sheet of ice can also harm fish by trapping gases and preventing oxygen from circulating in the water. "Our fish are fine," Reiner says. "They've got heaters." One low-budget pond trick is to throw a log or piece of wood in the pond, Reiner said. Hopefully, the wood will absorb the expansion of the ice instead of the pond liner. The mild winter will have little effect on ponds, but not in the spring, and that is all. After last year's mild winter, Oakland Nursery got lots of calls from homeowners whose ponds were choked with string algae and green goo. Reiner said there's no point using any chemicals on this kind of year. For stringy types of algae, however, you're better off tearing it out by hand. "It's going to be interesting to see what happens," Reiner said.



FILE PHOTO

Despite swings in the weather, your backyard pond only needs a little attention.

DANCE: *Tango is couples*

FROM PAGE B11
but it was a new experience for Paul.

"This is something I wanted to do because of her," Paul says. "It's fun, but it's pretty tricky. I think the guys are more nervous than the girls."

Other class members came on their own, searching for a good dance. Melissa Kennedy, a piano teacher, says she likes the OSU club's openness and dancehall style.

"I'm not a social person, but I feel comfortable here," Kennedy says. "Yuval gets people involved."

Tango survives in places

where people are willing to work a little harder for their fun, Flicker says. One has to study and practice the tango.

Flicker is working very hard to make sure the people of Columbus get the chance. He founded the club three years ago with the hopes of building a thriving tango scene in Central Ohio, just like they have in Europe and in other U.S. college towns. Flicker arranges two dances a week, serves as its primary instructor and brings in guest instructors.

Flicker himself has a unique background for a tango crusader. A math professor by trade, he's an Israeli native who learned the dance in the Argentinean dancehalls of Germany.

"I've never even been to Argentina," he says.

The history of tango intertwines with the history of Argentina, says Bortoli. The dance originated in the slums and took elements from each wave of immigrants: African rhythms, Jewish accordion playing, the German bandoleon and so on. It was popular in émigré communities where women were scarce. That led to jealousy, conflict, scandal and drama – elements that drive the dance today.

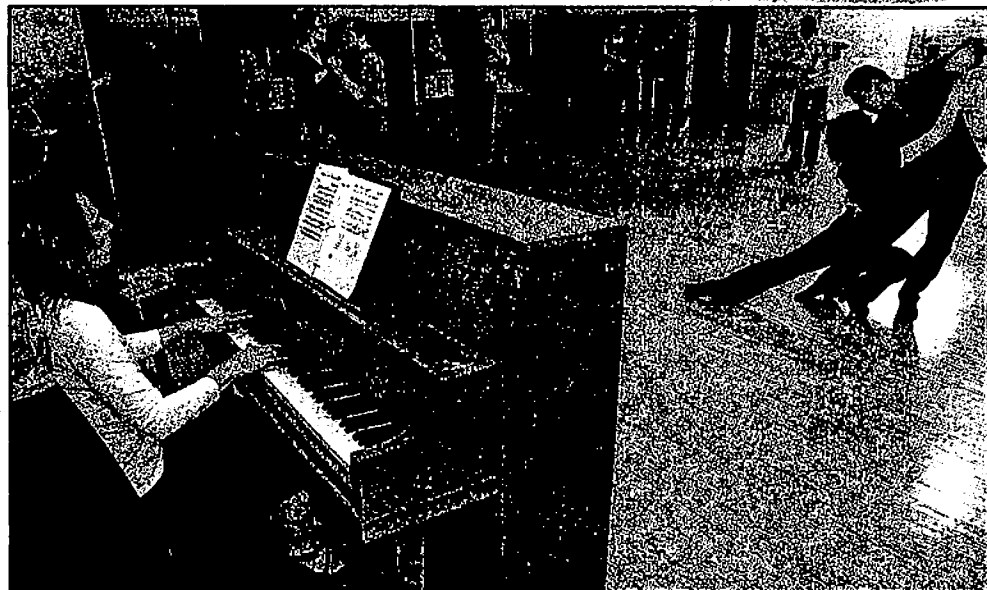
"The tango is life, relationships, couples," Bortoli says.

For more information, visit tango.osu.edu.

TONY GOINS is a Columbus-based freelance writer.



Veteran dancers David Black and Ikuko Takimoto spin and dip at a recent dance sponsored by TangoOSU.



PHOTOS BY JAMES MILLER | FOR BUSINESS FIRST

Dancer and piano teacher Melissa Kennedy provides some live music at a dance.



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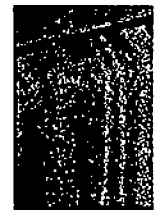
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