

Seniors Say â?¦ When did you last go dancing?

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We want to share the experiences and opinions of San Francisco adults 50 and over. If youâ??d like to be one of the people we contact for our next Seniors Say question, send your name and neighborhood to ***Mary Hunt, maryhunt@sfseniorbeat.com****. Weâ??d also like your age and a picture but these are optional.*

Nancy Ware and Loren: They dance to the beat of their own drum



Nancy Ware, 75, Noe Valley

The last time I went dancing was two days ago â?¦ in my kitchen. We live in a pretty small apartment in the city, but the biggest room is the kitchen. My partner, Loren, and I have been dancing in the kitchen for over 20 years. But just recently, weâ??ve added something.

The end of April was Lorenâ??s 84th birthday. I had gotten him something that I thought he would like, but a week before his birthday he announced, â??I know what you can get me for my birthday!â?•

â??What?â?• I asked.

â??A strobe light, so we can dance in style.â?•



This picture â?? not Nancy or her partner, Loren â?? has been hanging in their kitchen for 20 years, providing inspiration. (Photos courtesy of Nancy Ware.)

A STROBE LIGHT!! Is he crazy? But of course I went immediately to my computer, did a little research, and ordered a very cool strobe light that came with a remote control so you could change colors and the tempo with the click of a button. It arrived on his birthday, and weâ??ve actually had a lot of fun with it. Sometimes I wonder what the neighbors must think, but that doesnâ??t stop us.

We made an album on our iTunes that weâ??ve titled, â??Dancing in the Kitchen,â?• which has a variety of songs that we like to dance to â?? from a West African group to Frank Sinatra.

Dancing has been a big part of our lives. We loved going down to Nickâ??s in Pacifica to dance to the wonderful oldies with people our age. One Christmas, Loren presented me with three private dance lessons for the two of us at the Metronome in San Francisco. Autumn was our instructor. On our first lesson he turned to Loren and said, â??Why are you here?â?•

Loren replied, â??Iâ??m here because she needs to learn to follow me.â?•

Then Autumn turned to me and said, â??And why are you here?â?•

â??Iâ??m here,â?• I replied, â??because he needs to learn to lead!â?•

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Although Iâ??m not sure we reached our goals, we had a blast during our three lessons.

Weâ??ve also tried taking group lessons to learn the Cha Cha and the West Coast Swing, but weâ??ve given up on all of that. We realize that we dance to our own beat, created by our own drum, and arenâ??t meant to follow any specific instructions or pre-set steps.

All we need is a kitchen and a strobe light and weâ??re happy.

Peter Logan: Rock and roll will never die for this devotee



Peter Logan, 71, Cow Hollow

I last went dancing in December 2019 at the Boom Boom Room on Fillmore at Geary. A live band was playing rock and blues. I was there with friends and we danced in our usual style â?? free-form rock and roll. Iâ??m a good-enough dancer. I took lessons in junior high in 1962, then again at the Allegra Ballroom in Emeryville in 2018.

Iâ??ve never stopped dancing. My taste in music hasnâ??t changed, just broadened a little: And as Danny & the Juniors said: â??I donâ??t care what people say, rock and roll is here to stay.â?•

Beth MacLeod: Enjoys a wide range of music pleasures



Beth MacLeod, 69, Noe Valley

The last time I danced side-by-side, embracing and hugging and sharing weight with my fellow dancers, was the afternoon of March 11, at a dance rehearsal on Turk Street. After we presented our â??work in progress,â?• to a small group of fellow dancers, we were all told that Mayor Breed had declared a city-wide Shelter in Place order â?? no more rehearsals, no more hugs, no more playing with the ideas and movements, and no idea how long this huge change in our lives would last.

The last time I danced here in my home was just five days ago, with the women of Impromptu No Tutus â?? yes, we have such fun! We now meet weekly on Zoom â?? but, of course. The movement, music and seeing each other even on the screen creates energy and renews our creative spirits in living-dancing rooms.

I have always danced â?? freely as a young girl in the grassy back yard, in tap dance class when I was six, lots of dancing to the Beatles and Rolling Stones in high school, modern dance class in college, country dancing when I lived in rural Maine. I moved to San Francisco in 1978 and began to seriously study dance.

During the 1990s, I danced three to five nights a week at the then-numerous gay country-western dance bars. We danced two-step, country swing, west-coast swing, and were a community of dance lovers of all ages and backgrounds. There would be little conversation and no drinking (even though the dance floors were all in bars) â?? we were there to dance and dance we did for hours and hours. I knew that the movements, music, smiles and flirting kept me alive and feeling as positive as possible during the losses and grief of the AIDS epidemic.

In the past seven years, Iâ??ve belonged to Dance Generators (DGs), an intergenerational dance company in the University of San Franciscoâ??s Department of Performance Arts and Social Justice. Iâ??ve been introduced to so many styles of music and dance in the group â?? hip hop, flash dance, contact improv. I love the surprise of hearing a new piece of music, especially something way out of my usual sound landscape, and then finding the ways in which my body responds.

A good dancer? No longer a question! As our company director said, quoting Liz Lerman, â??Itâ??s about range of pleasure, not range of motion.â?• The DGs believe that dance can be for anyone and everyone, If I tune into my reach â?? both inward and outward â?? then I know yes, we are all life-affirming dancers, and can be until the day we die.

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I long for the day when, once again, I can smile as a dance partner draws near, we will pick up each otherâ??s hands, lean into an embrace, and step together to the rhythm of a sweet country waltz. Until that day, thereâ??s dancing in the kitchen, dancing in the yard, dancing on Louiseâ??s deck in the sun with giant shadows, dancingâ?¦

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Date Created
30/06/2020
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