

# Guest Artist Teaches Tap Master Class at Sterling Dance

By Haley Searls

"I'd like to dance and tap my feet, but I can't keep in rhythm," sings the Dwarves in the Disney classic *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves*. Unlike the Seven Dwarves, the tap master class taught by Ellen Keane did "keep in rhythm", tapping their feet to steady counting and executing various combinations with precision.

Earlier this month, Ellen Keane, tap artist and founder of Keane Sense of Rhythm, came to Sterling Dance in Two Harbors to teach a tap master class. A mentor of Renee Moe, Sterling Dance's founder and artistic director, Keane enjoys sharing the art of dance.

Over twenty-five years ago, Keane contacted Moe when Moe was teaching at the Grand Marais Art Colony. Keane was interested in teaching a master class while she was in the area for skiing. Since then, Keane and Moe have developed a great friendship and artistic connection.

Ellen Keane has devoted her life to teaching tap dance and "preserving the choreography of the tap legends." She has taught at the University of Minnesota and performed internationally. Keane has also presented multiple tap festivals in the Twin Cities, bringing in highly-talented tap instructors. Moe says, "She believes in the power of giving our students the opportunity to study with many teachers to learn the diverse styles of dance...just as I do."

The class covered the rudiments of tap dancing, improvisation exercises, and choreography written by various professional tap dancers. This choreography included a piece called "Laura", choreographed by Buster Brown, a member of the Copasetics. Other choreographers studied were Fred Strickler, a founding member of Jazz Tap Ensemble, Lynn Dalley, and Broadway choreography by Dr. Henry LaTang.

Teen student Aili Gischia said about the class, "What I really appreciated about Ellen's teaching was that she would tell us more about the history of tap dance, the choreographers, and where the art form came from, instead of just teaching us the tap phrases. We also did a lot of improvisation, which pushed me out of my comfort zone a little bit, but was still really fun!"



Ellen Keane and some of the tap students at Sterling Dance in Two Harbors.

(photo credit: Renee Moe)

Another teen student, Brie Svendsen, said, "I've worked with Ellen many times and I think she's an amazing teacher. I think Miss Renee had a great idea bringing her up here to teach. She's so fun and I always learn so much from her class."

Eight-year-old Anna Cavallin said that "it was fun to have a guest teacher and she showed us different tap moves." Her sister, five-year-old Ella, said "the fun part was dancing to the zoo song."

Adult student Martina Mellang relates how, "Renee Moe has been my dance teacher since I was eight years old. Now in my mid-30s I'm delighted when I get to tap dance with her.

Renee has an amazing connection to the tap community. She has welcomed Ellen up the Shore many times. Ellen just recently visited Two Harbors for a 2-day master tap class. Ellen teaches not just fun and technical tap rudiments, but also tap history. She has some wild stories. We all joke that dance will keep us young!"

Ellen Keane believes that the "gift of dance training should be accessible to everyone." Each year, she brings that accessibility to Two Harbors through her annual master class. "It is always a joy to work with [Renee Moe's] dancers and see them grow year after year," Keane says.

## The Long Way Home

By Steve Fernlund

I'm not a fan of anniversary celebrations, although the surprise celebration of our 25th wedding anniversary in 1998 was pretty special. So it is with sincere humility that I acknowledge the one-year anniversary of *The Long Way Home*.

Last January I was honored to become a contributor to *The Northshore Journal*. It's been fun writing stories about the people of Cook County and their activities and businesses.

Before we got too far into our relationship, I asked Christine, the esteemed publisher of this community newspaper, if she would allow me to contribute a weekly column called *The Long Way Home*.

I promised to put in some of the shorter stories about Cook County along with a cranky rant or two about the weather, fishing, spouses, local politics, or...

To her credit, she replied, "Bring it on."

She has been a loyal and encouraging supporter of my feeble efforts, despite some of the criticism my jottings inspired. One reader—a now former reader—sent her criticism last summer, both to Christine and me.

"I am appalled weekly at your lack of education, sense of entitlement and grandstanding in print. You really are a textbook narcissist."

"You seem to imagine all of us are interested in your drivel about your own personal business."

"Many of us are not. You're just not worldly or important enough to have entire columns in this tiny paper."

Since there is some truth in this critique, I offered my resignation to Christine. Which she promptly refused. The larger volume of positive feedback from happier folks chalks up this

disgruntled person as an anomaly.

So I've gone merrily on my way, weekly displaying my lack of education and grandstanding for the readers of this fine and not-so-tiny publication. It reaches every mailbox for free in Lake and Cook Counties after all and is free online. Two things that other newspapers can't claim.

Every couple of weeks I get an email or two about a column I've written from people who appreciated my drivel. I'll sometimes run into a person in town who compliments me on the quality of the newspaper. *The Northshore Journal* is making a difference on the shore.

It's been a true privilege having this forum each week. Your feedback, positive, negative, or neutral is appreciated. And if you have ideas for stories the paper should cover or topics you'd enjoy seeing me rant about, drop me an email.

Earlier this week the Cook County Economic Development Authority (EDA) and its offspring the Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) announced they are discussing a merger of the two organizations.

The EDA was created in 1988 and it was instrumental in the formation of the HRA, created a bit more than a year ago.

The current Executive Director of the EDA is leaving the position which seems like a good opportunity to consolidate the leadership of the two organizations under one executive. The directors of each organization, appointed by the county board, have each met separately and approved exploring the merger. The EDA and HRA board members will meet jointly on Thursday, February 2 from 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. The meeting will be held in the Grand Marais City Council chambers.

Legal counsel for the two may find a compelling reason or three to avoid this merger. As a business person, it just makes sense to consolidate the leadership of two or more organizations that overlap in function and objectives. It is more cost-effective and more accountable.

Steve Fernlund is a retired business owner, living in Cook County. He was publisher and editor of the Cook County News Herald in the 90's.

Got a good Cook County story for him? Let us know.

Call 218-226-3335 or Email: [steve.fernlund@gmail.com](mailto:steve.fernlund@gmail.com)

### TOWN OF CRYSTAL BAY REGULAR BOARD MEETINGS FOR 2023

The town board of Crystal Bay Township, Lake County, Minnesota holds its regularly scheduled board meetings on the third Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the Clair Nelson Intermodal Transportation Center (Community Center) located at 6866 Cramer Rd, Finland, MN 55603. If a meeting cannot be held as scheduled because it conflicts with a holiday or another day in which a meeting cannot be held, the meeting will be held the following week on the same day of the week, time, and place. The following are the dates on which the regular board meetings are scheduled to occur in 2023 and reflect any changes due to conflicts:

Month	Meeting Day
February	21st
March	21st
April	18th
May	16th
June	20th
July	18th
August	15th
September	19th
October	17th
November	21st
December	19th
January 2024	16th

The Annual Town Meeting is on March 7th at 7:00 p.m. at the Community Center.

If a regular meeting cannot be held on the date, time, or place listed above, notice of the date, time, and place of when and where the meeting will be held will be posted and published at least three days before the day of the meeting.

Contact the town clerk at 218-353-1236 or [crystalbaytownship@gmail.com](mailto:crystalbaytownship@gmail.com) with any questions.