

(Originally written 1/8/07)

I have just returned from the UCWDC World Championships of Country Dance! Finally, after 7 years of competing, and placing no higher than 2nd throughout 5 other World Championships, I am a **two-time WORLD CHAMPION!!!!**

I entered 9 Divisions, 31 total dance entries, and 5 divisions carried World Championship titles. I am beyond thrilled with these wins, but more importantly, the fact that I had one of the *best weeks ever* achieving personal bests out on the floor. I stayed confident throughout every dance and contest, and practiced a mindset to only allow positive energy, dispelling anything that might bring me down. I am proud to admit that it was a purely selfish week, something completely against my nature.

I will proudly be wearing my jacket, a coveted prize, worn only by each World Champion in their division, and embroidered with the details. I also will proudly wear (appropriate enough), one of my World Championship belt buckles (which I had to pay for!). Thank you so much for your support – it was a HUGE part of my confidence when it came time to performing!!

Here is a more detailed list of each competition, my placement and award, as well as my comments! To me there was so much involved with everything I accomplished last week, so read on if you want to know! It's quite long, but I knew some of you would be asking me, and although I would be thrilled to share with each of you personally, this way you can get only the info you were looking for and not hear me go on and on and on...

In addition to each of my contest, I was awarded 2nd Place in the Overall 2006 Points Championship in ProAm Female Crystal Intermediate, based on my participation throughout the year (this means I spent a lot of money to compete at many events!). My name was announced when I single-handedly carried my state flag in the Parade of Contestants (the other CT competitor was having dinner...).

I received my ProAm (Classic) awards from Tuesday and Wednesday on Thursday morning, Choreography on Thursday night. I had awards from ProAm Swing and Hustle on Friday night, and my line dance divisions were awarded Saturday night!

Tuesday- ProAm Female Crystal Intermediate **3rd Place**

This is my age division (30+) in the couples dancing I do with my professional coach, Robert Royston (www.robertroyston.com). I believe there were 8 overall competitors, plus 1 more for waltz and two step. Every dance is not required by each competitor (I scratched in both of my age divisions for Triple 2 Step), therefore some of the placements were not out of the overall number, as noted in parentheses. The overall figures I have come directly from the UCWDC website results page.

Polka – Gold w/Honors – 1 st	(4)
Night Club – Gold w/Honors – 1 st	(6)
Cha Cha – Gold w/Honors – 2 nd	(7)
Waltz – Gold	(9)
Two Step – Gold w/Honors – 5 th	(9)
East coast – Gold w/Honors – 2 nd	(7)
West Coast – Gold w/Honors – 1 st	(8)

Two step and waltz are weighted dances, and therefore my placement in each of those kept me from placing higher on the podium. Only the top 5 placements are awarded in each dance. No clue what happened in each of those dances to place me lower than expected – I’ll be watching the video to figure out where I can improve! Gold with Honors is VERY respectable (we are judged individually in ProAm (not just placed) on our ability in each dance.), and one award below Gold Graduate, the highest that can be awarded. I am thrilled with the 1st in NC, and 2nd in Cha, having worked hard to improve those dances. East Coast, Polka and West Coast have been my more accomplished dances throughout the year, so I was thrilled to pull those 1st places off against some fantastic competition!! 2 Years prior I competed in Intermediate ProAm and placed 4th out of 5!



My prizes included a \$15 Gift Certificate towards shoes/boots, and a World Championship logo duffle bag.

Wednesday - ProAm Female Open Intermediate

4th Place

This is the open age division (18+) in the couples dancing I do with my professional coach, Robert Royston. There were 15 overall competitors (One competitor scratched all of her dances).

- Polka – Gold w/Honors – 3rd (9)
- Night Club – Gold w/Honors – 4th (15)
- Cha Cha – Gold w/Honors – 5th (14)
- Waltz – Gold w/Honors – 5th (15)
- Two Step – Gold w/Honors - 4th (15)
- East coast – Gold w/Honors – 2nd (12)
- West Coast – Gold w/Honors – 3rd (15)

(con't)

Well you have some detail from the above listing. This 4th placement was one of my top highlights for the week!! It was a huge division, with many young and accomplished dancers. I placed in every dance, and stepped up to better dancing than the day before. I placed in my waltz out of a much higher number of competitors! This was really the *most accomplished day of dancing* for me during the entire week. I was also standing on the podium 4th "next to" Sydney Smythe, from the UK, who placed 3rd. Sydney is just 18 years old, has been competing since she was 10, is a highly trained dancer, whom I don't believe has ever lost any of her line dance competitions (ever!), and is a Line Dance Superstar 2007 World Champion! To achieve the position so close to her outstanding performance, with someone almost 20 years my junior and with her talent and ability, is awesome!!



My prizes included a \$15 Gift Certificate towards shoes/boots, and a World Championship Fleece Blanket.

Wednesday – Line Dance Choreography Non-Country Int/Adv **1st Place**

(comp held during my ProAm Open Division-just after my waltz)

This was my original choreography entry, "Geek In The Pink" Although competition only included 2 entries (there were 3 but I think the third entry scratched), to have a World Championship title for a dance that is being done throughout the Netherlands, UK, Asia, the US and around the world, is incredible! It was played during social dancing throughout the week – I heard it no less that 5 times in the first 24 hours of social dancing for the week!!!

As the Overall Champion in this division, I received my first jacket at a World Championships as well as the shoe/boot certificate. I was able to choose my size and get it embroidered on the spot. It fits perfectly!!!! I was offered the opportunity to purchase the belt buckle, which I did not (read on).

Thursday – Line Dance Female Crystal Intermediate **1st Place**

This was the age division (30+) of my line dance competition. I had 3 other competitors. This was my 4th year in this division, prior Worlds placements were 6/15, 2/8, 2/8, so I wanted this win so badly and was elated when 2nd place was announced and I still hadn't gone to the podium. The feeling to wait for your name to be called and realize it hasn't until last, brings me to tears as I write this! This competition requires us to dance 5 of 6 dances in pre-written and distributed line dances. We are all dancing the same dance with allowances for some variations, but I worked hard, mostly on

performance, styling and proper technique. We dance out on the floor together, but (it should seem obvious) not in partnership.

- Rise & Fall (waltz) – 1st (4)
- Lilt (east coast) – 1st (4) (has also previously been a polka)
- Smooth (west coast) – 1st (4) (has also previously been a night club)
- Cuban (cha cha) – 1st (4) (has also previously been a rhumba)
- Funky – 1st (4)
- Novelty – 3rd (4) Many of us refer to this as the “stupid” dance, as it related to no specific rhythm of dance. This year it was particularly silly, and since I didn’t need to have it to win, I only entered it as a fall back. I didn’t care about it enough to put any time into making it a first place dance! Terrible to say, but true! Obviously, taking 1st in the 5 dances added to my thrill for this competition!

Each additional World Championship title is stitched on to your existing Jacket. I was offered the opportunity to purchase the belt buckle, and would have received a discount on my second one, but I chose to only purchase this one, the Female Crystal Intermediate Line Dance World Champion!!! If you have \$75 dollars you can wear my other one! (half price of the first!) I also got to pick out my prize of choice, which based on all my other awards became a glass decanter.

Friday – ProAm R&B Swing and Disco Hustle (is there any other kind?)

This was the easiest day for me, partly because we stray from the country format, and no longer are required to wear boots! I danced 2 age divisions with Robert in each of 2 dance rhythms, and each of the 4 dances were lead-follow meaning no set routines just following Robert to dance to the music! Honors is the highest given, as this format is separate from the UCWDC titles and scoring. There were very few entries in this portion of the program, but I danced really well and felt I earned my right to move up to advanced now! We west coast swing all the time, one of Roberts specialties in the dance world, but practice hustle very little. I pulled it off!



ProAm Swing Female Open Intermediate	(18+)	Honors – 1st place	(3)
ProAm Swing Female Diamond Intermediate	(35+)	Honors – 1st place	(1)
ProAm Hustle Female Open Intermediate	(18+)	Honors – 1st place	(1)
ProAm Hustle Female Diamond Intermediate	(35+)	Honors – 1st place	(2)

So here I was again, stepping up to compete with young girls, and entirely from overseas. These competitors have a unique style and performance and have each other to compete with regularly. In Line dance, I spent an entire year competing as the only one in my division, but out on the floor with someone I would never compete against at World Championships (Danielle St. Amour from Quebec, competes in the Diamond division (40+) but attended many of the same events I did, so I was generally not alone on the floor). This meant I never knew my competition, and had nothing to drive me but myself and the prospect of dancers outside North America. There were 10 overall in this division!

Lilt – 5th

Smooth – 1st (the only dance out of the entire week that I felt I bombed on!)

Cuban – 5th

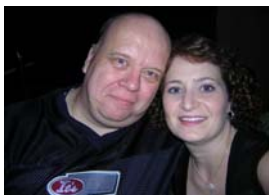
Funky – 5th

The lack of the other two dances, meant that I didn't place in the top 5 in those dances, so it's truly incredible I made the podium out of that number! The 1st place in smooth helped and once I can see all of the result on the UCWDC website, I think it will show that dancers were all over the board with each dance placement.



For this 5th place finish, I was awarded the shoe/boot gift certificate as well as a large beach-type tote bag.

During this week of competition, I accomplished a top 5 placement in each dance, making the podium for every UCWDC World Championship division, and came home with 2 World Championship titles! In addition I achieved personal bests in performance, confidence, and was able to keep my body and mind healthy for the entire week! On top of all that I had amazing support and accolades from so many, including one true and very supportive friend who made the trip to be there to watch me dance. Thank you to all of you – you have shown interest in my love for dance and that alone is precious!



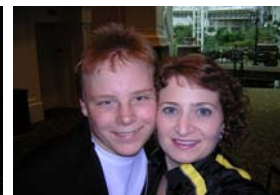
Big Dave (UK)



Mio (Japan)



Robin (Singapore)



Ben (Australia)



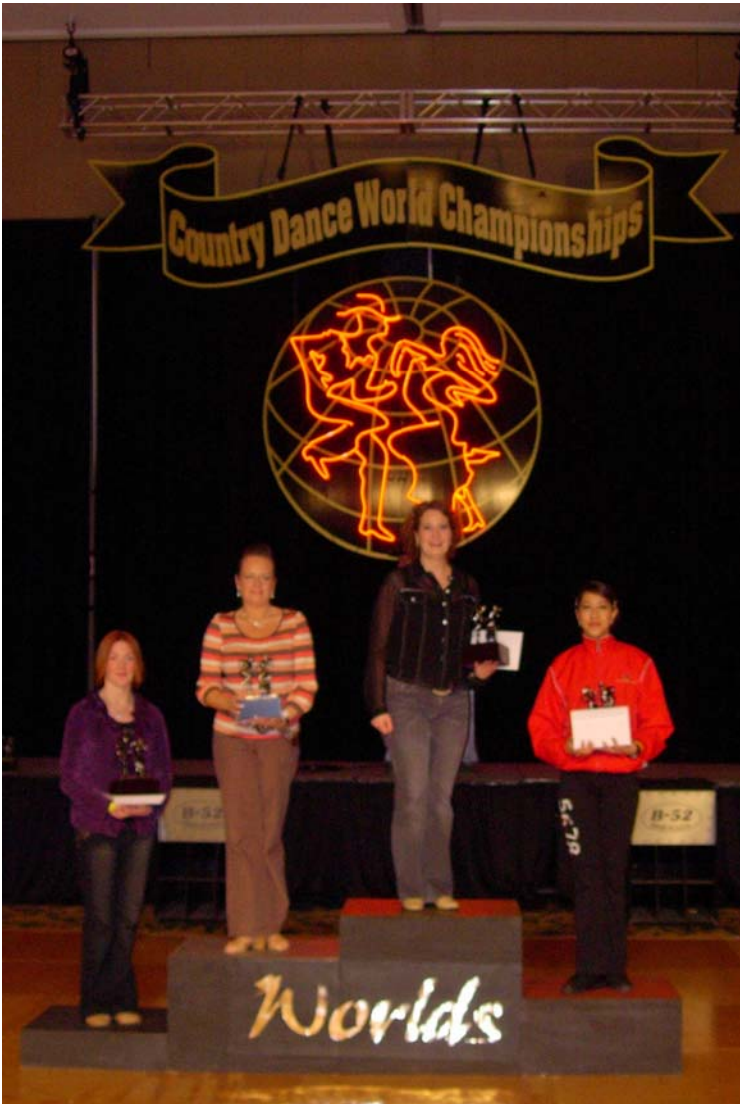
Rich (USA)

So I have 5 UCWDC Trophies, each displaying a plaque for the 5th, 4th, 3rd, and two Overall Champion placements, as well as a trophy for all of my swing and hustle wins (1 for all). If you want to display one on your mantle for a week or two, I'll send out a sign up sheet (LOL). But seriously I would be thrilled to have you watch any of my videos from the competition, everything was recorded!!!

I am a very tired, but thrilled dancer!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

THANK YOU!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Johanna



Crystal Intermediate Podium (still in "funky" costume)

p.s. my jacket reads:

Johanna Barnes WORLD CHAMPION

Choreography Non-Country Int/Adv
"Geek In The Pink"

Line Dance Classic Intermediate Crystal

The back of the jacket has the 2007 World Championship logo (and unfortunately the right breast carries with it the Gaylord Opryland Resort & convention Center logo! We are not allowed to wear logos in competition, yet it's there on our prizes!).

www.ucwdc.org

(the organization I compete under)

www.dancewhatyoufeel.com

My website!