

Bulldog Stompers get their clog on

By Hannah Doyle
STAFF WRITER

The Bulldog Stompers, UNC Asheville's clogging club, has low membership, but its embrace of less traditional clogging music, such as pop and hip hop, may interest new members.

"So many people still see clogging solely in the traditional sense," said Amanda Garrett, the group's director. "And while the traditional clogging style of bluegrass music and free-style footwork is very popular, especially in Western North Carolina, we are trying to also show people that clogging is evolving and we dance to every type of music."

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I usually tell people clogging is a mix of riverdance and tap with a mountain feel.

Nicole Giannatasio
Spanish student



JESSICA BLYTHE - STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Resident Life Coordinator Amanda Garrett, junior math student Whitney Abbott and junior psychology student Katie Hildreth practice clogging in Highsmith. Bulldog Stompers hopes to gain more members in the future, according to co-president Giannatasio.

The Stompers danced to several pop songs, such as "Let's Get It Started by the Black Eyed Peas" and "Move It Like This" by the Baha Men, in the past few years.

The Stomper's co-president, Nicole Giannatasio, senior Spanish student, hopes the popular music will encourage more students to join their team.

"Hopefully we can get a solid group that can come," Giannatasio said. "Then maybe we can get out more. It's been kind of crazy this year, but hopefully over the year it will get better."

The Stompers have not performed at any events yet this year, but they plan on dancing at UNC Asheville's Homecoming Pep Rally as they traditionally do, according to Garrett. Garrett, a UNC Asheville alumnus began practicing with the Stompers in 1998 and continued working with them after she graduated in 2002.

Though UNC Asheville graduate Kate Guzy formed the group in the fall of 1998, its membership has not increased significantly since then.

The group usually ends up with about 10 members, but there are fewer this year, according to Giannatasio. Students may be reluctant to get involved because they know little about clogging.

"A lot of people don't know about clogging or have never seen it, so they'll give you a weird look when you say clogging, like, 'What? What's that,'" Giannatasio said. "I usually tell them it's kind of a mix between riverdance and tap with a more mountain feel to it."

Whitney Abbott, junior math student, heard about the Stompers last spring and joined.

I had no idea what clogging was

before I came here," Abbott said. "Most people probably haven't had any exposure to it. I'm glad I tried it because I've met a lot of really cool people through it that I

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Not many colleges I know of have clogging teams. It's Asheville, we're an eclectic bunch of people.
KAREN MORIARTY
Sophomore student

wouldn't normally have gotten the

chance to know."

Practices are held once a week on Mondays in the Highsmith University Union, with the beginner class starting at 6 p.m. and the intermediate/advanced class at 6:45 p.m.

"There are many clogging groups around that are all about competitions and pageants," said Garrett. "I love the fact that this group was established as an enjoyable and safe place for anyone to come and enjoy dancing for fun."

The group sometimes collaborates with its sister team, the Mountain Thunder Cloggers, who were also created by Guzy. Some members of the Bulldog Stompers

also dance with the Mountain Thunder Cloggers. The two teams performed together last year at North Buncombe Elementary, according to Giannatasio.

"There are a lot more people in the Mountain Thunder Cloggers," said Abbott, a member of both. "I went to my first practice last week, and the age difference is bigger. There are little girls who are about nine or 10 all the way up to older women who have families of their own."

Despite the Stompers more casual approach to performances, more students do not show interest in joining.

"We do perform occasionally

on campus and sometimes with other clogging groups, but they're low-pressure performances, and anyone who knows the routines is welcome to dance," Garrett said. "No one is forced to perform, and you only dance in public if you feel comfortable doing so."

A full schedule deters others, as well. Karen Moriarty, sophomore drama student, attended a practice after hearing about the Stompers, but gave up joining when she realized she had too many activities.

"Not many colleges I know of have clogging teams," Moriarty said. "It's Asheville. We're an eclectic bunch of people."

Blue Spiral 1 exhibit celebrates new year with new art

By Meredith Wagner-Hoehn
STAFF WRITER

The Blue Spiral 1, a downtown gallery, continues to offer variety for art lovers and opportunity for artists with their annual New x 3 exhibit, showing from January 4 through February 24.

"It's new works, new artists, new year," said Susan Lundgren, who works at the front desk of the Blue Spiral 1. "There's no theme other than they're new. That's why it has so much variety."

The gallery generally exhibits art work in themes of medium, technique, or subject matter, according to Lundgren. The annual New x 3 exhibit provides the gallery's clientele with a more diverse selection of artwork. It also provides the gallery with a diverse selection of artists.

"It's a good way for us to see how the public responds to them, to see how easy they are for us to work with, to see if they're truly interested in being a part of the gallery," Lundgren said.

The community knows that The Blue Spiral 1 displays high-quality art, according to 27-year-old Sylvie Rosenthal, a sculptor showing in the New x 3 exhibit.

"If people are going gallery-looking in Asheville, they'll definitely stop at the Blue Spiral 1," Rosenthal said.

The Blue Spiral 1 attracts not only Asheville residents, but also art-viewers from around Charlotte and even farther south, according to 31-year-old Nathan Blank, the Iron Coordinator for Penland School of Crafts in Penland, NC and an artist showing in the New x 3 exhibit.

The gallery aims to showcase particularly eastern-southern artists, according to Lundgren.

"Asheville is a very arts-oriented city, and it's nice to be able to show somewhat locally," Rosenthal, a Penland resident, said. "I'm thrilled to be showing



MEGAN WILDMAN - STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Kat Turner, 18, Warren Wilson environmental studies student reacts to one of the many artists' works featured at Blue Spiral 1. The exhibit is running until February 24.

there."

Prime location proves essential to the gallery's quality, according to Blank. The receptive, carefree downtown atmosphere draws the public into the gallery.

"The space makes such a difference," Rosenthal said. "With their high ceilings, you can almost forget about the room and really concentrate on the objects. They've done a really good job at making it not distracting."

In addition to putting the public at ease, the Blue Spiral 1 tries to help their artists, according to Lundgren. Lundgren personally calls herself an artist activist.

"For an artist, they work really hard at kind of pulling their weight at getting you out to the collectors," Blank said. "They go out of their way to get your work in front of people."

Galleries and buyers often take advantage of artists, according to Lundgren. They see the artwork as a product to be bought and sold at its cheapest possible price, not as a creation to be cherished.

However, commerce controls this society, according to Rosenthal. Considering art as a product, on some level, is necessary.

The buyers make up one category of the Blue Spiral 1's visitors.

"They're looking for pieces," Lundgren said. "You have the true buyers that are art-lovers, that are looking for pieces that have meaning and resonance and really speaks to them in some way. Then you have the buyer that says, 'wow that's really cool, and it matches my couch.'"

Another category of visitors consists of artists. Student artists and adult artists alike visit the

gallery. Some come for inspiration, some to make sure they aren't rehashing a piece of art that's already out there and some just to enjoy it, according to Lundgren.

Every subject has subcategories, Lundgren pointed out.

"Like when people buy a car," Lundgren said. "Some people want it for transportation, some people want it aesthetically, and some people want it because it goes fast."

The artists themselves greatly appreciate the selling aspect of the Blue Spiral 1, according to Rosenthal and Blank. Galleries get their artwork out to the public more than any other avenue, although they do use other methods.

"This week I got postcards made," Rosenthal said. "I spent two days labeling and writing on

postcards."

Blank also does commission and custom-made work as art and as practicalities, such as plant-troughs and small iron fences.

"You try and get your images out there attached with your name so people know your work and remember your work," Rosenthal said.

Blank, Rosenthal and Lundgren agreed that art and its meaning is subjective.

"It's different for everybody," Lundgren said. "Some people like it just because it makes them happy and it's a very simple interaction. It makes it kind of more of an aesthetic."

Some people consider art a necessity for the home, according to Lundgren. It makes the house feel complete and covers that blank space on the wall.

On the other hand, some people consider art a necessity for their souls, according to Lundgren.

"There are people who don't care if they have anything in the house but art," Lundgren explained. "They will scratch together whatever kind of money and do whatever they can to have art, because it means so much more than an aesthetic pleasure."

To some people, like Blank, an artist gives fresh perspectives. "It's someone taking the time to show what they think is beautiful about the world and kind of opening their viewers' eyes to that kind of thing," Blank said. "It can be life changing, or it can be political, or it can be a lot of different ways of expression. But it's taking whatever they're into and getting someone to kind of stop for a minute and step out of their own life."

Jordan Ahlers, assistant director of Blue Spiral 1, who prepared the New x 3 exhibit, was unavailable for comment.

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are not commonly thought of as unusual.

- In Norway, Polydactyl cats are known as ship's cats. The extra digit is thought to give the cats better balance in stormy weather.

- The back legs, which typically have four toes, rarely have extra toes, and never do if the front feet do not have extra toes. When back paws do have extra digits, it is even rarer still for these extra toes to be thumb-like.

- There are Polydactyl cats with two and three extra toes.

- Leopards can be polydactyl, but bigger cats seem to only get extra toes on hind paws.

- In most animals polydactylism is a fatal trait, though this is not the case with cats.

All bulleted information on polydactyl cats from, <http://www.messybeast.com/poly-cats.html>

Do you or does someone you know have a fabulous pet? If so, we would love to feature it in the Banner's Pet of the Week. To let us know about your pet, email us at banner@unca.edu or just drop us a note outside the Banner office, located on the ground floor of Karpen Hall, room 19.