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## Me, lord of the dance? Try klutz of the class

**Note to my lovely instructor: It's for a good cause**

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TREVOR HAGAN / WINNIPEG FREE PRESS [Enlarge Image](#)

Doug busts a move (literally) with his patient Dancing with Celebrities partner, Anna Rudman.

Here's what I want you to do: First, stand up nice and straight. Next, while keeping your shoulders perfectly still -- you may need someone to hold them in place for you -- slowly begin to undulate your hips in a figure-eight pattern that will cause anyone watching to experience the first stirrings of a primitive passion.

There, that wasn't so hard, was it? I am, of course, kidding. Don't worry, I have paramedics on speed dial.

### **Come see a celeb step out**

Do you love dancing? Are you a paramedic? Well, Doug needs you to buy tickets for the fourth annual Dancing With Celebrities gala on May 1 at the Fairmont Winnipeg. Watch in horror as Doug goes toe to toe with celebrities like Sierra Noble, Fred Penner and "Dancing Gabe" Langlois. Tickets are \$175 apiece. Just call 975-3084 or visit the Society for Manitobans with Disabilities website and click on fundraising.

If you are a "normal" person such as myself, an overweight newspaper columnist with the flexibility of a frozen garden hose, you will know that, if you rotate your hips in the manner I have described, the last thing an onlooker will experience is thoughts of romance.

But that's not the point. The point is you now have an excellent idea of what I've been going through the last couple of months as I learn the sultry moves required to perform the rumba, the legendary dance of love.

I'm not kidding here. Once a week for the past two months, I have faithfully driven over to the spacious ballroom at the Ted Motyka Dance studio for rumba lessons.

I'm doing this because I agreed to take part in Dancing With Celebrities, in which "outstanding local celebrities" are paired with seasoned dancers in a ballroom dancing competition in support of the Society for Manitobans with Disabilities/Easter Seals Manitoba.

Before the big May 1 showdown at the Fairmont Winnipeg, we are expected to spend at least 20 hours sweating in the studio with our partners, cobbling together a three-minute routine that will let us wow the judges and avoid sustaining a concussion after spinning out of control and slamming into the salad bar.

After two months of gruelling lessons with my partner, Anna Rudman, a lovely Russian-born dancer who moves with the grace and power of one of the world-famous Lipizzaner Stallions, we have cobbled together, by conservative estimate, at least 20 seconds of non-stop dancing action.

A lot of my columns are packed with lies, but the truth is it would be a huge understatement to say I'm a bad dancer. It would be like saying the Titanic sank because it took on "a certain amount of water."

I have the potential to wreak more havoc on a dance floor than Lindsay Lohan in her favourite bar on three-for-one Jell-O shooter night, if you catch my general drift.

I've been trying to get my hips and shoulders to co-operate for 10 weeks. Everyone in the dance studio, at some point, has wandered over to frown at me -- much like my dad used to frown at the engine in his car when it wouldn't turn over -- and offer helpful advice.

This includes our competitors. For instance, fiddling sensation Sierra Noble and her dance partner, Yuriy Demchyshyn, were going through their paces in the studio awhile back. They are performing the Paso Dobles, which is Spanish for "another dance Doug could never do in a million years."

As they manoeuvred gracefully around the floor, they spotted Anna, who has the patience of a saint, trying her best to get me to move my hips in a manner the judges might find esthetically pleasing.

So Sierra, who along with being an amazing musician has studied dance since she was little, graciously demonstrated the proper technique. "It's called body isolation," she explained as she undulated and AT THE SAME TIME used her cellphone to send a text message to a friend.

So, as May 1 approaches, I'm getting a little worried about our chances. I suspect Anna is a little worried, too, although she keeps telling me I'm doing "great."

"Wow, that was great!" she will say during a lesson. "Now try that without falling down." Or: "Really great, Doug. Now keep your eyes open and don't drool so much."

Other than that, the hardest part is learning to do the rumba walk. The idea here is you are supposed to walk in a languorous manner in which you keep your thighs squeezed together and, with each step, drag both your heels and your toes along the floor. Piece of cake, eh?

"You are supposed to walk like a boy model, not like a zombie," Anna will grumble. Then, imitating my wide-legged gait, she'll suggest: "Try to walk like a human, not like a bear."

I strongly urge you to buy your tickets now. Especially if you happen to be a paramedic.

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