



Kelly Lapointe/AHN

**Twenty-two ballet dancers from the Move Dance Centre just found out that they all passed their first exams with the Royal Academy of Dance.**



# Local ballerinas leap to new heights

KELLY LAPOINTE

ALASKA HIGHWAY NEWS

Twenty-two Move Dance Centre ballerinas recently took their first Graded and Vocational ballet exams through the Royal Academy of Dance – and all of them passed.

This was the first year most dancers were exam candidates and teacher Sara Amiot-Cushman ARAD, RAD RTS said she was happy all the dancers passed their rigorous exams.

“It was really nice that everybody did so well,” she said. “They worked really, really hard and they deserved to pass.”

This is Amiot-Cushman’s second year as ballet teacher for Move, the

dancers could not take the RAD exams before since there was no certified instructor.

The exams were awarded in marks of pass, merit and distinction. Taking them allows students fine arts credits towards their high school diploma. As well, dancers are examined in the same syllabus as others all over the world, so they will be in similar programs if they move to a different country.

Twelve-year-old Katherine Grimes received a mark of distinction on her Grade 5 exam, and has maintained the level of distinction with all of the exams she has taken so far.

Her biggest challenge was perfecting the different exercises tested in the exam.

“There’s a few exercises that are somewhat the same, just different names, which made it a little bit hard,” she said.

Grimes was one of the few dancers from Move that had taken a Royal Academy of Dance exam before. Most of the dancers were like 15-year-old Nicole Schoepp, who was new to the whole process.

Schoepp took her exam for Intermediate I in Prince George and described the experience as “pretty nerve wracking.”

“It’s scary because you never know the person and you’re in a big, open room with just one person watching you,” she said of her exam, which last an hour and 15 minutes.

Eighteen-year-old Jessica Thomson spent two weeks practicing for her exam which she took through the Ballet School of California at the University of Long Beach in Los Angeles, CA.

She said the examiners were quite strict and she had to know her material very well.

“They don’t give you any clues or anything. They just tell you the name of the dances and you do it,” she said.

She needed to pass her exam to get into Advance II, so she can continue trying to be a teacher.

“It means a lot, I’m very happy that I did it and accomplished it and in somewhere I haven’t been before,” she said.

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Jessica Thomson, Caitlin Beale, Ashtyn Lockyer, Shiau Shan Kaophan and Keily Stewart will represent the Move Dancer Centre at the B.C. Performing Arts Festival May 24-26.

# Five Move dancers leap to provincials

**KELLY LAPOINTE**  
ALASKA HIGHWAY NEWS

The Move Dance Centre's dancers picked up some serious hardware from the Peace River North Performing Arts Festival March 26-29.

The dancers took home trophies and ribbons in ballet, jazz and tap, something 15-year-old Ahystn Lockyer is proud of.

"I think we did really good, our studio is improving gradually," she said, adding the sportsmanship is one of the most

important aspects of competition to the dancers.

"We're really positive people. We're there a lot for fun, that's what you gotta be there for first of all is your own enjoyment."

Ten-year-old Keily Stewart said the performing arts festival was really good, not only for her school, but also for her personally.

"I felt that I did a good job, I had lots of fun," she said, adding that she was ecstatic with her performance.

Lockyer, Stewart and Shiau

Shan Kaophan, Jessica Thompson and Caitlin Beale will move on to the B.C. Performing Arts Festival May 24-26.

The top three dancers in each category move on to the semi finals of the B.C. Performing Arts Festival, and then one from each category will move on to the national competition.

Kaophan, who will be performing in Ballet I, would like to go to nationals, "but I don't really have high expectations for it," she said.

The dancers moving on to

provincials said that they are most excited about gaining more experience and see what is out there for them in the world of dance.

In addition to the competition against the top competitors in the province, the dancers will have classes.

"You learn a lot because you get a one-on-one with the teacher at the end and she tells you what she thinks of you personally and what you can improve, so that's the biggest thing is seeing what they say," said Beale, who will

be competing in Modern III.

Eighteen-year-old Jessica Thomson, who will be representing Fort St. John for Ballet III, said it's exciting to be going to provincials for her third time.

"The main reason why we go is to learn and experience more," she said, adding that there are more opportunities through bigger competitions.

The Move dancers are off to compete in Edmonton and Grande Prairie at the end of this month.





Kelly Lapointe/AHN

## JAZZY MOVERS

Move dancer Katherine Grimes and the rest of the Junior Group practiced their jazz routine on Monday. The studio is putting on performances May 31 at 1 and 6:30 p.m. and June 1 at 6:30 p.m. at the North Peace Cultural Centre.





Kelly Lapointe/AHN

The Move Dance Centre's year end award winners show off their hard earned medals, plaques and trophies at the dance school's year end wind up Monday night.

## AWESOME AWARDS

The Move Dance Centre held its year end awards ceremony on Monday night with all the dancers taking home a present, but a few stood out from the rest when the trophies and medals were presented.

The awards for outstanding dancer were presented to one girl from each level. Alissa Minard won the

award for the pre-junior category, Milanne Desfosses won for the juniors, Maegan Woodall was the intermediate winner and Jessica Thomson took the award home for the advanced level.

Camryn Beaumont was given the hardest working award, Sydni Kozak was the most improved and Becca

Chmelyk won the student teacher award.

Excellence awards were given to dancers in different styles. Nicole Shoepf won the award for lyrical, Shiau Shan Kao Phan took it for jazz, Tristen Jackman won the jazz excellence award and Ashtyn Lockyer won it for ballet.

Dani Bell won the love of dance award, Shanice Thomas won the sportsmanship award, and Takisha Johnson won the most promising award.

Jean Norman won the "dancer with heart and energized spirit" award.





## **MUDDY MOVERS**

(Top Right) The Move Dance Centre's year end award winners show off their hard earned medals, plaques and trophies at the dance school's year end wind up.

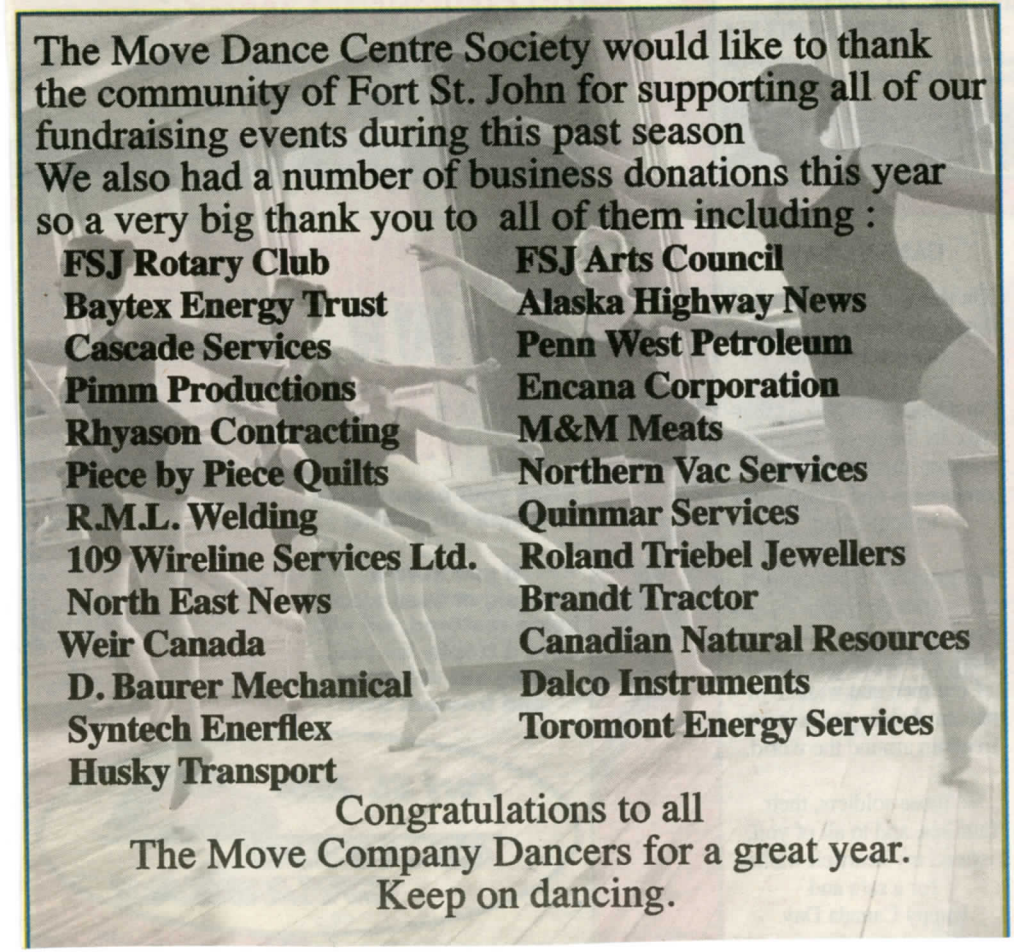
(Top Left) As is now a long-engrained tradition, the Move Dance Centre's members had a mud fight in the Peace River at their wind up and awards night.

Kelly Lapointe/AHN)









The Move Dance Centre Society would like to thank the community of Fort St. John for supporting all of our fundraising events during this past season

We also had a number of business donations this year so a very big thank you to all of them including :

**FSJ Rotary Club**

**Baytex Energy Trust**

**Cascade Services**

**Pimm Productions**

**Rhyason Contracting**

**Piece by Piece Quilts**

**R.M.L. Welding**

**109 Wireline Services Ltd.**

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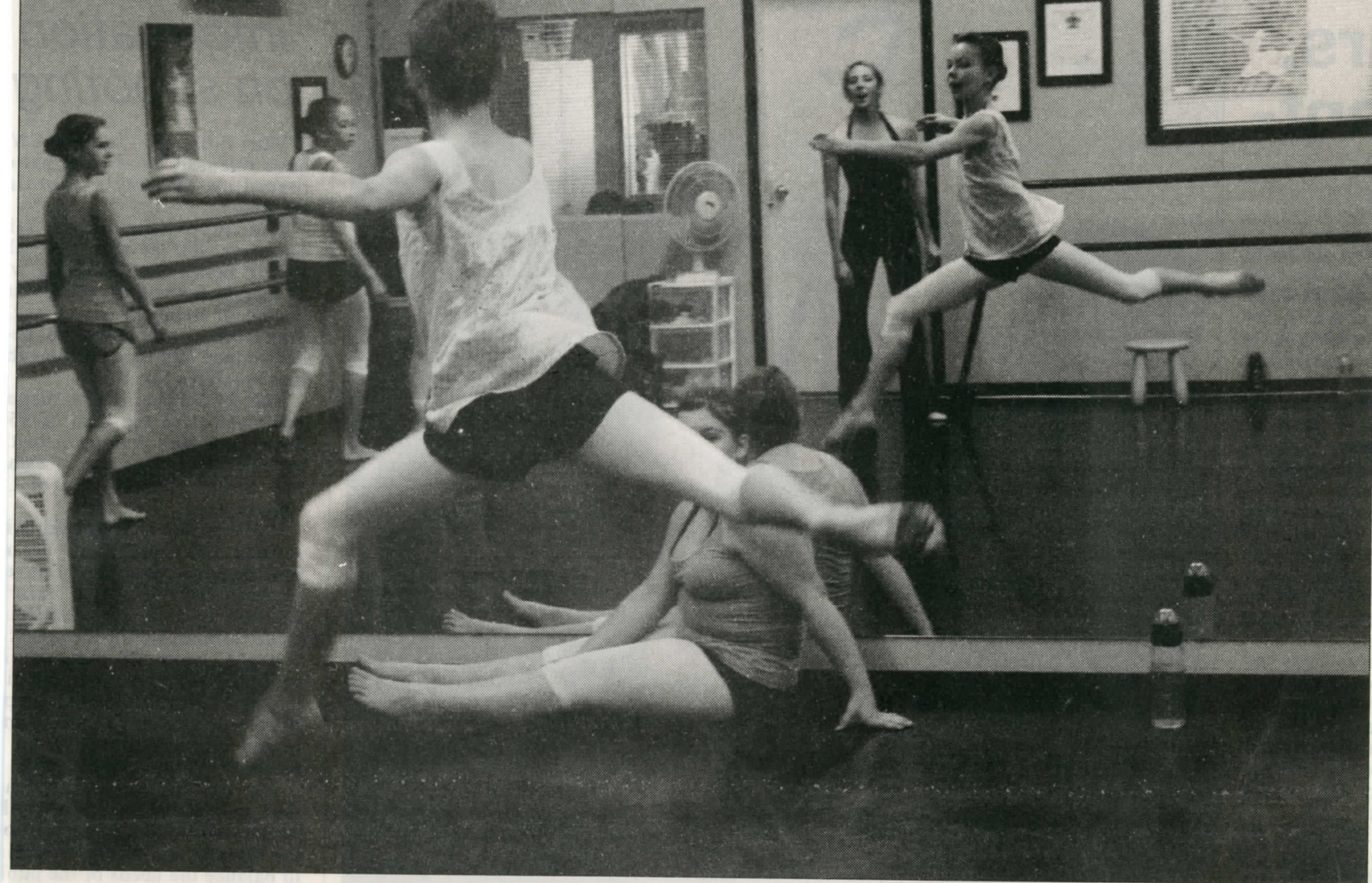
**Toromont Energy Services**

Congratulations to all  
The Move Company Dancers for a great year.  
Keep on dancing.









## SECOND OF SUSPENSION

Kelly Lapointe/AHN

Keily Stewart leaps across the room in a summer school class taught by Vancouver based ballet/contemporary teacher Crystal Wills (reflected in mirror) at the Move Dance Centre Thursday morning. Visiting teachers also include Calgarian Rock Mejia teaching hip hop and New York City instructors Kate Vallee - tap/musical theatre and Cary Hamilton - jazz/lyrical.





Kelly Lapointe/AHN

Some students from The Move Dance Centre learn new steps in their hip hop workshop with visiting instructor Rocky Mejia over the weekend.

# Hip hop about creativity, not posture

**KELLY LAPOINTE**  
ALASKA HIGHWAY NEWS

Girls of all ages learned how to express their creativity through hip hop over the weekend.

It has become a popular genre thanks to shows like “So You Think You Can Dance” said visiting instructor Rocky Mejia.

“My job as a teacher is to show all the dancers the reasons why things are the way they are, popping locking and

break dancing, the fundamentals,” said the Calgarian.

Mejia said he likes coming to Fort St. John – he already taught here during the summer – because the dancers are good at taking instruction and since they haven’t been exposed to much hip hop, what they do learn, they work on a lot and get good at it.

Mejia had a lot in store for the dancers on the weekend.

“A bit more hip hop education in terms of the roots as well as understand-

ing there’s no rules in your character or who you can be with it, so really push that character side of hip hop,” he said.

Dancer Nicole Schoepp said it’s great when they get to learn from new teachers instead of having the same people every week.

“When somebody else comes you get to learn something different,” she said, adding that they only get to learn hip hop a few times a year. “Just letting loose and not having to worry about posture or anything, it’s just about having fun.”

Move owner Ashley Campbell said small communities don’t usually get exposure to hip hop because teachers usually live in larger centers where it’s easier for them to get jobs.

She said it’s important for her students to learn as many styles of dance as they can.

“If they want to go out and get a job, they need to have some sort of hip hop background in dance, it’s just important for them to have all styles of dance under your belt,” she said.





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## DYNAMIC DANCERS

The Move Dance Centre's intermediate lyrical group was awash in red as they performed at the Move Dance Centre Society's second annual Christmas Auction Fundraiser at the Lido Theatre Friday night. The evening featured live and silent auctions to raise money for the dance studio. (Kelly Lapointe/AHN)