

Aha!

I experienced an aha! moment listening to an original 60's version of Surfin' USA on youtube when I suddenly was able to make sense of some of the lyrics. Where I previously sang a weird nonsense word "werochisentos", the real lyrics were "huarache sandals." What a revelation! I suspect I had never heard of those when I originally learned the song. In considering aha! moments, I have recognized that there are different types. This was an aural aha! moment, a little mystery solved.

Aha! moments often refer to the common human experience of suddenly understanding a previously incomprehensible problem or concept. Suddenly you see something in a different way which makes much better sense. These epiphanies can become markers where the world is forever changed by new understanding.

As folkdancers, we can experience at least two kinds of physical aha! moments too. I think it was at a long ago Enumclaw Folkdance Festival where I was taught a Balkan line dance. I learned each of the parts of the dance and their connections, and I could dance it successfully in a dry walk-through without the music. When the instructor put the music on, I was astonished to discover I already knew that dance and had been doing it regularly. My self-taught version was a pretty inaccurate version of the same dance, recognizable but only just. It took some effort to retrain my feet to do the correct steps. A second kind of physical aha! is of course a dancer who after much struggle and work, finally nails a dance. After many repetitions where they fumble through a confusing portion the whole dance clicks into place. A third kind of physical aha! might come after a dance is solidly learned. Once free to look around the room, you might see and learn exciting variations on the base dance that someone else is demonstrating! Perhaps where every step was even you find a syncopation that fits the music even better. Yet another aha! is more subtle. Learning about the culture or region that a dance comes from may shift a point of styling previously unnoticed. For example, while Rachenitsa and Graovsko are from Bulgaria with the same pattern on the floor in the same rhythm, they have very different flow.

We can certainly experience mental aha! moments too. Seeing something through new eyes can change one's viewpoint. My mother-in-law apartment is between tenants and my last tenant left it very clean. I did some touch up painting and minimal extra clean-up, and felt it was ready to show. After being on the market for a little over a week and receiving no completed applications, I was a little discouraged. A friend who also has a mother-in-law apartment asked if she could walk through it. She liked it but made some suggestions for staging such as putting bright colored flowers on the mantel, upgrading the drapes, clearing up dead leaves outside, painting some unattractive dark wood. The suggestions were great. Of course, those were the types of things I had done in the past, but had forgotten completely about. I became enthusiastic about the whole project of readying the apartment: caulking, painting, cleaning, getting new draperies and rods, and have enjoyed the process very

much. The yard is now ready for spring. The apartment is fresh and newly updated. Likely by the time you read this, I will have found a great tenant. In this instance, the aha! of seeing the apartment through someone else's eyes triggered my own actions and got me out of my unperceived mental rut.

Can organizations have aha! moments? NFDI has roughly 230 members and we're delighted to have each of you. I had a little aha! moment thinking about this. Each of you has your own reasons for NFDI membership. Could you please take a minute and email me at bmaslan08@gmail.com your favorite reason or reasons you keep your NFDI membership current? I'd love to see what people value about us, in the hopes of inspiring other individuals and groups to join also.

Here are some possible aha! moments for the asking: 1) Could it be you would love to go to a dance weekend or camp but need some financial help and don't know where to turn? Not only does NFDI offer youth scholarships, we also offer adult scholarships. Email us at nwfolkdancer@gmail.com for requirements and how to apply. 2) Would you like to run a full page ad in the Northwest Folkdancer and don't want to spend any money on it? NFDI is offering a free full page ad to anyone who gets five people or clubs to join NFDI (or rejoin if inactive more than a year). Just think, you or your favorite cause or group can run a full page ad in the Northwest Folkdancer at no charge! 3) Are you wondering how to enjoy a fun evening of folkdancing to live music and contribute to Northwest Folklife at the same time? NFDI's Folklife benefit is Saturday, March 30th, at the Cedar Valley Grange. See information elsewhere in this issue.

Your mission should you choose to accept it: notice what aha! moments you have experienced. They can happen when you least expect them. How has your world been forever changed?