



Photos by Erich Boekelheide

Dancin' ESCAPE artists cash in, and boogie the night away

By JOCK HATFIELD
Of the Emerald

The first few hours presented no problem. The 45 volunteers were more than willing to dance their hearts out for ESCAPE.

But as the sixth hour of the marathon came and went, their spirits began to silt down toward their feet. During their hourly ten-minute break they collapsed in a small side room and massaged each others toes.

"You have a nice arch."

Little explosions of powder rose from their feet. The dancers studied a foot massage chart.

Yes, according to the chart, the foot is the center of the body. In the foot are grounded the stomach, the sinuses, the ear and the lung. The knee is rooted in the heel. When the foot goes wrong you've had it.

The dancers lay on their backs, waving their feet in the air. Already six hours of the 10-hour marathon were over. ESCAPE was receiving a total of \$300 pledges for each additional hour the dancers kept on their feet, but the dancers were starting to drag.

"I admit it, I'm bushed," ES-

CAPE member Kelly Nakao commented between dances. "It's a little worse than Pre's trail."

The band started playing again, and the group groaned to its feet. "Back to work." Some dancers practiced energy conservation. "Last year I didn't know how to conserve," recalls Mike Bednarek, a veteran from last year's ESCAPE marathon. "I went all out in the beginning, and until the eighth hour I was fine. But the ninth was hard, and the tenth was brutal." He spent the last hour hanging on his partner. Tonight would be different.

"After a while you listen to the beat, and start moving naturally," explained Eusan Malarkey. "Around the 5th hour I got really tired, like I was going to faint, but I got a second wind."

In addition to money for the ESCAPE program, dancers with the largest amount of pledges would receive a Mellow Brothers water bed, a typewriter, or a free dinner.

As the eighth and ninth hour droned past, two of three dancers gave up. Others formed long trains and chugged around the perimeter of the floor. "I was going

to get in shape for this," said Eric Frazier. "Try to get extra sleep, good food. But I didn't have a chance." The train moved on around the floor.

At ten past eleven the dancers were waving their feet around in the air again. "The foot is the pathway to the body," explained ESCAPE adviser Margaret Dagget. Some dance partners, strangers at first, were becoming more familiar as they massaged each other's feet. "I really like your toes," commented one wilted dancer at intermission, as he rubbed a stray foot.

By 1 a.m., after 9 hours, the dancing had aged to a slow shuffle. Groups wrapped their arms around each other in an attempt to offer mutual support. These bits of dancing architecture moved slowly about, gathering converts. One large man, talked into dancing the marathon by a friend, grooved to the end.

Finally, at 2 a.m., when dancers were spilling over themselves onto the floor, and sweat was hanging over the ballroom in a cloud, the music ended. All but a few of the original participants finished, but none had escaped unscathed.



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