

old, retired from business in 1964. But there are still between 250 and 300 studios around the world today.

A common misperception about Arthur Murray dance studios is that they teach only "touch-dancing," or partnership dancing, Ames says. What isn't understood is that Arthur Murray is a technique, a method of teaching dance, he says.

"Arthur Murray is... a method of teaching which is too hard to explain or even try to tell you what the method is because it'd take too long. But the method of teaching is what's important, and the thing that helps people to learn in the quickest possible way.

"Arthur Murray's style has to do with taste, the correct way to use the body. I wouldn't say it's Arthur Murray's style, it's everybody's style. It's just that the style we're developing is the better way of using the body for what most people do. We develop it through a more graceful way by making it more natural... by using the normal flow of the body."

People take dance lessons for a variety of reasons, Ames says.

"Number one, it does teach them to have fun and to get to be with people, and to get closer to people, and a chance to feel important. Plus the fact that it does hold down a negative sense. How many people can actually touch in dancing and argue without pushing each other away first? That's an important factor. How many people can argue holding their arms around each other? They couldn't stay in that position very long, could they? And I think that's very important. Because dancing is something you can do that will hold down a lot of negative problems in your life.

"I feel it not only brings out the care about each other and the fun, it also makes people feel more care about their appearance toward others, aware of things that can offend such as odors. A lot of people may not be aware of B.O. and stuff like that unless they know they're going to be next to someone they really like."

Whatever the reason for taking dance lessons, the one everyone has in common is that they want to learn how to dance, or how to dance better.

Louise Phaigh, a 68-year-old



Photo by Maria Corvallis

Bud Ames, owner of the Arthur Murray Dance Studio in Eugene, and his assistant, Laurie Taylor, demonstrate one of the many poses they teach to dance students. This year marks the 75th anniversary of Arthur Murray dance studios. Ames has taught at the Eugene studio for the past 11 years.

Eugene resident who has been taking dance lessons for about one-and-a-half years, says she began taking lessons because she finally had the time and money. "I watched Arthur Murray and Katherine (his wife) dance on TV," she says. "They used to be like a song together, they danced so smoothly together.

"I thought when I had money I would take dance lessons like that. A couple years ago I finally had the time and a little extra money so I signed up," says Phaigh, who is a widow. "At first I was worried they wouldn't take people over 65, but they said age doesn't make any difference. They said some of their best dancers are over 90 and still dance in exhibitions."

Ardella Wilson has been taking lessons only since last fall but says she always has loved dancing. "When I was in high school I lived to dance. Then I married a fellow that didn't dance," she says, with a faint hint of resentment.

When Wilson became a widow about a year and a half ago, she wanted to get her mind off of things and be on her own. She saw an ad in the newspaper, and that led her to Arthur Murray, she says.

"I said to myself, 'Oh dear, oh dear,' then I came right over and signed up for a session. Then I signed up for another one."

Elmer Faris, a 72-year-old widower who seems to be one of the few men taking classes at the Eugene studio, began taking classes last July because he wanted to add a little style to his dancing.

"I've danced pretty much all my life — since I was 14 years old," he says. "But I wanted to add a little style and pick up some new steps. I've picked up a lot of style... and spit 'n polish I guess you'd call it."

"And of course there's always six ladies to every man."

A member of various local fraternal groups like the Elks,

Moose and Eagles, Faris has no trouble finding opportunities to put his lessons to work, he says. "I just go from one place to the other and follow the bands. Also, I dance in the T-room at the Hilton.

"There's some good dancers out there. I don't have any trouble."

Faris chose Arthur Murray because he first was invited as a guest. "I came because I thought I'd like it, and I did, so I've been hanging out ever since. It's a lot of fun — I look forward to it."

Ames' assistant, Laurie Taylor, works with new students when they first come to the studio to help them develop an appropriate program. "I try to help them choose a program that's going to be right for them not only for their ability but also for the amount of time they want to spend in the studio and also the amount of money they want to invest.

"Basically I take into con-

sideration several different things," says Taylor, who also is Ames' dance director for teachers and studio supervisor. "Their instructor's already found out their rate of learning, which has to do with no two people learn exactly the same. Obviously somebody who's 25 years old is going to learn a little bit differently than someone who hasn't started until they're 85 or 65. But generally we try to plan people's programs so that they suit them specifically — not only their physical needs but also to what dances they'd like to learn.

"Some of our students may be specializing in a little bit more country western-style of dancing. Some students may be doing everything from latin and ballroom, also adding a little country western."

Aside from teaching people how to recognize music, instructors also must teach men how to "lead" and women how to

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