

***A new champion was crowned at the 10th annual Dancing With The Gorge Stars event on Friday night. Dufur School teacher, Judy Ford, took home the mirror-ball trophy with her amazing performance of the cha cha to “Barbie Girl”.***

***The event was kicked off with a performance by The Dalles Dazzling Dancers, a group of 12 local students who danced to “Try Anything” by Shakira. The group included: Aubree Johnson, Emmersyn Glasgow, Kourtney Lane, Melody Wood, Olivia Anderson, Ruthie Fain, Lilly DeHart, E.J. Iaulualo, Kai Chavez, Kailin Glasgow, Riley Mead, and Xzavier DeHart.***

***Following the opening number all six stars and their partners were introduced, followed by the three judges, Tonya Brumley, George Mickens, and Pam Jensen. All three judges are former contestants of DWTGS.***

***The first to dance was “The Crazy Eye Guy” Ryan LeBreton. Partnered with pro Grace Johnson, they performed the Paso Doble to, “Eye of the Tiger” from the movie “Rocky”. The routine received lackluster points from the judges, but the crowd disagreed and shared some boos for their harsh judgement.***



***Next up, DeAnn DePaepe and pro Anthony Whipple, performed the foxtrot to “You’ve Got A Friend in Me”***

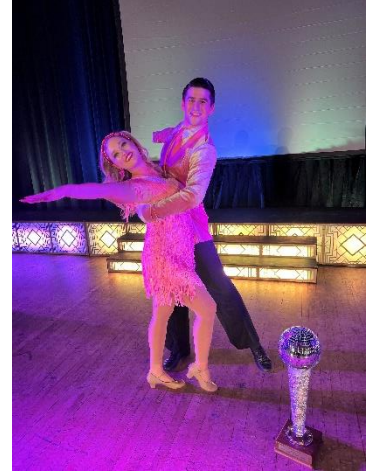
***from “Toy Story.” The routine received mixed reviews from the judges but they all agreed that DeAnn’s smile was infectious and she seemed to thoroughly enjoy the experience.***





*Third in the line-up was Randy McMurrin, dancing the Swing to “Danger Zone” from “Top Gun” alongside his partner **Haley Wayt**. The judges and audience agreed that he pulled off the Tom Cruise look and personality.*

*Fourth to go was Judy Ford and her partner John Meo dancing the Cha Cha to “Barbie Girl” from the movie “Barbie”. Judy’s prior dance experience and comfort on the stage really shined through in this spot-on routine. The judges gave the duo rave reviews and the first 10 of the evening!*



*The next pair to dance were Joel Lane and partner Sarah Reed. Dancing the Mambo to the popular “Austin Powers” theme song. The judges raved about Joel’s purple velvet jacket and his ability to impersonate this recognizable character, both in the routine and in interviews, earning him the highest judges score of the night!*

*The last star to dance, Yvonne Pepin Wakefield and partner Drew Innis, danced the Disco to “Ghostbusters”. Their routine was complete with a glittery dress, and a full spin on the floor by Yvonne, which amazed the judges and audience.*

*After a brief intermission where the audience stuffed ballots into their favorite dancer’s box, Addie Case was presented with an award for being the tried-and-true head judge of DWTGS over the last ten years. Addie agreed to watch from the crowd this year and support her employee, Joel, as he took the spotlight for the night. Following the award presentation, a video tribute from fellow judges was shown in her honor.*



*While audience votes were being counted, the pro dancers from the Utah Ballroom Dance Company performed six routines in different styles. Dances performed included a Salsa to “Conga” and a hilarious hustle to “Big and Chunky” with inflatable panda costumed dancers.*

*This led to the final act of the night, the top two dancers were announced, in no particular order, Joel Lane and Judy Ford were brought to the front of the stage. Adolfo Mollinedo, 2023 DWTGS winner, stood by with the mirror-ball trophy. After some back-and-forth banter and a drum roll from the crowd, Judy Ford was announced the 2024 champion and awarded the coveted mirror-ball. Congratulations to all our contestants on a job well done!*

*All proceeds from the event went to Mid-Columbia Community Concert Association, as their only fundraiser of the year. To learn more about Mid-Columbia Community Concert Association, visit [mccca.info](http://mccca.info).*



\*Photos by Sarah Reed, Utah Ballroom Dance Company