

D | Accent

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Bonus section

There's more to gain from martial arts than self-defense skills or a black belt. In today's **Adventure & Fitness Extra**

Free to subscribers on the ePaper and at mypalmbeachpost.com

DANCE

Ballerina's dreams for school lofty

Marquez danced in Cuba; her studio is in the former Thomas Dance Studio.

By **Barbara Marshall**
Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

"Plie, then passe. Releve. Balance, girls."

In an old Lake Worth ballet studio where newly installed "sprung" floors rebound with each step, Deborah Marquez calls out a dance sequence. Her students move through the classical ballet exercises while balanced on 2-inch rectangles of cardboard and satin at the tips of their pointe shoes.

Marquez changes the angle of a dancer's foot as she gently rotates it from the hip for a deeper turn-out. She steadies another dancer as the teenager arches lower, lower, lower until her torso is bent backward, parallel to the floor.

Earlier this month, this renovated vintage dance studio on a moribund stretch of North Dixie Highway became the new home of the School of Ballet Arts, Marquez's 5-year-old ballet school.

The Cuban-born, former professional ballerina, who danced with the Cuban National Ballet and Ballet Florida, has dreams for the school as lofty as her advanced students' jetes.

They'll be working on them in a building where young Palm Beach County girls — perhaps as many as 25,000 — have launched pink tulle dreams for more than 60 years.

Earlier this year, Marquez purchased the former home of Thomas Dance Studio, a family business begun in Lake Worth in the 1920s, where three generations of Thomas women taught ballet.

"I have a commitment to continue what the Thomas family started," said Marquez, whose students have been accepted to summer programs at prestigious companies including Alvin Ailey, Juilliard, Joffrey Ballet and the School of American Ballet.

Earlier this year, one of her students, Daniela O'Neil, of Wellington, was selected as a 2015 Presidential Scholar in the Arts by the national Young Arts Foundation.

Marquez is intent on building a school that combines the passion of Cuban ballet and the discipline inherent in the art form.

"We have that Latin flavor and the charisma that is identifiable in our school," said Marquez, who also choreographs student performances including "Coppelia," "The Nutcracker," "Don Quixote" and "Dracula."

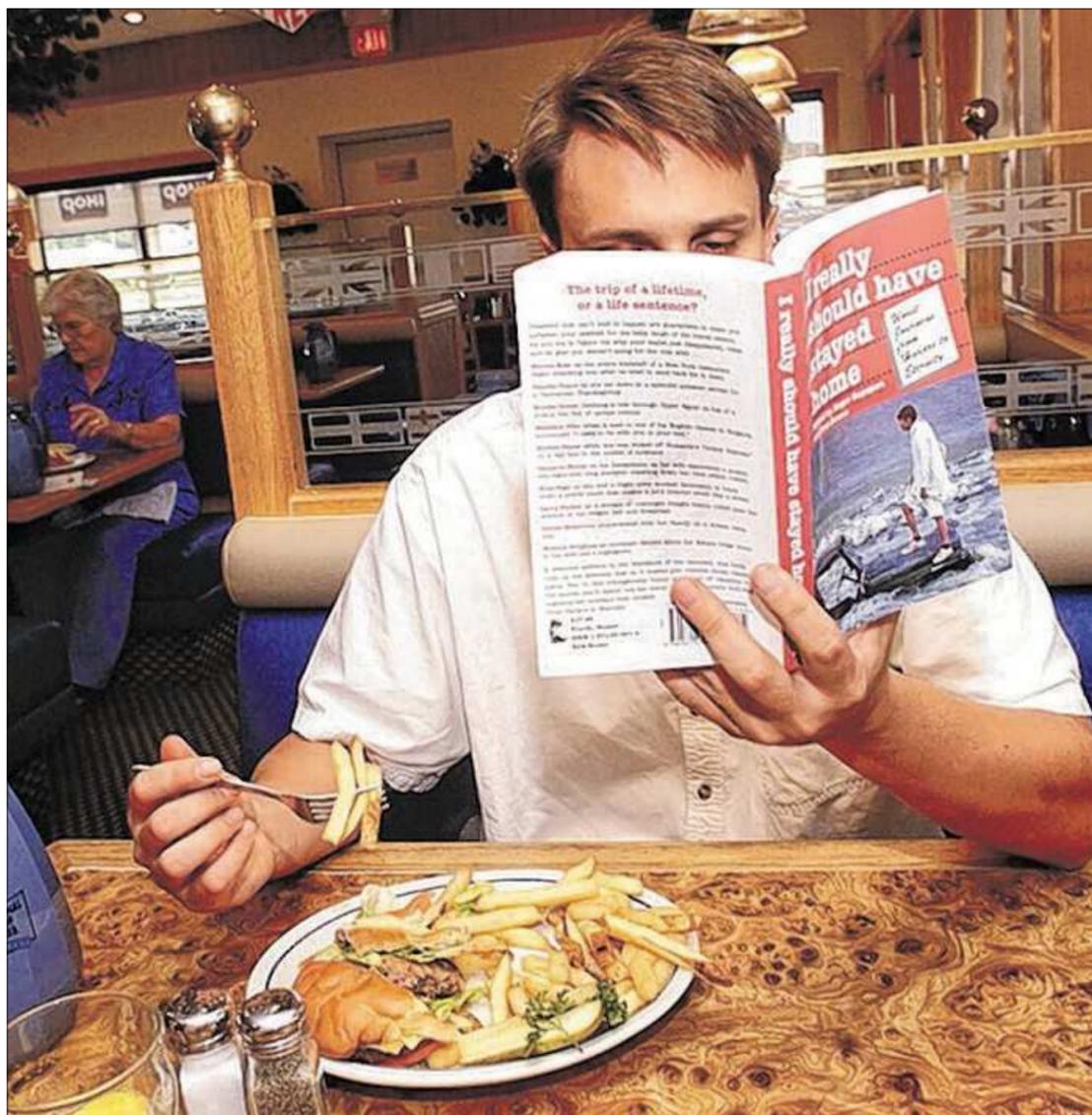
"I always try to make it an entertainment for the community, not just for our ballet parents,"

Dance continued on D2



Deborah Marquez instructs students inside her dance studio, School of Ballet Arts. Her school will teach Cuban ballet techniques. DAMON HIGGINS / THE PALM BEACH POST

IT'S TRENDING



Dining alone — or with a book, a smartphone or an iPad — is more common today than ever before. "It doesn't feel as alone as it may have prior to all the advances in technology," said Hartman Group CEO Laurie Demeritt. COX NEWSPAPERS

TABLE FOR ONE, PLEASE

More and more, we're dining alone for lunch and breakfast. And not because we're lonely.

By **Carlos Frías**
Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

Marian Bechtel sits at West Palm Beach's Bar Louie counter by herself, quietly flicking through her iPad e-book as she waits for her wedge salad.

Soft music plays as sunlight bathes the dining room through windows along Clematis Street overlooking the waterfront park.

What is she reading? someone interrupts to ask.

None of your business, thank you very much: Lunch is Bechtel's "me" time.

And like more Americans, she's not alone.

A new report found 46 percent of meals are eaten alone in America. More

than half (53 percent) have breakfast alone and nearly half (46 percent) have lunch by themselves. Only at dinnertime are we eating together anymore, 74 percent, according to statistics from the Hartman Group, whose research was part of a Food Marketing Institute report released last month.

"I prefer to go out and be out. Alone, but together, you know?" Bechtel said, looking up from her book. (Title withheld.)

Bechtel, a real estate paralegal who works in downtown West Palm Beach, has lunch with coworkers sometimes, but like many of us, too often works through lunch at her desk.

A lunchtime escape allows

her to keep a boss from tapping her on the shoulder. She returns to work feeling energized.

"Today, I just wanted some time to myself," she said.

Just two seats over, Andrew Mazoleny, a local videographer, is finishing his lunch at the bar. He likes that he can sit and check his phone in peace or chat up the bartender with whom he's on a first-name basis if he wants to have a little interaction.

"I reflect on how my day's gone and think about the rest of the week," he said. "It's a chance for self-reflection. You return to work recharged and with a plan."

That freedom to choose is one reason more people like to eat alone, says Laurie Demeritt, CEO of the Washington-based Hartman Group. Her company asks

Alone continued on D2

A TABLE FOR ONE

More Americans are eating alone — but not at dinner time.

53%
Ate breakfast alone

46%
Ate lunch alone

26%
Ate dinner alone

SOURCE: HARTMAN GROUP

Technology is definitely the preferred companion. Researchers noticed right-handed people eating left-handed so they could scroll through their phones.

BOCA RATON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Check out these dolls

People can borrow an American Girl doll if they have a library card.

By **Staci Sturrock**
Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

Ask any parent buffeted by begging for an American Girl doll.

The line of 18-inch, historical dolls is a black hole of retail desire, and the cravings cannot be satisfied cheaply.

Kit Kettredge and her paperback book, for example, will set you back \$115. If you want to accessorize Kit with a hat, bracelet and purse, you'll spend another \$24. Her school desk and chair are \$100.

But the price of admission to the American Girl universe just dropped locally.

Now all it takes to borrow one of six American Girl dolls

is a Boca Raton Public Library card, free to Boca residents and available for purchase to those who live outside city limits.

Families can take the dolls home for a week at a time. Kit, Caroline, Josefina, Rebecca, Kaya and Addy travel with a book, carrying case, complete outfit and a journal in which kids can record their adventures with the doll.

"The more children who create memories with the doll, the more journal entries other children get to read," says Amanda Liebl, youth programs director.

The dolls are at the library's two locations — 400 NW Second Ave. and 1501 NW Spanish River Blvd.

For more information, go to BocaLibrary.org.

For more information, go to sssturrock@pbpost.com



Children play with American Girl dolls at Boca Raton Public Library. And now you can take them home for the week with a library card. CONTRIBUTED BY BOCA VIDEO SERVICES DEPT.