

*From the Desk of Maribel Zubieta Diaz...*

*As I watch children and teachers rehearsing for the Festival, I think about the memories and lessons learned during this very exciting time.*

*My first Festival was in 1949; I was four years old. I remember taking my blue and silver ballet costume home, hanging it on the closet door, and keeping my bedside lamp on all night so I could look at it. We rehearsed and rehearsed and rehearsed. I could do my dance in my sleep. I learned to wait patiently*

for my turn (very hard for me to do), not to talk backstage (even Harder for me to do), and to learn from watching others (much easier for me to do.)

Two days before the Festival, I woke up with an itchy pimple on my leg. By the end of the day, I was one giant chicken pox!

I did not get to dance in that 1st Festival, but I discovered a very important lesson. The lessons that I learned on my journey to that Festival have stayed with me my whole life. And even though I missed the

*culmination of the hard work, the journey was well worth it.*

*I participated in many Festivals after that, and each one had a positive impact on my life. I am now 65 and still doing Festivals with the same enthusiasm and the same hope that I had back in 1949.*

*May the legacy continue...*