

TODAY

PLAIN DEALER

Packing in typing for tapping and talking

By **KAREN SANDSTROM**
PLAIN DEALER REPORTER

Journalists like career changes. Reporters frequently turn into publicists, lawyers, even social workers. A select few swap notebooks for stethoscopes.

Jane Goldberg's metamorphosis represented an unorthodox, tap-for-tap trade. The self-described "muckraking journalist of the '60s" silenced the typewriter keys so the feet could talk.

Goldberg, 45, turned a journalistic mission into an artistic one decades ago when she became a tap dancer. But the changes keep coming. Now she coordinates old jazz rhythms (done with feet) with monologues on topics from reproductive organs to the Persian Gulf. And since her hybrid art knows no precedent, the venues include comedy clubs, living rooms and, this week, Cleveland Public Theater, where she performs as part of the Performance Art Festival.

"I recently did an anti-diet conference," Goldberg said in a telephone interview. "I ate while I tapped."

At times during the stream-of-consciousness interview, it was hard to tell when Goldberg's tongue was and wasn't planted in cheek. But it seemed not to be when she talked about her entry into tap dancing in the 1970s.

As a free-lance writer feeding Boston newspapers, she began researching a story on masters of tap dancing who had had careers that paralleled the jazz movements of the '30s and '40s. She wanted to know, she said, "why these old guys weren't performing" anymore.

But Goldberg found she could only get to her "tap daddies," as she calls them, by dancing. So she sought out folks like John Bubbles, Honi Coles and studied with Charles (Cookie) Cook.

"They saw I was really serious about it," she said. "It was kind of an odd couple, this young white female and Cookie, who was an old black male."

She infiltrated the culture and made it her own, developing a mission to breathe life into the dance.

"Tap was almost a cause. It was almost like it wasn't around at all," Goldberg said. "It was a lost art. And I had lots of journalism background to be able to promote it."

She got a National Endowment for the Arts grant in the late '70s, and created her company Changing Times Tap. In 1980,



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THIS WEEK AT THE PERFORMANCE ART FESTIVAL

■ **At Cleveland Public Theater, 6415 Detroit Ave.**

Today and Saturday at 8 p.m.: Playwright, director and actor Lenora Champagne (New York City), world premiere of "The Best Things in Life," about today's women and how they deal with power; The New World Performance Laboratory (Akron), creating pedagogical drama-art events, researching performance techniques from around the world, demonstrating a trans-cultural speech-song movement-action dance.

Tomorrow and Sunday at 8 p.m.: Mexican-American-Cajun writer Paul Bonin-Rodriguez (San Antonio) presents "Talk of

the Town," the saga of Johnny, the irrepressible small town sissy boy who confronts love, lust and Lady Bird Johnson at the local Dairy Queen; feminist political tap-dancer Jane Goldberg (New York City), with "Rhythm and Schmooze."

Tickets are \$10 Fridays and Saturdays, unless noted; \$10 Thursdays and Sundays, \$8 students and seniors with ID. Pre-paid tickets are available by calling Ticketmaster, 241-5555 or in person at Ticketmaster outlets; tickets can be reserved by calling the festival hot line at 491-4555. For more information, call 221-6017.

"I once got a call for a strip-o-gram for an Argentinian corned beef princess," she said. "She was turning 50 and they wanted me to talk about the woes of being

happy rhythms. It challenges viewers to choose between sentiments.

"The tapping itself is straight out of