

## **Boston Branch of the Royal Scottish Dance Society**

### **Minutes of the Executive Committee**

October 29, 2014

**Present:** Betty Allen, Dale Birdsall, John Crabtree, Kat Dutton, Susan Haines, Alex Hall, Merrill Henderson, Bob Littlehale, Linda McJannet, Jeremy Thorpe

**Guest:** Kendra Eshleman

1. Minutes from the September 24, 2014 meeting – One spelling correction was made, and the minutes were approved.
2. Treasurer's Report (Bob) – The Main Checking account is at \$20,826.63 and the Lloyds account is at \$360.29 for a total of \$21,186.92. It was moved and approved to pay music subsidies of \$365 to the Fairlee class for 3 musicians and \$365 to the Brunswick class for 3 musicians. Bob reports that both the Federal Income Tax and the State annual report have been filed.  
Bob presented a spreadsheet outlining the Branch's expenses and losses over the past 6 years. Five of those six years incurred overall losses of \$19,824.28. We need to be careful with our finances or we could find ourselves going bankrupt. Can we increase membership and target particular participation groups?
3. Reports from Liaisons –
  - a) November Concert (John) – With the Concert occurring next week, this is a busy time. There is no up-to-date information on ticket sales, but volunteers are being arranged and the major jobs are filled. Bob reminded John to get the checks to him by November 1<sup>st</sup>.
  - b) Highland Ball (Bob) – Preparations seem to be going well with no problems. The official application will be posted soon.
  - c) Pinewoods Benefit Ball (Betty) – Betty has not heard from the co-chairs nor have they presented an official budget other than looking at last year's numbers. Based on last year's numbers with approximately 60 attendees and a possible profit of \$465, this proposed budget was approved. Overall, Exec needs to be sure the co-chairs know the expectations.
  - d) ESS Replacement Proposal (Jeremy) – The survey was sent out and Jeremy, Judy Erickson, and many other interested parties met to discuss the possible replacement for ESS. CDS has agreed to share the profits and losses 50/50 plus the insurance if we decide to go forward with the replacement. From the survey, there was strong support to bring in another genre such as Irish, strong support both for and against making it a family session, and strong support for integration.  
The proposed solution is to add American for several reasons: (1) there are a

lot of contra dancers in the Boston area, (2) the English/American week at Pinewoods closed, and (3) it is easy to find people who already do two of the three types of dance.

ESS is open for dancers ages 13 and up, and Cape Breton has been a part of it. The goal of the proposed week would be to streamline the classes for better participation. The committee consisting of Dan Blim, Meaghan Murray, and Stephen Thomforde are searching for teachers and musicians who are familiar with two or three of these genres.

There are four other sessions at Pinewoods offering Contra, so what would entice Contra dancers to attend this session? Contra dancers are looking for a challenge so participation in more than one session, either before or after this week would be encouraged with the possibility of a discount. CDS thinks that keeping costs low would entice their dancers. This may also be an opportunity for Scottish dancers to try new styles and an opportunity to attract new dancers.

The name for the week would be "ESC" meaning English/Scottish/Contra. By cutting the number of teachers, musicians, and chairs, the proposed budget based on 115 filled beds would show approximately a \$1200 profit.

It was moved and seconded for the Boston Branch to sponsor ESC for one year (2015) only and to re-visit sponsorship again next year.

It was also moved and passed to have Stephen Thomforde begin attending TMC meetings as the representative for ESC. The TMC will function in an advisory capacity for ESC.

- e) Scottish Sessions Pinewoods (Linda) – Confirmed teachers for 2015 include Linda Henderson, Graham Donald, and Kathy Giacoletti (Basic and Step) with discussion on utilizing a possible camper teacher. They are planning to follow a traditional schedule this year. The co-chairs have also been meeting with Barbara McOwen, the music director.
- f) New Hampshire Highlands (Susan) – The final budget for 2014 initially showed a loss of \$183.55, but after receiving a check from Veronica's Attic, a profit of \$158.45 was achieved. Possible teachers and a music director are being contacted.
- g) Teaching and Music Committee (Betty) – Looking ahead to Pinewoods 2016, Tim Wilson and Antoine Rousseau have been confirmed as teachers. From the Candidate Class – A Mock Exam has been scheduled with Cecily Selling on March 21<sup>st</sup> in Stow. Cecily will be teaching the Challenge Class on Friday evening.

The first draft of the Highland Ball program has been written.

Challenge Class – There were 16 dancers at the October session, and with the current structure of one teacher teaching for two consecutive months, Robert

McOwen will be teaching in November also. A teacher is needed for the January/February classes.

- h) *Tartan Times* (Kat) – the November/December edition went to the printer yesterday (October 28<sup>th</sup>) and the proof was sent to Kat. Barbara and Evelyn are getting the digital layout settled down and are thinking about adding color.
- i) Demonstration Team (Alex) – There is just one rehearsal before the November Concert.  
The team will be performing at the BCMFest (Boston's Celtic Music Fest) on Saturday January 10<sup>th</sup> from 3:10 PM to 3:55 PM in the Attic. They are possibly going to be at NEFFA also.
- j) Membership (Dale) - As of October 25<sup>th</sup>, there were 199 Branch members plus 15 associate members. Of these, 175 members plus all the associate members requested to receive communications electronically. In addition, 28 members paid the \$10.00 fee to receive a hard copy of the *Tartan Times*. To date, 69 who were members last year have not renewed. There are 14 first-time Branch members and one first-time associate member.  
John and MaryEllen reported that due to the generosity of 54 members, they have collected \$2318 over and above membership fees to support the limited income/student category of membership.  
John and MaryEllen also would like to request that the Branch discontinue membership applications online until members can actually pay online. It has been difficult to chase members for their checks. Laura and Meyer were asked about this proposal and are in agreement. This should be discussed at the next Exec. Meeting.
- k) Website and Publicity (Kat) – The minutes to the Executive Committee meetings need to be sent for posting to the website. Other information on the website needs to be updated. There currently is no ability to collect money online, but this is something that could benefit Membership, the Highland Ball, possibly the Bookstore, possibly the Concert, etc. What is the chain of command in passing information to the webmasters? The class listing/class locations should be updated for distribution at the Concert. The class liaisons should ask for any updated information to be forwarded to Barbara McOwen.
- l) Bookstore (Merrill) – The Bookstore was at the Brunswick Party where there were brisk sales. New collections are coming in.
- m) Class Liaison –
  - Chelmsford, MA (John) – The last class had 20 attendees with Loren Wright teaching and John Chambers providing Music.
  - Brookline, MA (Kat) – The class has returned to the Church of Our Savior and had a successful Halloween/Homecoming Party. The Holiday Party will be held on December 21<sup>st</sup>.

- Montpelier, VT (Dale) – Martha Kent reports that they have a good group of 6 and 7 couples and including three new women. She is not certain how many of her dancers have actually joined the Branch so she doesn't know if they have attained the minimum number needed for a Branch Class. Some people are just not financially able to pay. The Montpelier Rec. Dept. is appreciative of their efforts, and the class appreciates the venue that the Rec. Dept. provides.  
The Montpelier Social is planned for February 28<sup>th</sup> with Peter, Joanne, and Aaron providing music.
- Fairlee, VT (Dale) – The class had a wonderful fall social with music by Laura Risk, Susie Petrov, and Nicholas Williams. They are quite appreciative of those fellow dancers who travel great distances. Special thanks to Polly Birdsall who did the walk-throughs and to the Branch for the music subsidy that allows them to bring in such fine musicians.  
The class continues to see between 10 and 14 dancers most weeks and are encouraged by a mom and her teenage son who has invited other teens to come to class. This makes everyone quite hopeful.
- Salem (Dale) – MaryEllen reports that the Salem Class was well supported during her convalescence with Cathy Fahey, Charles Liu, Karen Sollins, and Gillian Charters teaching, setting up, and taking down. The Halloween Party is on October 30<sup>th</sup> while other scheduled events include Burns Night on January 24, 2015 and the Salem April Party in March on March 28<sup>th</sup>. Burns Night 2014 was kept small but was so successful that they would like to make a wider invitation to the Branch for 2015.  
The Salem Class also has an offer for Exec to consider. There are currently 5 regular teachers and 3 others who teach when available, so they would like to offer to manage the Pinewoods Benefit Ball. They have access to an inexpensive hall where the supper before the party could be reinstated at no additional cost. They would also be able to start preparing in late spring so that flyers would be available at Pinewoods Sessions so that faraway friends could be invited/encouraged to attend. They are also asking that Exec discuss the possibility of redirecting the Pinewoods Benefit Ball proceeds to make scholarships available to reduce the ever-rising fees to attend Pinewoods Sessions.  
It was moved to accept this request for discussions on where the proceeds will go.

- Cambridge, MA (Kat) – The class had a successful Halloween Party this past Monday.
- Brunswick, ME (Merrill) – The October Dance was great, and the class has a couple of new dancers. November 5<sup>th</sup> is the 140<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Grange, so the group will be doing some dancing as part of the celebration.
- Kennebunk, ME (Merrill) – The class has a new couple who have been dancing both there and in the Greenland class, but it is still difficult to consistently maintain a full set.
- Greenland, NH (Merrill) – There are 12 dancers in the Beginners' Class. The 18<sup>th</sup> Century Dance is scheduled for November 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- Northampton, MA (Alex) – The class is meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursdays and hopes to be able to maintain membership on this new structure.
- Great Barrington, MA (Alex) – The class has one to one and a half sets and has a link to a British Class in Pittsfield.
- Albany, NY (Alex) – The Fall Frolic is occurring on November 1<sup>st</sup> with Ed Pearlman and family providing music. One problem is that their insurance certificate is dated for last year and it is needed in order for them to use the YMCA. Bob replied that he had sent requests to all of the Branch classes and Albany had said they were alright.

4. Old Business –

- a) The SAGM will be on Monday November 3, 2014 at the Canadian-American Club in Watertown.
- b) The RSCDS AGM will occur in Perth on November 7 to 9, 2014. Kate Gray will represent the Boston Branch. Susan will relay our voting preferences to her.

5. New Business –

- a) Our positions for the RSCDS AGM:
  - Support for the membership subscription remaining unchanged.
  - Abstain for changing the legal form of the RSCDS with no support for the Toronto amendment concerning the Articles of Association and Rules and Procedures.
  - Abstain from the Constitutional changes.
  - Support for teachers with full certificates to receive the numbered dance books free.

6. Next Meetings –

- a) December 3 at Linda's