

Semi-Annual General Meeting of the Scottish Country Dance Society of Boston, MA, Inc.

7:45 PM Monday, November 6, 2023
Canadian-American Club, 202 Arlington St. Watertown, MA

Attendance: 20 zoom, 33 in person

Request for volunteer to assist with getting the word out, we are forming a new committee to social media, marketing, publicity. Please see Alena or Linda, join the brainstorm session to follow soon.

Aspirational statement: Read by Linda. Encourage and support gender inclusive terminology. No rules will be imposed, but we encourage the use and acceptance of gender-neutral terms. This will be added to our policies and procedures. Suzie will lead a workshop via Zoom in the spring for those who are interested.

- I. **MINUTES FROM ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM) Monday June 5, 2023 (Alena Taylor – in person)**
 - a. CORRECTION: Elections: in addition to Anne and Kat’s election to Exec. Cathy and Marsha were re-elected as Treasurer and VP, and Ken Launie was elected to serve on the Nominating Committee.
 - b. Approved with correction.
- II. **TREASURER’S REPORT, 2022-2023 (Cathy Crabtree – in person)**
 - a. Reporting on fiscal year ending September 30th. Membership: small increase from previous year. Will likely need to adjust membership fees each year due to continuous additions at HQ. 229 members in 2023, 223 in 2022.
 - b. Please renew your membership! Deadline to be included in the directory is Nov 15th.
 - i. Idea was brought forward to set an “auto-renew” system for membership. (card on file?)
 - ii. Would be a way to go to the website to find out whether or not membership is renewed. HQ website has a delay, but it is an option.
 - c. Program revenue – Very small profit from 2022 Fall Concert. Attendance was good, there was a shortfall with Pinewoods Scottish and ESCape. Highland Ball was very small shortfall. Boston Scottish Country Dancers has a small deficit. Pinewoods Reel taping and party broke even.
 - d. Expenses – Administrative, Insurance, Music Subsidies, Sound Equipment, Tartan Times, Marketing. See Cathy for details.
 - e. Ended the year with a small deficit but was a great year!
- III. **PINEWOODS CAMP, INC (Bruce – in person)**

- a. First complete season since the pandemic! Work weekends are set and available on the website.
 - b. Work of Hands Across has been combined with the bathroom project. Proceeding well. Hoping to begin that project shortly. Hoping to be ready before next season.
 - c. Pineneedles is in the works, but not sure if the project will be done before next season.
 - d. Disease continues to ravage the beech trees. Camp is continuing to remove diseased trees. Landscape is changing.
 - e. A new map of camp will be drawn! For campers, for the board, and infrastructure of camp.
 - f. Centennial is in 2025. Stay tuned for upcoming projects and merchandise.
 - g. No major facilities projects, but have done more accessibility routes, 2 electric vehicle charging station, new handwashing station outside of dining hall.
- IV. **PINEWOODS SCOTTISH SESSIONS, 2023 (Debbie Jarvis – in person)**
- a. Overall successful, and glad that Covid did not arrive at camp. Moral remained high, even though general attendance was down from non-Covid years.
 - b. Debbie J. and Catherine S. were chairs, and had a stellar team of music, teachers, and organizers.
 - c. Classes were generally well liked and attended. Conditioning class will continue in the year. Next year's class schedule will be adjusted a bit to ensure that overlaps are minimal.
 - d. 125 campers in session I. and ... campers in session II. Approximately 80 each. Those who did not come top reasons: 1. Not strict covid protocols, 2. Too strict covid protocols, and 3. Gender terminology not being the same as previous.
 - e. 77 evaluations were overwhelmingly positive.
 - f. Thanks to TMC and Exec
 - g. Next year's co-chairs will be Marc and Keira Hartstein
- V. **ESCAPE PINEWOODS SESSION, 2023 (Connie Kent – Read by Alena)**
- a. ESCape 2023 was a great success! We had the highest attendance ever for ESCape!

This year, 152 people registered for camp, and as expected some withdrew in the months leading up to camp. We had slightly stricter Covid policies than PCI required, and the majority of campers who were registered when we released those policies supported them. We had a few people withdraw for various reasons (Covid policies, injuries, illness), but overall had great attendance. Even better, only one camper was unable to attend because of a Covid exposure in the days before the session. Our final number at the start of camp was 138, though we had one camper leave midweek because of a non-medical issue. Given that so many people attended ESCape this past year, we are optimistic that next year we will fill camp completely and may even need a wait list!

ESCape 2023 ran from Monday, July 3 through Friday, July 7, and over the course of the week, no one tested positive for COVID. After camp, we heard reports of

only one camper who later tested positive (most likely contracted on his journey home).

For those unaware, ESCape combines English, Scottish, and Contra dancing, and it is the only session at Pinewoods that offers all three traditions. Our class offerings this year included the usual (English for All, Advanced English, Scottish for All, Experienced Scottish, Scottish Technique, Contra, Evening Dance Tutorial, and song swap) as well as several classes appearing for the third year in a row (Tai Chi and Change Ringing). New this year were waltzing, harmony singing, longsword, and conditioning. We also had our annual Chocolate Tasting Party on Thursday afternoon that featured showcases from several different classes.

Classes were generally well attended with a mild downward trend over the course of the week. Here are the specific numbers:

Evening dances continued to be split into thirds with each tradition getting about 55 minutes of dancing each night. On the final night, we started with a Grand March and ended with the Pinewoods Reel. The evening dances were well attended all four nights, even given the masking requirements on Monday and Tuesday. Each night, we ended the dance with a song. After parties included the Welcome Party, a Games and Tunes Party, Pub Night, and the Last-Night Pinecones Party. The Welcome Party on Monday and the Games and Tunes Party on Tuesday were held in Pine Hollow (ending promptly at midnight with some people continuing the festivities late in the Camphouse), while Pub Night on Wednesday (which went until roughly 4 am) was in the Camp House. We were thrilled to move the Last-Night Party on Thursday back to Pinecones, where it traditionally has been held.

Camper evaluations were mostly very positive with the general sentiment that camp is too short! We will take camper feedback about programming and staffing into consideration as we plan for ESCape 2024.

Our budget has been finalized, and there were several small deviations from our proposed budget for this year. Based on feedback from PCI, we allocated an additional kitchen scholarship; we hired two additional scholarship staff; and we received three additional scholarships from PCI (two NGI's that were reallocated from J4 and one additional needs-based scholarship). Despite these changes, we have only a small deficit of -\$122.11 which will be split between CDS-Boston and RSCDS. We feel satisfied with this small deficit because we would have made a profit if the camper with the covid exposure was able to attend.

Several campers have expressed interest in donating to an ESCape-specific scholarship fund so that we can continue to make camp more financially accessible. We are in the process of investigating this. We are also planning to

talk with other camp organizers who operate on a sliding scale to see if that would be a feasible model for ESCape.

This was our first year with a five-person committee, and we plan to keep that structure for the following year with April Birnie, Daniel Potter, Connie Kent, Laurie Tupper, and Kate Fais all staying on. Things were much more relaxed and enjoyable for all the organizers with the additional help. As people cycle off the committee in the future, we plan to settle on a four-person committee. We have already begun planning for next summer and are in the midst of hiring our staff. We expect that registration will be open by January 2024, and you can find it here: bit.ly/ESCape2024 We hope you will join us!

VI. **SUMMER'S END WEEKEND, 2023 (Loren Wright – Read by Alena)**

- a. Overall, the Summer's End weekend at Hulbert Outdoor Center (HOC) in Fairlee, VT was a success even though we had fewer campers than we had hoped. Financially, we came out in the black. Covid was an issue at different stages — four outright cancellations and some extra precautions — but as far as I know, there were no new cases as a result of our event. One person, who had apparently been exposed before our event, finally tested positive on Sunday morning, but they didn't participate in any meals or activities that day. We ended up with 43 attending, including four musicians and three teachers. There were enough dancers to run all the classes we had planned and the evening parties were well attended. For much of the evenings we had four 4-couple sets.

From the evaluations there were a few that hated the venue, a few that loved it, but most were in the middle, realizing advantages and disadvantages. The dance spaces were clearly a big improvement over what we had the last few years at St. Methodios. The “barn,” where the evening parties were held, clearly has an upper limit and many more dancers would make things tight, but still manageable. However, it's unlikely that we'll be able to return to this venue due to scheduling changes made by higher-ups in the Aloha Foundation (the parent organization that includes HOC). Our usual fourth weekend in August is no longer available. Earlier weekends are not available due to HOC's own programs and later weekends are not available at affordable rates due to the venue's popularity for weddings.

For the weekend to continue we'll clearly need to find a new venue. We were able to reserve the dates August 24-26, 2024 at HOC, which is a Saturday through Monday. Our tentative plan is to run a one-day event on Sunday, with a single teacher, who would offer a workshop or two before the evening or late-afternoon dance party. HOC would not be able provide a meal on Saturday, but they would likely be able to do so all day on Sunday and Monday morning. We would be subject to HOC's 40-person minimums. We plan a survey of past and potential new campers to determine whether we would attract that number. If we succeed with our plans for 2024, that will give us time to find a new venue for the future.

VII. OTHER BUSINESS

- a. New teachers for next pinewoods David & Catherine Queen. Jean Moodie, Jodie Coulis.

Motion to adjourn made and approved. 8:42pm