



## Teachers' Committee Minutes Final

### **Meeting**

Saturday, 22 September, 2012  
at the home of Greg Reznick, Berkeley, CA

### **Present**

Armin Busse, Kristi Closser, Patti Cobb, Laura Cooper, Fred DeMarse, Alex Harvey, Marianna Harvey, Bruce Herbold, Bradley Hobbs, Susie Langdon Kass, Paula Jacobson, Fred Macondray, Trina Merriman, Greg Reznick, Sandra Schultz, Alan Twigg

### **Regrets**

Kathy Allen, Cathy Bertics, Bob Branstrom, Juliet Davoren, Rebecca Davis, Crystal Goodwin, Bruce Hamilton, Jo Hamilton, Janet Hayter, Roy Hayter, Linda Henderson, Kathleen McAdam, Lin Pettengill, Gary Thomas, Ron Wallace, Tim Wilson

### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 by Armin Busse, Chair.

### **Edit Agenda**

"MC feedback form" was added to the posted agenda.

### **Announcements**

There were no announcements.

### **Old Business**

#### ***Change/accept minutes of previous meeting***

There were no changes to the draft minutes.

*Proposed:* Alan – that the draft minutes be accepted as final

*Seconded:* Marianna

*Motion carried, without objection*

**Report on Party Program Committees**

Bruce reported that programs for monthly parties were completed through January. We are on schedule as the December and January programs are due 1 October. Paula added that the Valentine's Ball program is done and has been distributed to teachers and class managers.

The policy regarding the distribution of non-RSCDS dance descriptions was repeated and clarified: Bruce will send out descriptions for non-RSCDS dance on the Valentine's Ball, the Jean Patrick Memorial dance, the Friday night Welcome dance at Asilomar and the Kim McGarrity Memorial Ball programs when requested by the event chair or the Ball Programming Continuity person (Paula).

Bruce relayed that a Branch teacher noticed that on the November Monthly party program there were three 3-couple set strathspeys. While this may be more common in other Branches, in our Branch 4-couple strathspeys are more typical. The teachers in attendance agree that set dances should be limited in a program. Variety of format is important when considering strathspeys for a program: 3-couple, square set, 5-couple are all nice options.

Alan pointed out that quick-time 3-couple dances are becoming popular in Scotland and England. Sandra added that several 3-couple strathspeys have been submitted for evaluation to be included in the upcoming Book 47.

**Courtesy**

Armin, Don MacQueen and Bruce Hamilton are in discussion regarding an article on courtesy for the Reel & Strathspey. As was reported at the last Teachers' Committee meeting (19 May, 2012), Bruce Hamilton has written on this subject many times before. If one of his previous articles can be found it could be updated and re-published.

Bradley discussed with Jamie Tanner the Teachers' Committee interest in making his Guide to the Valentine's Ball available to Branch members. Although this document contains information specific to our Valentine's Ball, there is a section on Ball etiquette which is applicable to all dance events. Jamie was happy to have his guide made available to all Branch members.

- ▶ **Action Item:** Armin will continue to work with Don MacQueen and Bruce Hamilton to come up with an article on courtesy for the Reel & Strathspey.
- ▶ **Action Item:** Bradley will have Jamie's "A Guide to the Valentine's Ball" posted to the Branch's Website.

**New Business****Discuss future Teachers' Workshop**

Trina has been organizing the Teachers' Workshop for 2013. The date has been fixed as 23 March with the workshop taking place between 10 and 2 o'clock. The workshop will be held at the West Portal Lutheran Church and School located at 200 Sloat Avenue at 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue in San Francisco. As previously reported, the workshop will be introduced by Bruce Hamilton. Patti will lead a session on microphone technique and Ron Wallace will teach the art of briefing dances. Attendees are urged to brief the dances at the April Monthly Party.

- ▶ **Action Item:** Trina will provide teachers with pertinent information about the workshop at the appropriate time.
- ▶ **Action Item:** Trina will send out a "save the date" notification via the teachers' reflector.

### ***Report from BC***

Bradley (BC – TC liaison) reported that the Branch Committee endorses the TC action to allow Part 1 teachers to vote at TC meetings and has instructed the Bylaws committee to update the bylaws accordingly.

The BC has approved our delegates for the Society AGM (3 November, 2012 in Aberdeen, Scotland). They are: Fred DeMarse, Robert MacKay, Margaret Renton, and Philip Whitley. The agenda was sent out from the Society on 24 August, the greater part of which is devoted to the election and confirmation of officers, board and committee members.

The Society wishes to increase membership dues from £15.00 to £16.00. This generated some discussion amongst teachers. It was questioned whether the Society has sufficient cause to justify a fee increase.

- ▶ **Action Item:** Bradley (BC – TC liaison) will convey to the BC the TC's objection to accept a Society membership fee increase without proper justification. If the financial reports do not support the necessity for a fee increase, the TC asks that the BC direct the delegates for the Branch to vote down this proposal.

The BC is appealing to teachers for help to find volunteers for several key posts in the Branch. There is need for Publicity and Outreach volunteers to handle and expand on the tasks previously done by Susie Langdon Kass. Susie has also relinquished her role in organizing the Branch's information tent at the Pleasanton Highland Games & Gathering: a volunteer will be needed to fill this spot.

There is great need for a volunteer to support the Branch Webmaster. If Larry Wakeman is unable to continue as Webmaster, that volunteer may be asked to take the lead role. In light of the need for Webmasters to have a back-up person, Kristi volunteered to support Armin who is the Webmaster for the Teachers' Committee Website. Problems with the Branch Website would not necessarily affect the operation of the TC Website.

- ▶ **Action Item:** Kristi will discuss with Armin the new TC Webmaster support role.
- ▶ **Action Item:** Greg will write a job description for Branch Webmaster detailing the specific technical knowledge required for that position.
- ▶ **Action Item:** Greg (Reel & Strathspeyer editor) will put a note in the R&S asking for Website, Publicity and Outreach, and Pleasanton information tent volunteers.

### ***Report on TAC***

Paula (TAC rep) has been forwarding reports from TAC through the teachers' reflector as she receives them.

It was noted next year's TAC Summer school will be held in New Brunswick, Canada. Being an odd-numbered year, no teacher examinations will be conducted

Paula stressed that as a representative of the Branch, she encourages teachers to contact her if they have concerns appropriate to the Teachers' Association (Canada). She will relay those concerns to the proper party.

A new TAC representative will be appointed in January. Paula has admirably served as TAC rep for three years.

### ***Special Topics for future Meetings***

Teacher run classes/Class Manager run classes was suggested as a round-table discussion topic. The purpose being not to dictate how a class is to be run, but rather to bring to light the pros and cons of each system.

### ***Teacher resources***

Greg Reznick submitted a proposal to address the needs of new Part 1 (Prelim) teachers.

1. Request through the Branch Committee that the Corresponding Secretary forward the names of successful candidates to the Branch Registrar and the Chair of the Teachers' Committee. The Registrar should update the status of the individuals in the Branch Directory. These tasks should be added to the job description of the parties involved.
2. That the Chair of the Teachers' Committee, or their delegate, send an e-mail to the candidates having received their Part 1 certification containing (at least) the following:
  - a. Information regarding the existence of the Teachers' Reflector and instructions on how to subscribe to it.
  - b. The addresses of the Teachers web page and a brief description as to what can be found there.
  - c. An overview of the operations and responsibilities of the Teachers' Committee.
3. That the Chair of the TC, or its delegate, be given the task of providing a copy of the relevant information from HQ regarding Unit 4, including the relevant parts of the syllabus (body and appendices), the checklist, and Notes for Mentors document.

Alan, who previously ran the Branch's Teacher candidate course, noted that mentors need the current teacher course and exam information as well as the candidates themselves. It is important that candidates and mentors have easy access to the Society's information on the examinations. Greg mentioned that Moira Thomson (Secretary to Membership Services Committee and Events Administrator at the Society Headquarters) has been very helpful in providing needed information, and that he would be willing to be a liaison to Headquarters if there is a need.

- ▶ **Action Item:** Greg to provide link (URL) to the Society's exam information on the Teachers' Website.

*Proposed:* Patti – that Greg's recommendation be approved as amended.

*Seconded:* Fred DeMarse

*Motion carried, without objection*

- ▶ **Action Item:** Bradley (BC – TC liaison) to forward Greg's teacher resource proposal to the Branch Committee for approval.

***Teachers' candidate tutoring***

Six candidates are needed to be eligible to host an examination tour. An exception may be made to accommodate five candidates, but that means the cost of the course will be borne by a smaller pool of dancers. Currently there are only two candidates expressing interest in a teacher course at this time: one for Unit 3, one for Unit 5.

Joan Baker has six candidates and will run a teacher course in Phoenix, Arizona.

- ▶ **Action Item:** Bradley (BC – TC liaison) to inform the Branch Committee that there is insufficient interest by dancers to conduct a candidates' course in preparation for teacher exams in 2013.

***MC feedback form***

Directed by the TC, an ad hoc committee of Armin, Bradley and Trina created a MC feedback form to provide an immediate survey critique of Masters of Ceremonies at monthly parties. The results will not be tabulated or otherwise collected. Only the MC's will see their own feedback. The original concept was that the form would be given to teachers attending the monthly party. This plan has changed and now the form will be made available to all participants at Monthly Parties. There will be separate boxes for each MC at the sign-in table to deposit the completed forms. The survey questions are:

1. Did this MC brief the dances clearly, providing the information needed?
2. Was this MC's manner welcoming and generally conducive to an enjoyable experience?
3. Did this MC pace the event well?
4. Did this MC manage the event well: maintaining control, arranging sets, interacting with the musicians?
5. Did this MC make it easy, accessible and enjoyable for you to dance?

It was thought that the third question regarding pacing would encompass how well the MC handled requests for encores. The attending teachers thought that an explicit question on this matter was required. Although the policy regarding encoring dances was clearly defined at the last TC meeting (19 May, 2012), dances continue to be encored with less than majority support.

- ▶ **Action Item:** Trina will update the MC feedback form to include a question on the MC's handling of encores.

It was pointed out by those who have conducted many surveys that people who fill out survey forms can be quite unsympathetic under the cloak of anonymity. Several teachers suggested and underscored that it may be wise for MC's to select a few comrades who can give them a fair and honest assessment of their role as MC. MC's who do not wish to be critiqued need not participate in the survey. The intent of the feedback form is to point out strengths and weaknesses for self-improvement.

Tangentially, it was remarked that typically all class teachers are assigned a set of dances to brief at the monthly party they host whether they are comfortable with the task or not. Teachers who do not wish to MC at events are behooved to decline the obligation. The role of MC is a job, not a bestowed honor.

As both teachers and dancers may provide feedback to MC's, it was suggested that they be identified as such on the form. While all opinions are valid, a newer dancer may have a different point-of-view than an experienced teacher.

- ▶ **Action Item:** Trina will update the MC feedback form to include checkboxes for new dancers, experienced dancers and teachers.

*Proposed:* Greg – that the Branch implement use of the revised MC feedback form at Monthly Parties from October 2012 to January 2013.

*Seconded:* Patti

*Motion carried, without objection*

The BC has previously accepted this action (2 June, 2012). Since this was a TC action and not a BC action it was not a voting issue for the BC. October to January Monthly Parties will be used to test the merits of the feedback form and if revisions are needed. The form will not be used at upcoming holiday parties. Those who MC are encouraged to give their feedback on the process to members of the TC. At the next several Monthly Parties the leading MC will notify dancers and musicians of the MC feedback form and its intent and scope.

In this discussion concerning Monthly Parties, Kristi noted that some of the documents posted on the Branch Website pertaining to Monthly Parties are out of date.

- ▶ **Action Item:** Kristi will review the various documents posted on the Branch Website pertaining to Monthly Parties and update them as needed.

## Other Business

### ***Discussion on Dances***

Kamo Karousel, by Eddy West, is on the programs of the next three monthly parties. This Intermediate/Advanced 32-bar jig contains the formation set & rotate for 3 couples (bars 17-24). The question was raised if hands should be taken at the beginning of the formation. After much discussion, and pointing out that the 1<sup>st</sup> woman and 3<sup>rd</sup> man have a longer cast compared to casts in a standard 2-couple set & rotate, the consensus of the attending teachers was that hands should be taken while setting.

Broadford Bay is on the Monthly Party programs starting in November. It is also on the program for the Kim McGarrity Memorial Ball at Asilomar. Apparently some dancers have difficulty with bars 17-24 of this RSCDS reel (meanwhile turn and cast). Dancers are cautioned not to overshoot the 4-bar chase. Teachers are asked to stress the phrasing and pacing of this combination. The transition from the grand chain (bars 9-16) is key. Jack Baxter's jig, Tiraluin--which begins with a similar turn and chase meanwhile combination--may be more approachable for some dancers and a good way for them to progress to Broadford Bay. In both dances, dancers on the fist diagonal chase halfway round while their partners turn; in the next four bars the dancers who were chasing now turn, dancers who were turning now chase.

### ***Suggestions for a new Starter Jig***

Paula knows of several dances by Derek Haynes which would work well as starter jigs. Since many of these dances are unfamiliar to our Branch members, they would have to be introduced in the body of a Monthly Party program and then placed at the beginning of the program once dancers become comfortable with them.

### ***Other announcements***

Fred Macondray reported on the need for balancing exercise to prevent injuries. It seems that Scottish Country dancers as well as ballet dancers develop strong sections of the quadriceps leg muscles. While this in itself is good, the resulting impact may not be as good. The strong muscles on the outside of the leg may overpower the less developed muscles on the inside of the leg and pull the patella (knee-cap) out of alignment. He suggests that dancers routinely exercise the inner thigh muscles (fascia medialis) by placing a spacer block of some sort (hard foam block, rolled-up towel, etc.) between the knees and squeezing the thighs together.

### ***Choose date and location for the next meetings***

The next Teachers' Committee meeting will be held at the home of Alan Twhigg in Mountain View on Saturday 19 January, 2013 at 2:00. Social time begins at 1:30.

The meeting on 18 May, 2013 will be hosted by Patti Cobb and Bruce Herbold at their house in Oakland.

No venue was chosen for the meeting tentatively scheduled for 21 September, 2013.

### ***Adjourn***

*Proposed:* Patti – that the meeting adjourn

*Seconded:* Fred DeMarse

*Motion carried, without objection*

The meeting was adjourned at 4:38 by Armin Busse, Teachers' Committee Chair

Following the meeting, the special round-table discussion was on warm-up routines and whether an established routine was better than varied exercises.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Bradley Hobbs  
Recording Secretary

### **Follow-Up Action Items**

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