



Teachers' Committee Minutes
Final

Meeting

Saturday 21 September, 2013
at the home of Kathleen McAdam, Lafayette, CA

Present

Kathy Allen, Cathy Bertics, Armin Busse, Alex Harvey, Marianna Harvey, Linda Henderson, Bruce Herbold, Bradley Hobbs, Susie Langdon Kass, Don MacQueen, Kathleen McAdam, Trina Merriman, Lin Pettengill, Alan Twigg.

Regrets

Kristi Closser, Rebecca Davis, Fred DeMarse, Gail Erwin, Bruce Hamilton, Jo Hamilton, Paula Jacobson, Sarah MacQueen, Dwayne McQuilliams, Mary McQuilliams, Gary Thomas, Ron Wallace, Tim Wilson.

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 2:15 by Armin Busse, Chair.

Edit Agenda

There were no changes 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: Bruce – that the draft minutes (19 January, 2013) be accepted as final.

Seconded: Trina

Motion carried, without objection

Report on Party Program Committees

Bruce reported that the Jean Patrick Memorial Dance program has been completed (and danced). Also completed are the programs for the Asilomar Kim McGarrity Memorial Ball, October and November's monthly parties, and the Valentine's Ball.

A program meeting to be held after the Teachers' Committee meeting will complete December and January's Monthly Party programs.

During discussion of party and ball programs, it was suggested that the Valentine's Ball – and perhaps the Asilomar Ball – be added to the list of monthly parties that is distributed to teachers and class managers.

- ▶ **Action Item:** Bradley (TC-BC liaison) will ask that the BC direct the Monthly Party Venue Coordinator include the Valentine's Ball, and at the discretion of the BC, the Kim McGarrity Memorial Ball, to the list of Monthly Parties.

Further, discussion ensued on the timeliness and relevance of the on-line Branch calendar. Consensus was reached that the Branch calendar should include all Branch events twelve months in advance.

- ▶ **Action Item:** Bradley (TC-BC liaison) will ask that the BC direct the Calendar Coordinator to ensure that all Branch events—especially all long range major events-- are included in the on-line Branch calendar twelve months or more in advance, if possible, to allow Branch members to plan accordingly. The BC will also see that this specification be included in the Calendar Coordinator's job description.

N.B.: It was clarified at the following BC meeting (5 October, 2013) that the Calendar Coordinator is in charge of the print calendar in the Reel & Strathspey. Event committees, class managers, the Monthly Party Venue coordinator are responsible for posting their events on the on-line calendar and are responsible for its inclusiveness.

Courtesy

Armin and Bruce Hamilton have created a new Branch document on courtesy protocol for classes and Branch events.

- ▶ **Action Item:** Armin will attach the courtesy document to these minutes for approval by interested Branch teachers.

It is anticipated that the document will be published in the January/February issue of the Reel & Strathspey. Once approved by Branch teachers, the document will be posted on the Teachers' Committee Webpage and sent to the Branch Webmaster to be posted on the Branch website.

- ▶ **Action Item:** Armin will send the approved document on courtesy to the editor of the Reel & Strathspey for publication and to the Branch Webmaster for inclusion on the Branch Website. Additionally, Armin (TC Webmaster) will post the document on the Teachers' Committee Webpage.

MCing – Teachers' feedback form

For the last dance year, feedback forms have been made available at Monthly parties to elicit feedback from those in attendance on their perception of how well the Master of Ceremonies carried out their duties. The questions on the form, which identified the responder's level of dancing experience, were:

1. Did this MC brief the dances clearly, providing the information needed?
2. Was this MC's manners welcoming and generally conducive to an enjoyable experience?
3. Did this MC pace the evening well?
4. Did this MC handle encores correctly (requested by >50% of dancers)?
5. Did this MC manage the event well: maintaining control, arranging sets, interacting with the musicians?
6. Did this MC make it easy, accessible and enjoyable for you to dance?

This last question was later stricken from the form, the argument being that one person could not possibly have complete control over all these elements.

Use of the form have been limited. Often those setting up the sign-in table at Monthly parties were not aware of the survey forms and did not know what to do with the forms and voting pouches stored with the other monthly party administrative supplies. While there were many feedback cards submitted in the first few months, without constant support of the project responses dwindled to five responses on average per MC as the dance year went on.

Having been implemented for a year, the TC chose this meeting to review the impact of the project, discuss its successes and shortcomings and whether the project should be continued. Reaction was polarized: some teachers felt that any feedback was valuable, while other teachers felt the project targeted them personally.

Teachers who did not favor use of the feedback cards argued that the band or sound person did not get critiqued, so the MC should not be singled out for critique and responsibility for the dancers' enjoyment. If the questions were more general, the form could still address the concerns of the party attendees without personally criticizing the MC.

Those in favor of the project reasoned that if an MC did not want feedback, they were not obligated to retrieve their cards at the end of the evening. Their cards would simply be discarded, unread. The membership needs to be comfortable at Branch functions and offering a way for them to voice their feedback can only foster this comfort. Feedback is solicited on the MC's responsibilities and not the band or the sound person because the MC is the liaison between those providing the service and those attending the party expecting to have an enjoyable evening.

Proposed: Bruce – that the MC feedback form continued to be available at Monthly parties for the 2013 -2014 dance year.

Seconded: Bradley

7 aye, 5 nay, 2 abstain. Motion carried

- **Action Item:** Armin (Chair) will send out a notice via the teachers' reflector instructing potential MC's that the MC (of Monthly parties only) explain the purpose and location of the MC feedback forms before the briefing of the last dance of the first set.

Because the forms are administrative in nature, it is fitting that they be set up on the sign-in table.

- ▶ **Action Item:** Trina (Convener of the MC feedback form ad hoc committee) will write a short explanation to be included with the feedback form supplies to instruct the hosting class on the set-up of the forms and the voting pouches.

New Business

Report from BC

Bradley (BC-C liaison) reported that the BC is recruiting a new Monthly Party Venue Coordinator as the current volunteer, Bob Branstrom, has moved out of the area and can no longer serve this post. The BC asks that teachers seek out dancers who may be willing to serve as the new Monthly Party Venue Coordinator, a volunteer position whose duties can be handled, by-in-large, by phone calls and e-mails. The need for a new Monthly Party Venue Coordinator is immediate and Bob is willing to help with the transition. Teachers are also asked to encourage dancers to fill open volunteer posts within the Branch.

The BC also wishes that more teachers would join or support the Membership Committee, whose focus is membership retainment. Membership Committee business is generally transacted by e-mails and phone calls.

The Publicity and Outreach Committee focuses on member recruitment, which would also appreciate more assistance from volunteers.

In preparation for the Society's AGM on 2 November 2013 in Perth, Scotland, the BC is asking for the opinions of members of the TC on the singular motion up for vote.

Item 12.1 from the draft agenda proposes:

"The Management Board proposes that for the year from 1st July 2014, the basic full annual subscription shall rise by £2.00 to £18.00, with other categories pro-rated as appropriate."

Currently £2.00 is equivalent to \$3.06.

Understandably, the teachers present were not enthusiastic about the fee increase but there was no opinion expressed in support or in opposition to the motion. As with last year's increase of £1.00, the Society offered no explanation or defense of the motion. The subscription rate increase may negatively affect membership renewal.

Approval of TC-BC Liaison

Bradley has been serving as the TC-BC liaison and was willing to serve for another year. By consensus, Bradley was approved to continue in this post.

Report on TAC

Trina attended the TAC AGM (27 July in Sackville, New Brunswick, Canada) in Paula's (TAC representative) stead. At the meeting, three points were raised.

TAC Books and TAC Sound, which have always dealt with hardcopy media, are now considering how to effectively use electronic media for their commerce. If their plans are successful, books would be available as pdf files and music --once sold on CDs-- would be available to download as data files.

The Teachers' Association (Canada) has also established a database of teachers to increase networking opportunities. TAC members will be able to submit a form indicating their availability for dance workshops as well as special focused areas of experience.

Trina also reported that the TAC Outreach Fund was underutilized. This fund was established to assist new groups, support live music at events, and back dance festivals. Branches can apply for aid through the TAC Website. Grants are typically up to \$600.

Special Topics for future Meetings

The next special topic for discussion is teaching dancers of more advanced age, which will be lead by Marianna Harvey.

- ▶ **Action Item:** Marianna will prepare as needed for the special topic discussion on teaching dancers of more advanced age at the January TC meeting.

Two new suggested topics were different devices to play music for classes, and the use and recruitment of musicians for classes.

Branch webmaster – TC support

Carol Hatcher is assisting Larry Wakeman with the Branch Website. Kristi had hoped to be available to assist Armin with the TC Webpage, but anticipates moving out of the area. Don volunteered to act as the back-up person for the TC Webpage. The Webpage is constructed with HTML and CSS programming languages however, Armin explained that most of the work was content management. Bruce (Monthly Party programming person) offered to provide updates to the dance repertoire file.

Report progress on database for ball program write-ups

Alan and Paula continue to work on the dance write-up database. At this point, with the rudiments in place, new program dances are added to the catalogue on as-needed bases with FileMaker. Alan estimates 20 – 40 hours are needed to bring the database up to date and would welcome volunteers with FileMaker experience to assist in completing this project.

Other Business

Discussion on Dances

This is no' my ain Hoose (Book XV, No. 9) is show incorrectly in some editions of Scottish Country Dances in Diagrams (the Wee Green Book). The WGB diagrams bars 17 – 24 with the 1st couple passing right shoulder in the middle after dancing round first corners. It was argued that the 1st couple actually dance round partners passing left shoulders as in a gypsy turn to dance round second corners.

Suggestions for a new Starter Jig

Two suggestions were offered for new jigs to start a dance program:

A Dancing Career (John Drewry, Greenburn Book 1)

A Jig to the Music (Doris Young and class, The Second Book of Graded Scottish Dances)

other announcements

Several comments were made concerning dancing at the Pleasanton Highland Games and Gathering.

There were questions about dance formats on the Jordanhill stage (high stage) for adjudication. There is a ten-minute time allotment per group, although most groups use only about five minutes to complete their dances. An extra time through a dance will not cause a group to go over the time limit, which was the concern raised. The adjudicators are merely looking to see that the dancers are enjoying themselves and are displaying their finest skills. The BC can set written rules for the Pleasanton dance stages, but it was felt that the current unwritten understanding provides more flexibility.

For dance performances on the St. Andrews stage (low stage), Greg and Olga Reznick have been the sound engineers. Although Greg is happy to accommodate groups who have music recorded on CDs, the preference is for MP3 files.

Choose date and location for next meetings

The next meeting, tentatively scheduled for 18 January, 2014, will be hosted by Bruce Herbold and Patti Cobb in Oakland

N.B.: Post-meeting, Bruce confirmed that Patti and he would be able to host the meeting on Saturday 18 January, 2014 at their new home in Oakland.

The meeting in May was not fixed at this time. It has been tentatively scheduled for 17 May, 2014 but this date may conflict with the Sacramento Ball and workshop. 31 May was suggested as an alternative—Memorial Day weekend being the weekend earlier.

N.B.: Post-meeting, it was determined that the Sacramento Ball will be held on 17 May, 2014, therefore the TC meeting is scheduled for 31 May, 2014 to avoid any conflicts.

Adjourn

Proposed: Bruce – that the meeting adjourn

Seconded: Alan

Motion carried, without objection

The meeting was adjourned at 5:19 by Armin Busse, Teachers' Committee Chair.

The special topic for discussion was using YouTube to advertise or teach classes.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bradley Hobbs
Recording Secretary

Follow-Up Action

- ▶ **Action Item:** Bradley (TC-BC liaison) will ask that the BC direct the Monthly Party Venue Coordinator include the Valentine's Ball, and at the discretion of the BC, the Kim McGarrity Memorial Ball, to the list of Monthly Parties.
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