



Teachers' Committee Minutes
Final

Meeting

Sunday 25 September 2016
at the home of Lin Pettengill, Half Moon Bay

Present

Armin Busse, Laura Cooper, Rebecca Davis, Alex Harvey, Marianna Harvey, Linda Henderson,
Bradley Hobbs, Susie Langdon Kass, Trina Merriman, Lin Pettengill,

Regrets

Kristi Closser, Juliet Davoren, Fred DeMarse, Sara Gratiot, Bruce Herbold, Paula Jacobson, Pat O'Brien,
Rachel Pusey, Sandee Schultz, Gary Thomas, Alan Twigg, Ron Wallace, Tim Wilson.

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 2:23pm by Armin Busse, Chair.

Edit Agenda

Proposal for a course aimed toward the Dancing Achievement Award (DAA) was added to the agenda.

Because the TC-BC Liaison (Bradley) was confirmed for another year at the May TC meeting, this item
was stricken from the agenda.

Announcements

There were no announcements.

Old Business

Change/accept minutes of previous meeting

Proposed: Marianna - that the [21 May, 2016 Preliminary B] minutes be accepted as final.

Seconded: Armin

Motion carried, without objection

Report on Party Program Committees

The program for the 2016 Kim McGarrity Memorial Ball at Asilomar has been completed and sent out, including the descriptions of the non-RSCDS dances.

October, November and December monthly party programs are complete. Among the dances on these programs is the 40 bar reel, "La Baratte your Way Home" (sic) written by Branch member Geoffrey Wood and included in RSCDS Book 50. Programs sent out 8 August.

The 2017 Valentine's Ball program is finished and has been distributed. Non-RSCDS dance descriptions have been sent out via the teachers' reflector.

Report on future Teachers' Workshop: Injury Prevention and Recovery

Trina has done exhaustive work to find the resource people to lead a teachers' workshop regarding injury prevention and recovery. Finally her efforts have coalesced: Robert Britton, an Alexander Technique instructor, has agreed to lead the morning workshop. From the Alexander Technique website (<http://alexandertechnique.com>), this approach to muscular efficiency is described as "... a simple and practical method for improving ease and freedom of movement, balance, support and coordination. The technique teaches the use of the appropriate amount of effort for a particular activity, giving you more energy for all your activities". The workshop will cover such topics as the function of warm-ups, the pitfalls of warm-ups and the benefits of cool-downs, which are often overlooked. Mr. Britton will also introduce us to techniques to keep us injury free as we dance. There will be a Q&A period.

This Teachers' Workshop is being planned as a morning event, 9:30-12:00 on a Saturday shortly after the 2017 Valentine's Ball. While a longer session might seem to be more practical, with concern that that much information would be overwhelming, the workshop remains as a morning event. It was suggested that an afternoon session of dancing may be a fine way to take advantage of the gathering of teachers. Trina is looking for a venue in the San Francisco or Berkeley/Oakland area for this Teachers' Workshop.

New Business

Report from BC

Bradley (BC-TC liaison) reported that with the election at the Branch AGM there have been some changes within the Branch Committee. Margaret Ward's term has ended and Mindy Brown-Lechner was voted in to take her seat. David Deacon has volunteered to assume Margaret's role as Recording Secretary.

The Santa Rosa Youth Workshop and Ball; held on 30 April, 2016; was successful. The workshop was attended by three sets of youth dancers under 35. The ball, which was open to all dancers, was enjoyed by five sets. This, the second year for this event, was chiefly organized by Levi Bailey. With the support of the Bailey family, the Santa Rosa Youth Workshop and Ball came out ahead \$155.

Many of our Branch events do not do as well, often exceeding their budgets. Monthly Parties continue to lose money on average due to declining attendance. Past surveys revealed that driving home late at night was a common reason some dancers shy away from attending Monthly Parties, especially those which are further away for them. In response, the BC has directed Mark Burt (Monthly Party Venue Coordinator) to schedule an additional party as an afternoon tea dance. For the 2016/2017 dance year, both the May party in Hayward and the June party in Aptos (hosted by Santa Cruz) will be afternoon dances starting at 3:00.

The Sound Engineer for Monthly Parties for the last twelve years has been Paula Jacobson. Paula is transitioning out of this role and is training Tom Ward and Don MacQueen to take her place. Tom has assisted Paula in setting up the sound equipment for two years. Last year Don has started learning the art and science of controlling the nuances of amplified music under Paula's tutelage.

Starting in this dance year (2016/2017), Paula will be the Sound Engineer for the South Bay and Santa Cruz Monthly Parties; Don will handle the East Bay (and presumably the Santa Rosa) Monthly Parties. Paula hopes to step down from her role as Sound Engineer at the end of the 2017/2018 dance year.

Because membership fees were increased last year (from the Society) and so as not to discourage dancers from attending the Monthly Parties, Monthly Party pricing will remain unchanged: \$18 for non-members, \$12 for members, \$6 for youth dancers and those with financial hardship, \$2 for beginner dancers in their first year with a signed form from their teacher.

Branch membership is down from last year, only because many members have not renewed their memberships. Membership renewal notices are now sent via e-mail, which some members disregard or find confusing. Even so, Gary Thomas (Branch Registrar) follows up with reminder notices. Teachers are encouraged to remind their dancers to renew their memberships (or join the Branch, as the case may be). Members can use the online directory to easily confirm if their membership is up to date by checking their profile (<http://www.rscds-sf.org> then, after signing in: Directory, My Profile). The membership expiration date is noted at the bottom of the right column of the profile header. Date of the last membership payment is noted in the next line.

The Branch Committee discussed a family membership rate. After considering many permutations and algorithms, the Branch Committee decided to simply set membership fees for youth (12-17) and young adult (18-24) dancers at their respective Society rates. There is no Branch component to their membership fee.

On the Society AGM ballot there is a singular motion: not to raise subscription fees (membership fees). Because the Society changed their legal status in 2014 to a "Scottish Charity Limited by Guarantee", there is a requirement at every AGM to have at minimum one motion for the membership to vote on. Motion 10.1 serves this purpose.

From the Society, Helen Russell (Chair-elect) has initiated a strategic aims committee aimed at fostering to the needs of the RSCDS world-wide. Ms Russell has contacted Branches to get input on Branch activities and what support they desire from the Society.

The St. Andrews stage (low stage) is in need of a slight modification following the constant impact of dancing feet during the Pleasanton Games. One of the stacks of shims, which support the cross beams shifted out of place: there was a little extra bounce in that one area of the stage. Tom Ward, who

oversees the stage set-up and disassembly, has volunteered to carry out the needed modifications to ensure that the support shims stay in place as we dance.

Also at the recent Pleasanton Highland Gathering and Games, a few dance groups had promotional postcards, which were either made available to the general public or handed out to audience members after a performance. This is proving to be an effective promotional method, which the Branch Committee would like to support by creating a Branch promotional postcard. The postcard would have one or two images of dancers, a short blurb about Scottish Country dancing and contact information, including a QR code for Smartphones.

For promotion of the Asilomar weekend, Viki Lewis has created a two-minute video, which is featured on our Asilomar webpage. There is also a twelve-minute video, which has been shown at house concert fundraisers for the Asilomar weekend. Viki would also like to make an hour-long video promoting Scottish Country dance in the Bay area, which would contain some Asilomar footage. She is seeking grant funding for this project. The Branch Committee supports her efforts and is very pleased with the videos she has made to promote the Asilomar weekend.

Jane Muirhead (Branch Bookstore Manager) continues to sell off non-Branch recordings and dance books and leaflets. This year at the Asilomar weekend, she and Pat O'Brien will discretely utilize their vehicles as the bookstore. Unlike the past many years, to save money and stay within budget, the Branch will not be renting a room for the bookstore. On Sunday morning, the bookstore will be at Hearthiside (the non-stage end of Merrill Hall).

At the May TC meeting under the topic of Guidance and Courtesy, there was a discussion of dress standards at formal events. The attendees at that meeting felt that the standards should be upheld in respect for the other dancers and the committee, which worked hard to cultivate an elegant and celebratory ambiance. The BC, however, felt differently. The overriding sentiment was that any sort of suggested dress code could be interpreted as intimidating and inhospitable.

Although a different group of teachers were assembled at today's meeting than at the May meeting, they concurred with the sentiments of their fellow teachers. As formal wear is de rigeur for formal events, education and information would be the best way to maintain that standard. The standard need not be intimidating to new or visiting dancers: minimally a dress shirt and dress slacks for the men, a nice dress or even a blouse and skirt for the ladies. The term, "Sunday best" was mentioned, although this expression may have lost its meaning in modern times. For a more elegant standard, used clothing stores should be replete with bride's maids' gowns. Many kilt shops rent Highland gear for the gentlemen.

Teachers and class managers are urged to educate their dancers on dress standards for each event: classes are casual dress, balls are formal dress. For the informative element, it is advised that the Valentine's Ball and the Asilomar weekend media simply state that the balls are "Formal dress".

Report on TAC

Trina Merriman (TAC representative for the Branch) attended the Teachers' Association (Canada) AGM and Summer School held at Bishop's University in Sherbrooke, Quebec, Canada from 28 July to 7 August. The San Francisco Branch was well represented with Gary Thomas managing the music shop, TAC Sound;

Fred DeMarse teaching and Linda Henderson as MC for the Tuesday evening dance. Twelve Branch members were present at TAC Summer School.

With Linda as MC and Gary and Trina briefing the dances, the evening progressed very smoothly. The next day, the clarity and efficiency of the briefings was the subject of talk around the campus. Apparently other briefers are not as organized or succinct as our teachers.

Also unique to our Branch is our Children's Ball. It seems that having a formal dance specifically for young dancers is extraordinary. At the TAC representatives' meeting, the issue was raised how to get young people to dance. Trina reported to the group the various methods the SF Branch uses to attract youth and young dancers and keep them as a vital part of our branch. Examples of this strategy, beyond the Children's Ball, include multiple children's classes, reduced pricing at Branch events for Youth and Young Adult dancers, and other events geared towards our younger dancers. It was revealed at the TAC Representative's meeting that TAC reps would like educational workshops during their portion of the week's gathering.

Society Chairman Jim Healy addressed the AGM attendees. He was there the whole week, talking to dancers and eagerly listening to their comments and concerns. At the AGM, the motion passed to allow non-RSCDS certificated SCD teachers to join TAC at an associate level. The TAC Executive will draft the details of this new membership level guided by information garnered from the survey on the matter.

Next year, the TAC AGM and Summer School will be at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada—21-30 July (21-23 for TAC representatives). Cecily Selling is stepping down as the area representative to TAC. Theresa Lockhart will be taking her position.

Selection of Party Program Committees

The program for the Kim McGarrity Memorial Ball 2017 is due 1 March, while the program for the Jean Patrick Memorial Dance is due 15 March. There were, however, no volunteers to serve on either program committee.

- ▶ **Action Item:** Armin (Chair) will send out requests for volunteers to serve on program committees for the Kim McGarrity Memorial Ball and the Jean Patrick Memorial Dance via the teachers' reflector.

This discussion brought up the question of how newer Branch members were made aware of whom Kim McGarrity and Jean Patrick were. It was pointed out that their biographies were included in the Members' handbook (www.rscds-sf.org/branch/MembersHandbook/Handbook.htm) for that very reason.

The Members' Handbook was delivered to every Branch member when it was first printed in 2004, with the intent that new members would get a copy when they joined the Branch. As it turns out, we went through the first printing some years ago. Lacking hardcopy handbooks, Gary Thomas (Registrar) has been sending the website link to new members.

With the knowledge that there were no hardcopies of the handbook, a committee was formed to revise and update the Members' handbook as needed. Laura volunteered to be the convenor. Bradley and Susie—who served on the original committee—joined in. Rebecca also volunteered for this committee.

- ▶ **Action Item:** Bradley (BC-TC Liaison), request from the BC funding for a reprint of the Members Handbook, 2nd Edition.

The initial run might need to be larger because for the last ten years, new members didn't get a physical book.

Candidate Class

Presently there are six candidates for the Teacher Candidate Course, with a possibility of three other dancers taking the exam through our Branch. Six is the minimum number of dancers needed to be an exam center on the Teachers' Association (Canada) sponsored examination tour without incurring expenses for the examiners. Armin has confirmed that he will be the lead tutor of this course, with Alan Twigg and Paula Jacobson lending support, as reported in the May 2016 minutes. Barring any scheduling conflicts, Lyle Ramshaw and Susan Worland-Bentley will be the musicians for the exam and will also play for perhaps two classes as well. Bruce Hamilton was recommended to coach the candidates on the art of briefing dances. It was suggested that the training also cover teaching the elderly and those with physical difficulties (especially the hard of hearing).

There will be ten classes in preparation for the Unit 2, 3 and 5 exams in Spring 2017. Eight of those classes are scheduled for the following Sundays, 2:00 -6:00:

January 15, 22
February 12, 26
March 12, 26
April 9, 16

Classes will take place at the American Legion Hall, 1504 Minnesota Avenue, San Jose—the hall where the San Jose Monday night class meets.

Discuss future Teachers Workshops

At this time, the only Teachers' workshop is the one being planned for February/March 2017 on injury prevention and recovery.

Special Topics for future Meetings

Several suggestions of special topics were made at the May 2016 TC meeting. There were no additional suggestions at today's meeting.

Dancing Achievement Award

The Dancing Achievement Award, previously known as the Dancing Proficiency Award, is given to dancers who demonstrate mastery in their dancing. There are three levels to this award: Intermediate,

Advanced, and Very Advanced. A preparatory course spanning at minimum five hours is required before testing for each level of this award.

Trina has done the groundwork to get a course established within our Branch. Fred DeMarse and Linda Henderson would teach the courses. Ron Wallace, as certified examiner, would be a good choice to be the assessor, but that decision is up to the Society.

Trina is looking for a venue in Berkeley/Oakland to hold classes and envisions this at being a bi-annual occurrence. The Society would cover the assessor's fee; the dancers would pay £21 to the Society for evaluation fees.

Other Business

Discussion on Dances

No dances were brought up for resolution.

Suggestions for a new Starter Jig

"Orpington Caledonians" from RSCDS Book 49 was suggested as a starter jig, although it is a reel.

Other announcements

Rachel Pusey is interested in establishing periodic ceilidh dancing in the South Bay. Having research other dance groups meeting schedules, she feels that the third Saturday of the month would be the best day to hold this dance with minimal or no impact to other dance groups' (Branch, ECD, Contra) affairs.

While this could be a feeder event for Branch classes, there was limited concern that the flow could go the other way and drain dancers from classes. Rachel would like to start ceilidh dances around Burns' night and continue once every other month for March, May and July.

Choose date and location for next meetings

Marianna Harvey will host the next meeting on 21 January, 2017.

Adjourn

Proposed: Trina – that the meeting adjourn

Seconded: Laura

Motion carried, without objection

The meeting was adjourned at 5:07pm by Armin Busse, Teachers' Committee Chair.

Because of the full agenda, no post-meeting special topic was scheduled.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bradley Hobbs
Recording Secretary

Follow-Up Actions

- ▶ **Action Item:** Armin (Chair) will send out requests for volunteers to serve on program committees for the Kim McGarrity Memorial Ball and the Jean Patrick Memorial Dance via the teachers' reflector.

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