

## **Minutes of San Francisco Scottish Dancers Annual Class Meeting Sunday June 6, 2010, 3-6pm, Bruce & Patti's house**

**Present:** Susie, Isabel, Sid, Trina, Jeff, Bruce, Sylvain, Eileen, Linnea, Mark, Tom, Diane, Donald, Roberta, Patti, Ken, Donna, Debbie

Class manager Linnea Johnson chaired the meeting. Meeting called to order approx. 3:15pm.

### **Committee Reports**

**Finance Committee:** Roberta distributed copies of Profit & Loss (P & L) report to the group. The report showed P & Ls for this year to date and those for the corresponding period in 2008-2009. Additional P & Ls were for period including the summer, namely Sept 2008-Aug 2009 and Sept 2007- Aug 2008.

Patti highlighted some details in these reports:

- \$1106.10 deficit this year as opposed to profit of \$811.57 last year
- Deficit this year mainly due to lower attendance and so less fees taken in – both basic and intermediate classes are smaller this year.
- No basic class continuing from the fall means this low enrollment carries forward
- Parties did better this year (apart from Winter Solstice Party)
- Donations were down
- Slight increase in expenses, though rent (the major expense) is flat
- Teachers' pay less (due to no fall basic class)
- As of May 30, 2010 bank account balance is \$2239.32

Discussion centered on how to combat decline in revenue and what is the critical mass to break even for the class. Comments included "spend less on gifts", rent is major expense and teacher costs are minimal for the summer, three more people each week would break even, three sets would be ideal for dancing in intermediate class, more publicity should be given to the fact that donations to the branch are tax-deductible.

**Publicity Committee:** Eileen distributed a report detailing types of publicity used this past year. They include paid advertising in neighborhood publications, websites, postcards, flyers and a demo at the Glen Park Festival. Budget is \$250 of which the largest line item is \$75 to have flyers posted by Thumbtack Bugle. Some of the other publicity methods are free (Craig's List) or have a sunk cost (postcards via Dancer's Group distribution).

Discussion centered on relative effectiveness of the various methods. Participation in the Solano Stroll works well for the Berkeley group so our group will look into participating in Bay Area Dance Week (BANDW - happens in April/May with admission process beginning in December) and in the Noe Valley Harvest Fair (October). Patti proposed, Tim seconded, that our class participate in BANDW by

having a one-hour intro' class. Patti and Publicity Committee will research the most effective way to participate in the Noe Valley Harvest Fair. Susie commented that the entire class has to take ownership of postering and flyer distribution.

**Class Manager:** Linnea commented that help is always needed for the monthly and solstice parties. Donna asked if we should consider cutting back on decorations for these parties to save money, time and effort. There was discussion about decorating for the solstice parties including the following points:

- Linnea reported that many of the decorations are just sitting in her garage so no extra cost is involved
- She would appreciate someone else take charge of decorating
- Winter solstice party decorations are beautiful and they stay up to benefit the church through the holiday period, no need to take down at end of party
- Cut out summer solstice party or scale back on its decorations that need to be removed on the night
- Solstice party decorations are part of class tradition so shouldn't be omitted entirely
- From financial standpoint, keep summer solstice party & cut back on its décor

Patti proposed, Trina seconded, that Sylvain should be officially appointed as Assistant Class Manager. Sylvain accepted the position.

There was a general consensus that both solstice parties should be retained but that decorations should be scaled back, particularly for the Summer Solstice Party coming up on June 24, 2010.

Linnea was acknowledged and thanked for her long-term commitment as class manager.

**Music:** Patti reported that Joy and Michael are increasingly more able to handle musical responsibilities and are happy to do so. She commented that there is a good balance of strengths between the two of them. Those present thanked Patti for all her work regarding the music and asked her to pass along our thanks to Joy and Michael.

Patti would like to be able to dance more; as Joy and Michael mature in their roles this becomes more possible. Donald volunteered to play drums (be the rhythm section) on occasion.

Re. summer music: Patti is not able to co-ordinate musicians through the summer but it looks like this will be a non-issue. David Strong is back on July 24 and will play at various times through the summer. Michael has volunteered to play for the adjudication team and Joy will play for the class so most Thursdays are covered. Sylvain volunteered to help out. Taped music is a back-up.

Comment was made that many classes only have taped music so we are extremely fortunate to have wonderful live musicians.

**Publications:** Tim has obtained permission from all but three people involved in the original Solstice Party Book (out of print) to scan and create a digital version of the book. Given that SF Collection Vol. I is a free download, he doesn't feel that we can charge for the digital Solstice Party Book. It was suggested that it be noted that donations are welcome and that we put both an address to mail a donation to and a PayPal button on the website.

Discussion ensued over the class website. Many of those present didn't know that there was one. It was recommended that the website address be made more prominent and also listed in the Class Directory.

## **Upcoming Activities and New Proposals**

**Hall Search:** The Noe Valley Ministry is closing for renovations from January 2011 and so we need to find a new class space from that date. A Hall Search Committee was formed comprising Sylvain as co-ordinator, Susie and Mark. All class members should be on the look-out for venues and let Sylvain know of any possibilities. Sylvain has started collecting requirements for the class space: these include size, cost, location, liability.

Initial parameters are that we need 18' x 36' minimum space, with a wooden sprung floor at \$550 rent per month or less.

Jeff volunteered to check out spaces in Presbyterian churches.

Susie posed the question "where would you go to class?" which led to a discussion of the relative importance of area parking, safety, ease of access via public transportation and maintaining comfort levels of visitors for parties.

Linnea summed up the hall search process: committee meeting to set parameters, information gathering, locating suitable spaces, class meeting or similar to vote. She noted that we might have to make sacrifices in our move.

**Solstice Party Dates:** Susie put forward several possibilities for the Winter Solstice party date.

They were: Thursday Dec 16, Thursday Dec 23 and the Saturday between, Dec 18. Discussion concluded that Saturdays in December were always very busy so while we might get a better turn-out for a Saturday, this was not guaranteed, and it would also involve an extra rental cost. By a show of hands, Dec 16 was the date confirmed for the Winter Solstice party.

**Carpooling:** Discussion focused on various ways to put carpools together for Thursday class and monthly parties. Two suggestions both used a dedicated carpool clipboard. One had drivers posting spaces available in their car and the other a sheet with columns of drivers and riders. Patti volunteered to draft a carpool form. For events/monthly parties, this will also incorporate places that have been offered for people to stay.

**Locking-up:** Susie & Sid have been locking up forever and would like to “retire” from this responsibility. Tim volunteered to take over on lock-up and was thanked by the group for stepping up. Flyers will need to be collected in a timely fashion. There was discussion about starting the class a bit earlier as we must be out by 10pm in order to comply with the Noe Valley Ministry’s licence. Official start time of class is now 7:50pm. Susie will change Summer Solstice Party flyers to new time 7:50-9:50pm.

**Changes to Structure of Basic Class:** This topic was brought up because, this year, only one of two starting basic classes retained students. Bruce noted that the Berkeley class has beginning dancers starting in September, January and March and suggested that we go with the idea of multiple recruitment times, starting at the end of October after the Noe Valley Harvest Fair, with another push in January in the new class space. Linnea commented that flyers are already out with a September date. Susie suggested an open enrollment period for September & October and a short intro’ session (like the five weeks starting in January 2010). Donald observed that there are many barriers to beginning Scottish dancers, as opposed to his square dance class where they can start anytime and the teacher gets them in somehow. He suggested having more ceilidh dancing and less teaching for intro’ periods. Bruce commented that there are always choices made and balance sought in respect of the teach/dance combination.

Patti proposed, Susie seconded, holding open enrollment in the fall, another push in January and possibly a third in April. First class continues to be free, but new dancers would get a discount if they pay on the first night.

Mark pointed out that the basic class structure might have to be changed again in the new space.

Additional note: During discussion re. teacher recommendations it was agreed that the success or failure (in terms of people continuing) of a beginner/basic class rests to a large degree on the chemistry amongst the beginner group rather than the specific teacher.

## **Teachers For Next Year’s Classes**

All teachers expressed their wishes and availability for 2010-2011.

**Patti** is delighted to fill in as needed and would be willing to do up to ¼ year teaching the basic class.

**Susie** would like to do the basic class, not the experienced. OK with part year and not available in January.

**Trina** would like to do one section of the experienced class and one section of basic class.

**Bruce** is happy to teach the intermediate and/or the basic class. He noted that this will be a killer year for the class and we need to put the needs of the class high.

**Tim** is willing to teach either class but would like to have a break and not teach the entire year.

All teachers confirmed that they would prefer not to split a session.  
Roberta expressed thanks to all the teachers on behalf of the class.

The teachers left while those present discussed the teachers' wants and what people felt that would work well for the class as a whole. The following recommendations were made for September 2010 - June 2011.

<u>Session</u>	<u>Basic Class</u>	<u>Experienced Class</u>
1 <sup>st</sup>	Trina	Bruce
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Bruce	Tim
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Susie	Bruce

Trina will be the sub for the experienced class if she is not teaching the basic one.  
Patti can sub in either class.

The teachers accepted.

### **Other Business**

- Sylvain offered to help Linnea with gift buying
- Jeff told the group that he and Diane have greatly enjoyed their five years dancing with the class and found it to be an incredible community experience
- Susie asked how people felt about changing the class night. The consensus was that the additional disruption of changing nights would be considered if that was the only alternative to find a suitable space for the class

Patti moved to adjourn the meeting at 6pm.

On behalf of the group, Mark thanked Bruce and Patti for hosting the meeting.

Minutes prepared by Debbie Saunders