

The Scottish Country Dance Society of Boston, MA, Inc.
Minutes of the Semi-Annual General Meeting, 3 November 2014

The meeting was called to order at 7:55 PM by President Jeremy Thorpe.

Minutes of the SAGM: Gregor Trinkaus-Randall moved and Lance Ramshaw seconded adoption of the minutes of the June 9, 2014 AGM. The minutes were unanimously approved as written.

Treasurer's Report, 2013 - 2014: Bob Littlehale reported that the Branch had one of its worse years financially. There is \$26,661.88 in the Main Account and \$1,365.28 in the Lloyds Account for a total of \$28,027.16. One line item not included is the insurance cost of approximately \$2,000 for coverage at Pinewoods for ESS and Scottish Sessions. ESS 2014 incurred a loss of nearly \$8,000, of which CDS paid for half after discussions with Judy Erickson. ESS has suffered overall losses for nearly all of the last 10 years or so. Pinewoods Scottish Sessions also incurred a loss of approximately \$1,680.91. In conclusion, after 16 years as Branch Treasurer, Bob Littlehale announced that he will not run for re-election in June, 2015.

Pinewoods Camp, Inc.: Bill Card's report was a compilation of information from Board of Directors meetings, a Facilities Committee telecom, and reports from the Executive Director.

Schedules for 2015 have been set. The Country Dance & Song Society has decided to discontinue their English & American week in August. The week has already been filled for 2015 but is available to an existing Program Provider or even a new Program Provider for 2016. The camper fee for 2015 has been set at \$51.25 per camper night, an increase of 1.5% from 2014 but in line with the usual increases.

There are two scholarship grant programs available for attending Pinewoods. The Next Generation Initiative (NGI) Program is offered by Pinewoods, and there are various scholarships offered by the Branch through the Scottish Dance and Cultural Education Association (SDCEA). The Scots are allowed 5 NGI Scholarships for ESS and Scottish Sessions together, and all 5 were used in 2014.

Projects for 2014 consisted of renovations to the Shower House "Amsterdam" and construction of cabins "Rory O'More" and "Money Musk." The main project for 2015 is renovations and repairs to "Pinecones," including replacing the roof, replacing shingles, repairing trim, and construction of a new porch and bedroom on the south side (back). The work also includes code-legal electric wiring and a new kitchen floor. "Pinecones" should be ready for the Scots to see during Volunteer Work Weekends in spring 2015.

The Scots continue to be quite generous financially to Pinewoods, and they are extremely appreciative.

The Pinewoods website, www.pinewoods.org, has been in service for a few years, but a few dead links and outdated documents have been noted. The website is going to be revised and updated by its original preparer, Ethan Hazzard-Watkins. Pinewoods also has a Facebook group and a YouTube channel that is linked to their website.

Lastly, Pinewoods will be celebrating its Centennial of country dancing in 2019. Plans are already underway and may include the return of "20 tables of 8" that was so much fun in 2012. They are hoping that the Scots will join them and bring a lot of friends as well!

Pinewoods Scottish Sessions 2014: Jeremy Thorpe and Kendra Eshleman reported two successful sessions, with a wonderful music and teaching staff. Camp was nearly full with 143 for session I and 142 for session II. During their two years as co-chairs, Jeremy and Kendra have been compiling detailed information that they will pass along to the next co-chairs.

English-Scottish Session 2014: The ESS Committee, consisting of Jerome Fung, Meghan Murray, Marissa Roque, and Jean Monroe, reports that ESS 2014 was a great experience, led by teachers Mel Briscoe, Robert McOwen, Barbara Finney, Anna Rain, and Michael Gorin and spectacular music by Dave Wiesler and friends. Unfortunately, ESS 2014 was marred by a severe attendance problem despite aggressive efforts by the committee. Total attendance was about 95 people, 20 below the minimum charged by Pinewoods Camp, Inc. and about 60% of total camp capacity. This led to a massive budget shortfall of \$8000, a loss that is being split between CDS and the Branch. The Committee recognizes that a loss of this magnitude is unacceptable and unsustainable for the future and that ESS has been struggling for the past few years with attendance and finances. The Committee consequently believes that ESS is unlikely to remain viable if its format and/or offerings do not substantially change. "Mixed" sessions such as ESS offer unique opportunities to campers and staff but also pose an organizational challenge. In recognition of this and to keep a Scottish-themed session with a different flavor from Pinewoods Scottish Sessions at Pinewoods, concrete steps toward major restructuring are being taken by the ESS Committee in conjunction with the leadership of RSCDS Boston and CDS Boston Centre. The Committee expresses its thanks to the 140 responses to their recent survey that in turn will help in the restructuring process. Please stay tuned for information concerning the revamped ESS.

New Hampshire Highlands 2014: Loren Wright reported that 81 people, including 6 full-time staff members, 3 part-time musicians, and 4 non-dancers, attended New Hampshire Highlands 2014. The music staff, led by Terry Traub, also included Barbara McOwen and Emerald Rae plus Stephen Thomforde, Howard Lasnik, and Robert McOwen playing for the evening parties. The teaching staff consisted of Janet Walker, Jen Schoonover, and Susan Eisley. The first two classes of the day were the usual graded classes, while during the third period, Janet taught a class featuring Hugh Foss dances, Jen taught Cape Breton dancing, and Susan conducted a party prep session.

Sixteen people stayed in the dormitories and the remaining 65 filled all the available space in the Retreat House. Once again, we made good use of the Retreat House great room, including holding two classes, Debbie Douthart's tea, Veronica's Attic, the Branch Bookstore, and the Saturday evening ceilidh. The tea, which featured a "Downton Abbey" theme, was enthusiastically received.

Thanks to the donation from Veronica's Attic, New Hampshire Highlands 2014 ended up in the black.

New Hampshire Highlands 2015 will occur on August 28 – 30 (4th full weekend in August).

Lance Ramshaw moved and Peter Olszowka seconded to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Haines, Secretary