

The Scottish Country Dance Society of Boston, MA, Inc.
Minutes of the Semi-Annual General Meeting, 4 November 2019

The meeting was called to order at 7:54 PM by President Jeremy Thorpe.

Minutes of the AGM: The minutes of the AGM 3 June 2019 were approved as submitted.

Treasurer's Report, 2018 - 2019: Cathy Crabtree's report highlighted the Branch's financial position as of September 30, 2019, the end of the fiscal year. The total liabilities and net assets stand at \$60,677.34. The Highland Ball made a small profit, while Scottish Sessions Pinewoods and ESCape were both quite successful and cleared a profit. ESCape was fortunate in that several people donated services, and Scottish Sessions Pinewoods had a teacher who returned their honorarium. The Boston Scottish Country Dancers were not so successful, due in part to fewer paying gigs. The Workshops sponsored by the Teaching and Music Committee also had a small shortfall that was covered by the Branch.

Pinewoods Camp, Inc.: Bruce Mabbott, the RSCDS representative to the Pinewoods Executive Board, presented his report on the state of Pinewoods. Since the AGM, there has been a lot happening at camp! The Executive Director, Carl, had a busy summer, and the Board of Directors just had their Fall retreat weekend.

The building of the new infrastructure around camp continues. This past off-season:

- The new deck at C# has been well received and, during this off-season, will be completed.
- New handrails have been installed at a lot of cabin entrances.
- Two new crew cabins have been built up in the Highlands.
- New aluminum dock sections
- Royton bathroom upgrades

The following projects are planned for the upcoming off-season:

- Bathroom upgrades for Fieldtown and Longborough
- Hot water installed in Grenoside, Fieldtown, Longborough, and Hunsdon House
- Raising the roof in Newbiggin by about 2 feet – The design is completed and pricing received.
- Re-roofing cabins – about 20 more to go. This is the last phase of this multi-year project. We will be good for about 30 years!
- Logo sales in camp office basement
- Drainage in Hunsdon parking lot

There was a medical emergency in C# during one of the CDSS sessions this summer, and the AED from the camp office was successfully used to resuscitate a camper whose heart had stopped. This incident shone a spotlight on some issues. What if it had happened somewhere else in camp? It is likely that if this had happened at the dining hall or Pinecones, then the camper would not have made it by the time the AED was fetched.

Pinewoods is now installing two new AEDs (one at the dining hall and another at Pinecones) so that our response can be better in the future. Also, evacuation procedures from C# were changed to get other campers out of the area while the medical personnel were working. In the dark, this was tough, so emergency floodlights will be installed and can be activated in a situation such as this so that everyone can get out of the area quickly.

Dennis, who replaced Tony as the maintenance guru and all-around camp caretaker, is working out well. He is working part time year round, and this change seems to be much more beneficial to the camp. Lots of little upgrades are being tackled!

Pinewoods instituted a fragrance-free policy this past summer, and, so far, it has been relatively successful with minimal pushback. Fragrance-free shampoo, conditioner, and soap are available in all shower rooms, which means you have less you need to bring to camp, so you can bring back much more Pinewoods clothing!

More tree clearing is being planned for the off-season with about 60 more trees proactively being removed as they are in danger from winter storms that might occur. These trees are mostly beech trees that have been compromised by a blight. As these trees get more diseased, the higher the likelihood that they will topple or snap during storms.

They are also removing brush back from the cabins to a distance of about 10 feet. This helps to provide a fighting chance if a fire should erupt.

New Generation Initiative (NGI) scholarships continue to provide opportunities for young adults to enjoy sessions at camp that they otherwise might not be able to afford. Hard as it is to believe, some of these scholarships go unused, so please make sure you apply for them!

Pinewoods is also incredibly grateful to the generosity of the Scots. Thank you again!

That is all the news from Pinewoods Camp, Inc. and enjoy any sessions you go to this summer!

Pinewoods Scottish Sessions, 2019: Co-chairs Laurie Somario and Katarina Dutton presented this report on behalf of themselves and their third co-chair, Ellen Scannell-Woods.

Scottish Sessions 2019 at Pinewoods was a wonderful time, "Back to the Highlands," for all that attended. Anyone who applied before the application deadline was accepted to at least one of the two sessions. Session 1 was a completely subscribed session with a remaining wait list of 10 people. Session 2 was nearly completely subscribed, with only 3 unfilled camper slots. Session 1 had sixteen first time campers, session 2 had thirteen. Scholarship opportunities were well utilized in both sessions. There were 3 NGI recipients in each session, six kitchen work exchange recipients in session 1 and seven in session 2. We were fortunate to have many people helping our campers enjoy every moment of their time

spent at camp between classes with many memorable parties, after parties, and late night camp house dancing. Our final positive income was \$3654.74.

This year we had several great teachers from far and near. Jean Dodds from Australia, Janet Johnston from Scotland, Lance Ramshaw and Howard Lasnik from Massachusetts, Lois New from New York, and Katherine Giacoletti from Philadelphia. We also had Laura DeCesare, Anna Rain, and Catherine Scannell teaching for our potpourri classes. And dare some say their favorite class of rejuvenating stretching, yoga, led by Roberta Lasnik. The teachers were well received with high praises from all classes and compliments on different teaching styles.

This year we had the fabulous Elke Baker as our music director. She hired as many talented musicians named Elizabeth as she could find, including the lovely Liz Donaldson, the brilliant Beth Murray, and the exceptional Elizabeth Anderson. They were joined by the amazing Anne Hooper, the divine Dave Wiesler, the laudable Larry Unger, and the unalliterative but absolutely awesome Keith Smith, for a truly spectacular band.

Our morning pipes were provided by longtime Pinewoods favorite Dan Emery. Classes were played both by the regular staff musicians and aided by almost a dozen camper musicians. Altogether, the musical team did a top-notch job and created the kind of musical magic that our camp is so well known for.

We were lucky as co-chairs to be able to raise the musician salary this year, to help keep Pinewoods camp competitive with similar musical opportunities, and show our musicians how much we appreciate the hard work they do bringing the dances to life. Elke will be music director again for Pinewoods 2020, and we are already looking forward to some of the names she has been suggesting – it promises to be another fantastic lineup!

ESCAPE 2019: Co-chairs Daniel Potter and April Birnie forwarded the report that was read by Jeremy Thorpe.

Dates: July 1-5, 2019

Staff:

- Melissa Running (English)
- Katherine Giacoletti (Scottish)
- Carl Levine (Contra and a Moth story-telling workshop)
- David Roodman (Morris)
- Julie Vallimont (Sound)
- Jim Fownes (Sound)
- Dave Weisler (musician)
- Susie Petrov (musician)
- Aaron Marcus (musician)
- Susie Lorand (musician)
- Josh Burdick (musician)
- Nora Smith (musician)
- Laurie Tupper (musician)
- Dan Emery (piper)

ESCAPE 2019 was a rousing success! We had 127 total campers (including staff), so camp felt full, but the dance floors were not crowded. The majority of campers came from Massachusetts and the greater New England area, though we also had campers from Oregon, California, Finland, and the Czech Republic. Our age breakdown skewed older: 69 campers were over 51 years old, while we had 25 campers who were 15-30 years old and 33 campers who were 31-50 years old. We had thirty-two campers who had never been to

ESCAPE before, which was about 25% of the total campers, and we had 14 people who were new to Pinewoods.

This past summer, we reintroduced a daily contra class during the morning. When such a class was last programmed, it was poorly attended, but now with ESCAPE in its 5th year, we felt there were enough contra dancers to support a class. Luckily, we were correct. Contra was programmed against experienced Scottish and the Morris class, and all three sessions had about 30 people every day. This gives us the confidence to continue to program a morning contra for next year.

This was the second year that ESCAPE has used gender-free dance role terminology, and the first year that we have gone completely gender-free. Both Katherine and Carl called using "larks and ravens," and Melissa used positional language. On Tuesday during tea, we held a conversation about the choice to move away from gendered language in dancing that was co-chaired by Aaron Marcus, Carl Levine, and Daniel Potter. The conversation was well attended and continued beyond the teatime. Though some faces were noticeably missing from camp this year because of the switch to gender-free calling, our numbers show that the decision has not hurt the future of the session. We plan on continuing to use gender-free dance terminology in 2020.

One exciting occurrence at camp was the power outage we suffered on Tuesday afternoon. The power went out around 4:30 PM and did not come back until about 1:00 or 2:00 AM. Most people did not even notice at first that we had lost power, though camp manager Carl and office manager Thom were hard at work making provisions to best accommodate us through the outage. The generator that powered the kitchen meant that our dinner was not delayed, though we ate on plasticware to avoid having to run the dishwasher. For the evening dance, Carl and Thom brought all of the lanterns and flashlights they could and set them up on benches that ran in between the sets. Our three callers quickly adjusted their programs to consist of dances that could be danced from just a briefing, as there would be no microphone to use to be heard over the music. Susie Petrov rallied all of the musicians to play acoustically for the first contra set, and some even played the whole night (as opposed to two of the three thirds of the dance). During the English portion, some musicians even took to roaming on the dance floor as they played. It was a truly magical night, and many campers told us in their evaluations that we should consider programming an acoustic night again whether or not the power goes out. We are considering it. One budget note: because of the additional playing that the musicians did on Tuesday night and as compensation for the hardship of playing acoustically, we gave each musician an additional \$30 in cash to supplement the check that was already cut for them.

This past year, we made about \$3,200. Because we are stable financially, we have made the choice to hire an additional full-time musician, upgrading our piper position (which will continue to be filled by Dan Emery in 2020) from a full-ride position to a paid position.

Additionally, we have chosen to increase the stipend for all musicians and callers from \$400 to \$450. These changes can be seen reflected in our budget.

We are almost finished finalizing our staff for 2020:

- Jenny Beer (English)
- Marc Hartstein (Scottish)
- Luke Donforth (Contra)
- Nancy Barbour (Rapper)
- Dereck Kalish (Sound)
- TBA (Sound)
- Dave Weisler (musician)
- Kristen Pleneaux (musician)
- Julie Vallimont (musician)
- Peter Macfarlane (musician)
- Catherine Miller (musician)
- Adam Oleksa (musician)
- Christopher Jacoby (musician)
- Dan Emery (musician)

ESCape 2020 will be July 6-10, 2020. I hope we will see some of you there!

New Hampshire Highlands Dance Weekend, 2019: Roberta Lasnik reported that about 70 dancers enjoyed the weekend teaching of Chris Ronald, Linda Henderson, and Robert McOwen. Fantastic music was provided by music director Terry Traub along with Barbara McOwen and Emerald Rae on fiddles and Howard Lasnik on percussion.

The weather was perfect for dancing – warm days and cool nights, and Elizabeth Anderson was our Lifeguard on Saturday. Thom Howe brought the Branch sound system, and music filled the dance hall.

Betty Allen and Bob Littlehale made buttons that we could all read, and “The Connecticut Ladies” devised the Grand March, to the pipes of Campbell Webster, that ended in sets ready for the evening dance devised by Chris Ronald.

Mike Little brought the Branch Bookstore and did a brisk business. Gary Apfel kept the Ceilidh moving along with many acts including a signed reading by Morgan Henry, a dance and song routine from the Nashua group, a fiddle and dance swap by Malka Rae and Emerald Rae, and a flute duet by Ilana Schmitt and Alex Bowers. We also remembered the too soon passing of Gregor Trinkaus-Randall with a reading by Deirdre Rees.

Many thanks to all who helped out at the ice cream party, Saturday afternoon tea, silent auction, candlelight supper on Saturday, setting up and clearing the dining hall and hanging and packing away the “blue bunting.”

All the dances taught in the classes have been posted on the RSCDS Boston Branch website.

Save the date – August 28 – 30, 2020!

Respectfully submitted, the New Hampshire Highlands Committee (Gary Apfel, Gillian Charters, Susan Haines, Roberta Lasnik, Loren Wright)

Other Business:

- Evelyn Murray will continue to work with Barbara McOwen from long distance on the *Tartan Times*. Thank you, Evelyn!
- The Bookstore Managers are looking toward stepping down from their position. Responsibilities consist of storage of the inventory of about 12 banker-sized boxes, attending some Branch events, keeping the books, and connecting with the Branch Treasurer for financial interactions (income and expenses). The Bookstore is present at Pinewoods to sell publications and musicians' items. Expenses to the Branch include the buying and shipping of publications from overseas.
- Thank you to Linda McJannet, Robert McOwen, and Cathy Crabtree for your hard work on the recent Ceilidh!

The meeting was adjourned at 8:43 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Haines
Boston Branch Secretary

