



THE BLETTHERS



Ingrid Kendall, Chair

Laurie Walter, Editor

June Workshop: Don't forget that our peerless June Workshop will be held this year in Valparaiso, IN, on June 7-9 (a week later than usual and a boon for those of us with other commitments in June). Teachers will be Jim Rae (Lockerbie, Scotland), Fiona Miller (Lethbridge, Alberta), and Charles Inglis (Ottawa, Ontario) and music will once again be by Tullochgorum. For more information, contact Noel Chavez (708-848-9218) or Melissa Whitson (708-655-4154, eves.).

Spring Dance: Our annual Spring Dance will be held Saturday, March 16, at 7:30 PM in St. Josaphat Parish Hall, SE corner of Southport and Belden Aves., Chicago. Cost, as usual, will be \$5. For a "cheat sheet," send a S.A.S.E. to Corinne McArdle, 9745 S. Karlov #304, Oak Lawn IL 60453.

Silk and Thistle: Doug Jensen and Mady Newfield reminded me in the gentlest possible way at our New Year's Ball that there are *three* Branch classes in Chicagoland and that I had been neglecting to mention one of them. Silk and Thistle meets Tuesdays, 7:00-9:30 PM, at the Fermilab Village Barn. For more information, contact Doug and Susan Jensen (708-232-9089), Mady Newfield (708-584-0825), or Mary Helen Polensky (815-756-7182). My apologies to this vibrant group; they don't deserve to be forgotten!

Madison Ball: The Madison SCD have a tremendous weekend planned, April 19-21. On Friday, Mary Kay Schladweiler will call English country dances and Norma Briggs will call New England contra dances; music by McDuff's Ceilidh Band; in Paoli (near Madison). On Saturday, there will be Ball walk-through, 11:00-2:00; Social hour, 5:30-6:30; Dinner, 6:30; Grand March and Ball, 7:30-- (music by an expanded McDuff's); all in the Great Hall, UW Memorial Union. The After-Ball Party will follow at the home of Ann Lindsey and Chuck Snowdon. The weekend finishes with the famous brunch at 10:30 on Sunday, at the home of Edna and Charles Pruett.

If all this sounds right up your alley, contact Jean Willett, 5329 Milward Drive, Madison WI 53711. And hurry! They need your dinner reservation by April 12.

RSCDS Survey: At the RSCDS 1995 Annual General Meeting, Jim Healy of Perthshire was elected to the Executive Council. Jim has taken note of discussions about the RSCDS and the fact that many people are not totally happy with our governing organization. So he devised a survey to take the pulse of the RSCDS worldwide membership.

[The following are the points he wants members to respond to:] **1)** The Society should stock and sell a large selection of popular dances, whether "official" or not. **2)** The Society should attempt to integrate and influence Ceilidh Dancing, not ignore it. **3)** The Society should improve the quality and frequency of its communications with members. **4)** The Society should do more to encourage children's dancing. **5)** The Society should change the administrative structure to reflect the fact that policy is no longer set by one person. **6)** The Society should maintain a comprehensive index of all Scottish Country Dances. **7)** The Society should produce more exciting recordings. **8)** The Society should update its examination process to reflect current best practice in education. **9)** The Society should concentrate more on teaching the enjoyment of SCD and less on demonstration or exhibition standard dancing. **10)** The Society should publish more dances, more often.

You may respond to all the points, or some of them, or none. This is one of those quizzes where "None of the above" is an appropriate response (and should be sent back to Jim). Jim also asked if something important is missing and he wondered what priorities people put on the issues.

Should you respond to this survey? As Jim put it, "I WANT YOUR VIEWS and in massive numbers because otherwise these are just the ravings of Jim and who is interested in one person's views no matter how interesting, intelligent or informed?...I would like replies from all 25,000 members of the Society."

You may send your answer directly to Jim at the address below. Ree Grisham has offered to be a conduit for those of you without e-mail. N- (for "normal") mail address: Jim Healy, "Northfield," 11 Muirton Bank, Perth PH1 5DN, Scotland. FAX: 44 1738 441938. e-mail: 100535.3242@compuserve.com. (Ree Grisham)

Toronto Tartan Ball: Perhaps one should think a bit before agreeing to be guest of honor at this event. This year's honoree, General John de Chastelain, made a speech, devised a dance, taught the dance, and then played the pipes for it--all to the delight of the crowd. (For the record, the Ball Chairman wrote me, "We do not generally (bad pun!) make our guests play for their dinner. As he offered, I was happy to let him.") Once again, this was a wonderful evening. Bobby Brown and the Scottish Accent provided the music, and they played, and played, and played. We were due to wrap up by 11:30 PM; at 1:00 AM we were still going strong, demanding not one, but two encores to the last dance. I enjoy the different sound of this band. They have two accordions, a keyboard, an electric bass and a drum set. Nary a fiddle in the group! I found quite a bit less booking ahead this year, where people fill their dance cards during the reception hour. I booked a couple of dances with special friends, but I stayed available for most of the evening, and I had no trouble finding partners for every dance, even when I was attempting to sit out. (Ree Grisham)

Asilomar Workshop: The San Francisco Branch's workshop is held in November at Asilomar Conference Center on the Monterey Peninsula. The setting is wonderful, and morning walks along the Pacific Ocean were inviting. This is a huge event, with attendance "limited" to 250. There were six teachers, from the U.S., Canada and England. The musicians came from both coasts and included the members of Fiddlesticks & Ivory. A special treat came after the Friday night welcome dance, when Peter Barnes, Jeanne Morrill and Earl Gaddis gave a concert. Jeanne, who is a charming singer, also joined the band during the Friday and Saturday dances so we experienced dancing to mouth music. (Ree Grisham)

Highland Arts Festival & Concert: The Simon Fraser University Pipe Band, the current World Champs, hits town April 26-28 with a weekend full of entertainment and education. Things start out with a concert at the Copernicus Gateway Theater at 8:30 PM Friday evening. Saturday and Sunday are crammed full of classes for pipers, drummers and highland dancers. There are also General Interest sessions (developed in part to keep parents occupied while their children are taking classes). These include Scottish Social Dances; Scottish Country Dancing; history; genealogy; whisky tasting; recipes for traditional treats; introduction to Gaelic or the pipes, drums or Highland Fling; the psychology of performance; and a wrap-up overview session. Celtic Aire is the featured group at the Saturday evening ceilidh, along with members of the pipe band and highland dancers. This all requires advance planning, since registration must be done in advance and tickets for the ceilidh are available only through preregistration. The classes listed above are \$10 each; there is a weekend pass available which allows unlimited class attendance. The concert is \$15 and the ceilidh is \$8. For more information, call the Illinois St. Andrew Society or see Ree Grisham. (Ree Grisham)

Recording review: *Ghillies on the Golden Gate*, by Fiddlesticks & Ivory. As hinted at in the album title, this is a West Coast band, but they have played for Scottish Country Dancing all over the United States and in several other countries. The musicians are all quite talented, and this recording is not afraid to showcase unusual combinations. Kim McGarrity is the director, and she also plays the fiddle and creates the arrangements in conjunction with Lyle Ramshaw, the piano player. Joining in on fiddle are Janet Kurnick and John Taylor; David Mostardi plays the accordion; Andy Johnson is on the bass; and John Day plays the drums and a variety of other rhythm instruments. The dance sets included on the recording are: Fair Jenny's Jig, Delvine Side, Lady Milne, Miss Ogilvie's Fancy, Miss Grace Hay's Delight, Mony-musk and The Rendezvous. The arrangements combine some classic compositions by masters such as Neil Gow and William Marshall with modern tunes, many by Kim McGarrity. One of the more unusual sets is Miss

Ogilvie's Fancy, which is done with three-hand piano and bass. This recording meets a high standard: it is equally enjoyable for dancing or listening. (Ree Grisham)

New arrival: Congratulations to Nancy and Jeff Strolle on the birth of their second daughter, Annika Claire. She arrived on February 28 just before 1:00 PM. All are doing well. (Ree Grisham)

