



THE BLETTHERS



Ingrid Kendall, Chair

Laurie Walter, Editor

June Workshop: If you haven't yet sent in your money, time is parlously short! The RSCDS, Chicago Branch, 1996 Weekend Workshop will be held June 7-9, in Valparaiso, IN. Call Noel Chavez (708-848-9218) or Melissa Whitson (708-655-4154, eves.) for information. See you there!!

Music Workshop: The Weekend Workshop Committee has convinced Barbara McOwen to come to Chicago a day early to lead a music workshop. See the enclosed flyer for more details or call Ree Grisham at (312) 528-7824. Barbara says observers are welcome at the workshop, so if you are interested in learning more about Scottish music or you just want to hear one of the outstanding fiddle players in the country, this is the evening for you. (Ree Grisham)

Musicians invited: Barbara McOwen has invited local musicians to join members of Tullochgorum during selected sets during the Friday Night Welcome Dance, June 7, at Valparaiso University. See the enclosed flyer for more details or call Ree Grisham at (312) 528-7824. (Ree Grisham)

Last regular Sunday class: The bad thing about approaching the Workshop is that regular dancing ends (but see below!). The last St. Josaphat class at St. Josaphat (until September) is May 19.

Summer dancing: There will be plenty of opportunity to keep your feet in shape after the Workshop. The St. Josaphat class will meet at Fox Center, corner of Jackson Blvd. and Oak Park Ave. in Oak Park, 6:00-8:00 PM on the following Sundays: June 23 & 30; July 14, 21, & 28; August 4, 11, 18, & 25. Scot-Reel will meet at the Marie Irwin Center, corner of Ridge Rd. and Highland Ave. in Homewood, 7:00-9:00 PM on last Thursdays: May 30, June 27, July 25, and August 29. Silk and Thistle will meet at the Fermilab Barn in Batavia on Tuesdays; call Doug and Susan Jensen at (708) 232-9089 for dates and directions.

Volunteers needed: Mady Newfield and Mike Fitak are chairing the Branch booth at the June 15 Highland Games. They need people for setup, cleanup, and to run the booth in between. Call Mady at (708) 584-0825 or Mike at (708) 952-8637. Kathleen Baker has agreed to chair the 1997 New Year's Ball and will also need help of all kinds. Call her at (708) 455-0456.

Committee of Management elections: The following lucky dancers have been elected to terms on the Branch's Committee of Management: Bryan Luce, Chair; Mary Lou Woods, Secretary; Liz Slake, Treasurer (continuing); Kathleen Baker, Joan Hall (continuing), and Gary Hay, Members-at-Large. Ken Heinemann has been elected to the Elections Committee. Congratulations to all of you and our thanks in advance for serving the Branch!! Also, thanks to the outgoing team: Ingrid Kendall, Chair; Robin Gas-ton, Secretary; Bryan Luce and Corinne McArdle, Members-at-Large. You've done a great job!

Be careful what you ask for, Year II: Last year I reported how the RSCDS-Atlanta Branch overcame adversity at the initial Culloden Highland Games. I went back to Culloden this year to discover that the group was facing new challenges. Instead of the hodge-podge of wood pieces from last year, the dance platform was made up of smooth 3 x 5 segments. Unfortunately, the group neglected to specify that the platform should be level, and it wasn't. We did the Hooper's Jig variation--IM changed places with 3W, launched off the edge of the platform and climbed back on, in perfect time to cross back with 3W. We had a little rain, a lot of gravityand, just to make life interesting, the Games put the main entertainment stage

(the one with the amplified bagpipes) next to the dance tent. It was a blast! I can't wait to go back next year. (Ree Grisham)

Nonskid shoes: Last Fall, Noel Chavez and I treated our dance shoes with a polymer coating reputed to reduce skidding on slippery floors. We were going to the Asilomar Workshop and the Quarries had strongly recommended treating our shoes. After many months of usage, the report on the coating is positive. I haven't needed to step in the Slip Stop all year, nor have I wrenched a back or ankle slipping on the floor. I use my treated shoes almost exclusively; Noel switches back and forth. The treatment is Dow Corning 3140RTV Coating, and it's a bit difficult to obtain. I got mine from Susie Langdon Kass in San Francisco. A tube that will treat four pairs of shoes costs approximately \$18. There is a larger container available if a group wanted to have a shoe-treating party but once opened the container must be finished or discarded--the tube can be resealed. It is vital that this treatment be done on new shoes, or at least shoes with new or sanded soles. **WARNING: DO NOT TREAT YOUR ONLY PAIR OF SHOES.** If you come across a nonslippery floor, the treated shoes turn on you, making you feel like you're dancing in the La Brea tar pits and causing horrid blisters. For more information, talk to me or Noel. (Ree Grisham)

Thoughts from a dancing musician: For the past year, I've been playing with the band at classes, and I'd like to share some thoughts with you. (I have spent too much time in law firms...here's the disclaimer: although my fellow musicians may share my feelings, I am speaking only for myself, not for the band or any individual.) This has been a wonderful experience and I look forward to playing for dancing next year. Why do I do this? Well, of course it's fun. I love music. But I also see this as a way of supporting and giving back to Scottish Country Dancing. That's very important to me. Just to give you an idea of what kind of preparation we do, the band meets one evening a week to rehearse for 2-3 hours and the larger fiddle club meets once a month for a workshop and music review. Ruth Conley, Greg Breiland, and I also talk to each other several times during the week. It's a lot of time and effort but I feel it's worth it, especially when I see you flying across the dance floor with smiles on your faces. The warm applause at the end of each dance is a lovely reward, too. [And for us non-musicians, it's lovely to have live music! Thanks to Ree, whom you undoubtedly pegged as today's author, and the other musicians.]

Flowers of the Forest: George Iain Murray, 10th Duke of Atholl and a long-time supporter of Scottish Country Dancing, passed away on February 27 following a stroke in December. The Duke transferred Blair Castle and its magnificent estate to the National Trust just before he died, so we can continue enjoying the beautiful site. The new Duke is a third cousin in South Africa who is not sure he is interested in accepting the title. (Ree Grisham)

From Barb Ellis: Some of you may know that Sandie Lamb, who has danced with us for many years, was taken ill last year with what turned out to be a brain injury. Its cause was undetermined and Sandie has recovered quite well but unfortunately can no longer work. She is at Glen Oaks, 270 Skokie Blvd., Northbrook IL, (847) 498-9320. Her daughter Jennifer has been staying with neighbors. In July, they will return to Scotland to live, probably in the Dundee area, since that's where Sandie's brother lives. We would like to acknowledge Sandie's long association with the Branch. Anyone wishing to contribute can send money to Barb (with checks made out to Barbara Ellis, since Sandie doesn't have a bank account). Sandie would also appreciate hearing from you at the above address/phone number.

Minutes of Committee of Management meetings (January, February, and March, 1996): *Minutes of January 21st meeting*--1. Motion to approve the revised minutes of the December 17, 1995, COM meeting--passed. 2. The COM welcomed Bryan Luce who will complete Kent Smith's term as a Member-at-Large. 3. Plans for the February 4th Open House which Bryan will chair were reviewed, including a mailing to all contacts from the Highland Games and an ad in The Reader and other publications. 4. The COM extends their appreciation to the Iowa dancers for their demo of "The Green Boughs of the North" at the New Year's Ball intermission in honor of the Twin Cities Branch anniversary. 5. The COM discussed the repair of the old sound system which Tom Senior is coordinating. 6. The Friday night socials at Ham-lin Park were discussed and the COM agreed they will need to re-evaluate continuing the socials for the next year due to the low attendance. 7. The New Year's Ball was reviewed and it appears the event will break even. Motion to approve the reimbursement of Elke Baker's and Liz Donaldson's travel expenses for the

New Year's Ball, a total of \$214 for their round trip tickets from Baltimore--passed. 8. The COM discussed the June workshop dates which have been finalized as June 7-9, 1996, at Valparaiso University. 9. Motion for the Branch to cover the cost of postage for a letter being submitted by a member, as a private individual, for financial support for the member in need due to illness, with the condition that the COM have a copy of the letter to review prior to mailing, to insure it does not jeopardize the charitable status of the Branch--passed. 10. The Treasurer's Report included a discussion regarding having an accountant prepare the 6-year IRS submission, due in June, 1996, and a review of potential fund-raising activities to support the Branch were briefly discussed, with further discussion at a future meeting. 11. Motion to pay the insurance premium for the liability insurance, upon review and approval of the policy by Bryan Luce--passed. 12. The Secretary reviewed the status of the HQ charitable status changes. At the HQ AGM in November, 1995, it was unanimously resolved "that the Society retains its charitable status in the future," and it was unanimously approved "that the Branches confirm their autonomous status," resulting from the Society's need to maintain its charitable status under the new law. They also unanimously agreed that the annual subscription rate be £6 to Society HQ, with the Branches determining the additional subscription for the Branch. A special HQ Executive Meeting and HQ General Meeting will be held in March and May, respectively, to finalize the amendments to the Society and Branch Constitutions required due to the charity legislation changes. A License Agreement has been proposed as the connection between HQ and the Branches.

*Minutes of February 18th meeting--*1. Motion to approve the revised minutes of the January 21, 1996, COM meeting--passed. 2. The COM reviewed the Open House: attendance was low with only six new people. 3. It was recommended that at the April COM meeting there be a review of the Friday night socials and a recommendation as to whether they should continue in the next year. 4. Liz Slake presented the final Financial Statement for the 1996 New Year's Ball, with 91 registered dancers, 22 paying the \$30 late fee. The event showed a profit of \$7.20, which is the first time in recent years the Ball has not shown a loss. The search for a chairperson for the 1997 New Year's Ball is underway. 5. Corinne McArdle confirmed that plans are underway for the Spring Dance on Saturday, March 16th. 6. Doug Jensen has reported that "Silk and Thistle" has given some performances. The COM encourages those involved to attend the bimonthly technique classes which Barbara Cool teaches and to follow the Branch guidelines for giving demonstrations. The COM recommended that requests be communicated to the Demo Team teacher for the potential joint effort with the Branch Demo Team. 7. Robin Gaston reported on recent information from HQ regarding changes to the Headquarters' Constitution, the Branches' Constitution, and proposed License agreement. These will be presented for approval to a special AGM meeting to be held in May, 1996. After that time, it is anticipated that the Branch will be expected to sign the License agreement. 8. Motion to have a professional tax accountant do the tax return which is due to the IRS by June, 1996, for a fee of \$150--passed. 9. The COM discussed the declining attendance at Sunday night classes and will canvass the teachers to determine their availability to come to a COM meeting to discuss the issue. 10. The COM reviewed the need to do fund-raising for the Branch and potential fund-raising activities. The COM agreed at this time to maintain the focus on supporting regular Branch activities and will reconsider the need for fund-raising at the end of the fiscal year. 11. Given the recent lack of volunteers to bring tea and setup/cleanup and the need for COM members to handle this additional responsibility, the COM agreed to present the issue for discussion and vote by the members at the May AGM.

*Minutes of March 10th meeting--*1. Motion to elect Bryan Luce as the Vice Chairperson for this meeting in Ingrid and Corinne's absence--passed. 2. Motion to approve the minutes of the February 18, 1996, COM meeting--passed. 3. The main goal of this month's COM meeting was to review the draft Members' Handbook and make the necessary revisions in preparation for its publication. Melissa Whitson, a member of the subcommittee who originally drafted the Handbook, generously agreed to provide the background about its development and input about revising and updating it. An extensive discussion followed regarding content, format, and tone. A revised draft will be presented at the next COM, where further actions will be determined. 4. Motion to ask the recommended members until two accept, in the order specified, if they would be candidates to fill the Election Committee position for Tom Watkins, whose 3-year term is ending. 5. The agenda, notice, and semi-AGM minutes for the AGM on May 5th were reviewed and will be distributed at least 3 weeks prior to the AGM. 6. Liz Slake confirmed there are two Branch CD's with Bell Federal for \$1,500 each; one expires on 11/24/96 and one on 11/24/97.

7. Bryan Luce has reviewed the insurance policy and raised several questions he would like to ask the agent to confirm we have the necessary level of coverage. In particular, he would like to ask about the exclusion of damage to leased or rental property, which has potential application to the Branch use of St. Josaphat's hall, and the level of coverage needed for Branch property, particularly the sound system equipment. Bryan requested and received permission from the COM to contact the agent on behalf of the Branch to discuss the above questions and to ask for a quote on an umbrella policy.
And many thanks to Robin Gaston for many, many months of minutes!!!

A Quiz for your drinking hours (if any): 1. What is a deoch an doruis (often pronounced "doch and doris")? 2. In big cities, children used to make (and still do in some places) sugarolloy water. What is it? 3. Atholl Brose is carried into the Sergeants' Mess of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders every Hog-manay and a quaich is given to every officer and NCO. What is Atholl Brose? 4. And what is a quaich? 5. Why would most people prefer a Scots pint of ale to an English pint? 6. Why in the 18th century was claret the favourite wine of Scotland, while port was the favourite wine of England? 7. What is the most important ingredient in Scotch whisky? 8. If you sing "Auld Lang Syne" properly, you sing about "a rich guid willie waught." What is that? 9. What drink is made from a recipe said to have been given to high-land clansmen by Bonnie Prince Charlie? 10. Every night of the week, tankers full of a certain liquid go by road to London. What is this precious liquid which Glasgow has and London hasn't?

A Quiz on dances: 1. Who were the Eight Men of Moidart? 2. Who was Madge Wildfire? 3. Who was The Guid Man of Balangigh? (and how do you pronounce "Balangigh"? [or, for that matter, "guid"?) 4. Which dance depicts a church window? 5. What is Clutha? 6. What "first" did The Reel of the 51st Division achieve and why was it controversial? 7. What is the connection between Appin and Fasna-cloich? 8. What is the connection between Rob Roy MacGregor (Book 26, No. 7) and the Braes of Balquidder (MacNabb 1)? 9. What are the Cuillins of Skye and which famous singer was pulled [!] by them? 10. What is the better-known name for "John of Bon Accord"? 11. What do Corn Rigs, The Silver Tassie, and The Lea Rig have in common? 12. What do Oxton Reel, Iona Cross, and Snowflake Strathspey have in common? 13. What do Aberdeen, Glasgow, Bavaria, and Holland have in common? 14. Who was Donald Bane and what distinction did he have? 15. Where are the Lanes of Au? 16. What do Jennifer, Genevieve, and Euan have in common? 17. What do Airie Bannan, Polharrow Burn, and Scotch Mist have in common? 18. What do The Duke of Perth, Broun's Reel, and Pease Strae have in common? 19. Who was the yellow-haired laddie and where was he born? 20. What do Strip the Willow and The Hebridean Weaving Lilt have in common?

[Answers to both quizzes next issue!!! From The Summer School News Reel, the TAC Summer School Newsletter, 1995, thanks to Noel Chavez.]

The eternal question: Ah, the perennial debate has come up again on Strathspey. I am reminded of what the immortal bard deigned to say on the subject:

To brief or not to brief, that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler on the floor to suffer
The flings and errors of unbriefed dances,
And take hands around in a sea of troubles,
Or by briefing, what end then? To wait: to sleep;
to snore; and, with briefings we see no end to
The headache and the thousand natural shocks
That dance is heir to.

With apologies to W. Shakespeare (1564-1616). (Michael Hanson, Seattle WA, via Noel Chavez)