



# THE BLETTHERS



**Bryan Luce, Chair**

**Laurie Walter, Editor**

**New Year's Ball!!!** The most exciting event of the Winter season will be held on January 4, 1997, at a new location: The Ukrainian Cultural Center, Chicago Ave., Chicago. Music by *Local Hero* (Susie Petrov, piano; Paul Woodiel, fiddle; Chris Layer, pipes). Further information and registration forms are being mailed; if you did not receive the preliminary flyer, contact registrar Mary Helen Polensky, (815) 756-7182. The celebrated tea dance and brunch will take place at The Barn at Fermilab, Batavia, IL, on Sunday, January 5, from 11:00 AM-2:00 PM. The brunch is potluck; local musicians in various permutations will play for the dancing; there will be an "open pot" at the door for donations. For more information, contact Kathy Baker, (847) 455-0456.

**Holiday party:** Even before the January Ball, you can kick up your heels at our Branch's Holiday Potluck Party, followed by social dancing, on Sunday, December 15, at St. Josaphat. Potluck dinner begins at 6:00, followed by dancing (nothing too strenuous, please!), followed by dessert.

**June Workshop:** Of course it isn't too early to be making your plans (and even reservations!) for the 1997 RSCDS, Chicago Branch, June Workshop. This year's Workshop will be held May 30-June 1, 1997, and returns to a former location, Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, IL; rooms are *en suite*, meaning with a bathroom attached to each room! Teachers are Ellie Briscoe, Marjorie McLaughlin, and Geoffrey Selling, all of whom have been (justly) immensely popular at previous Workshops. Information from Noel Chávez, (708) 848-9218.

**Pay your dues!** Just a reminder: if you haven't paid your 1996-1997 dues, you may stop getting this wonderful publication! Dues were due on October 31 but the Committee of Management will graciously accept late payment: contact Liz Stake at (312) 784-3805. Remember, your dues support Scottish Country Dancing in Chicagoland and around the world, entitle you to reduced class admission and the company of the friendliest people there are, and insure your continued receipt of Branch mailings such as this one (advert.).

**Thanksgiving Sunday class:** There will be dancing at Loch Michigan on the Sunday after Thanksgiving, with a special treat: Andy Imbrie, Jr., will play piano for our dancing pleasure! Be sure to attend.

**ScotReel dance:** ScotReel will hold a dance on Saturday, December 14, at 7:30 PM in the Marie Irwin Center, corner of Ridge Rd. and Highland Ave. in Homewood, IL. All are invited to come and join the fun. If you'd like to bring a goodie for afterwards, they would be grateful; otherwise, just come and partake!

**Fall Dance a rousing success:** The Fall Dance held on October 26 was great fun for all! Thanks to Mary Helen Polensky for organizing it and to the fine local musicians who lifted the dancers' spirits (not to mention feet) with their playing.

**Friday evening socials?** The Committee of Management is planning to schedule Friday night social dances at Hamlin Park in the new year, since they were enthusiastically received last year. Dates are not yet set. Stay tuned!

**Timely arrival:** The Semi-Annual General Meeting agreed to remind dancers to arrive on time (i.e., 6:00 PM) for Sunday dancing-or even a bit early if you would like to have time to put on your shoes, stretch on your own prior to group warm-ups, etc. If you do arrive later than 6:00, please be considerate of the other

dancers and teachers, avoiding making noise or otherwise causing a disturbance. Also, please refrain from pushing other dancers during the dancing.

**English Country Dancing:** Always a good time, held at Saint Mark's Episcopal Church, 1509 Ridge Ave. (corner of Grove and Ridge), Evanston, IL, "on the second floor of the parish house in Cunningham Hall (enter from Ridge just south of the Church)." Upcoming dates: November 27 and December 11, the latter billed as a "special dance," though all feature live music. All dances are taught and should be easy for experienced (or even beginning!) Scottish dancers such as yourselves. More information from Tom Senior at (847) 433-8704.

**Long-lost dancer:** On November 3, the Loch Michigan group was pleased to welcome back Judith Pretty, who danced with us in 1988 and was visiting from Scotland. Nice to see you again, Judith!

**A tale of two socks:** Last December, fellow Chicago Dickens Fellowship member Charlie Quinn and I joined a UIC Holiday tour to Stratford-on-Avon and London. We planned to visit the Dickens House Museum and Rochester Cathedral during our stay. We are both inveterate museum and church explorers and we enjoy spending hours at such sites - previous visits have always seemed too short!

I have been known to head for the High Street and purchase some good, warm wool socks to counteract the damp, cold stone floors of most English cathedrals in winter. So, when we arrived in Rochester, I looked for a "resale" shop to get some warm footwear before heading on to the Cathedral. We found one known as "Bernardo's," a shop sponsored by the former Princess Diana. Its profits go to underprivileged English children.

When I asked the friendly volunteer clerk on duty for some nice, warm, wool socks, she searched behind her counter and came up with a pair of lovely, tan knee highs, brand new and still labeled. I had seen schoolchildren wearing a similar type and I thought they just might do.

Glancing at my short, 5' 1" frame, the clerk said, "I hope they're not too big for you." I laughed and told her of my mother's description of my big feet - she always said I have a "good understanding." The clerk was greatly amused and she shared this anecdote with other store volunteers.

Sure enough, the two socks were a perfect fit! [Liz Stake]

[Ed. note: Liz's story helps me to answer a question that I have had in recent months: how does one properly refer to the former Princess of Wales? My suggestion is, "the artist formerly known as 'Princess.'"]

**The Hangman's Reel:** The story goes that the fiddler was sentenced to be hanged. The sheriff had an old fiddle that hadn't been tuned in years and promised to free the fiddler if he could play a good reel without tuning it. The music now known as "The Hangman's Reel" is said to be the result! The great fiddler Jean Carignan used to play the piece, but only as a last encore, saying that it took too long to get "out" of the special tuning. [Noel Chavez]

#### CALENDAR:

<i>Loch Mich--</i>	<i>ScotReel--</i>	<i>Silk &amp; Thistle--</i>
Dec 1 Class with live music		
8 Class	5 Class	3, 10, 17 Class
	14 Dance	
15 ***** <b>Holiday Party</b> *****		
22, 29 No class		24, 31 No class

#### 1997!!!

Jan 4 ***** <b>New Year's Ball</b> *****		
5 No class		
12, 19, 26 Class		7, 14, 21, 28 Class