



# THE BLEETHERS



Ree Grisham, Chair *Pro Tem*

Laurie Walter, Editor

**New Year's Ball:** Our gala 1998 New Year's Ball will be held on Saturday, January 3, at the Ukrainian Cultural Center in Chicago, beginning with a reception at 5:30 PM. Music will be by Sprig of Ivy, led by Terry Traub and also (!) featuring Barbara and Robert McOwen. Early-bird prices (by 12/20) are as follows: RSCDS member, \$36; non-member, \$40; non-dancer, \$28. All prices are \$6 higher after December 20, except for dancers under 18 years of age, who are always \$20. Chicago-area dancers are encouraged to bring a sweet for the tea. Call Ingrid Kendall at (708) 957-4494 if you haven't received a flyer and Liz Stake at (773) 784-3805 to offer hospitality.

**Brunch and Tea Dance:** The Brunch and Tea Dance will be held Sunday, January 4, at the Kathryn Legge Lodge in Hinsdale, with music by Sprig of Ivy and The Grace Notes. Eating will begin promptly at 11:00, with dancing to follow (not to last past 3:00). The program of 14 fun, accessible dances includes many of the musicians' favorites, as well as our own, such as *Mairi's Wedding*, *Flowers of Edinburgh*, and *The Irish Rover*. The Lodge is large and luxurious, with plenty of room to sit and socialize or listen to the music, so be sure to encourage interested non- or unsure dancers to attend. There is no charge but there will be a kitty for the musicians. The brunch is potluck and there should be heating-up facilities. Call Mady Newfield at (630) 584-0825 or Doug Jensen at (630) 232-9089 for more information or dance instructions.

**Weekend Workshop:** The 1998 RSCDS, Chicago Branch, Weekend Workshop will be held May 29-31 at Valparaiso University in Valparaiso, Indiana. Teachers: Dale Birdsall (Ohio & Vermont), Mary Murray (Vancouver [or North Vancouver, if you are reading carefully!]), and Kent Smith (Connecticut) [hoo-ray!!]. Call Mary Helen Polensky at (815) 756-7182 for more information. It should be great fun!!!

**Holiday Party and class schedule:** All are invited to the Holiday Party on December 14 at St. Josaphat. The potluck dinner starts at 6:00 so please arrive a wee bit early with your goodies. Mary Lou Woods is coordinating the menu: call her at (773) 878-8605. Social dancing will follow. St. Joe's classes will then take a holiday hiatus, resuming on January 11. Silk and Thistle will not meet on December 23 or 30 due to closing of Fermilab; they will have goodies on December 16 and resume dancing on January 6.

**Open House:** Start recruiting your friends now: our next Open House will be February 8 at St. Josaphat.

**Members needed!!!** Please note the membership form enclosed with this issue of *The Blethers*. There is still time to send your completed form to Sue McKinnell, 1745 Indian Trail Dr., Naperville IL 60565. The membership list will be finalized soon and you need to make sure you are on it.

**Chair status:** Gary Hay is taking a brief leave-of-absence from his duties as Branch Chair. Following procedures in the Branch Constitution and By-Laws, the Committee of Management has elected Ree Grisham to serve as Chair *pro tem*. Many thanks to both of them for past, present, and future service to the Branch.

**TAC Summer School:** The 1998 Teachers' Association (Canada) Summer School will be held outside Ontario for the first time, specifically at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver. 1998 is both the RSCDS 75th and TAC 40th anniversary. The August 16-23 session is for dancers of all levels, taught by Mary Brandon (Los Angeles), Bruce Fraser (Scotland), Robert McOwen (Boston), Mary Murray (North Vancouver), and Simon Scott (Vancouver). Candidate Classes for the Preliminary and Full Certificates are August 9-23, with Elinor Vandegrift (Seattle) and Ron Wallace (Santa Rosa). The Vancouver Organizing

Committee is planning many extra activities: optional afternoon classes, evening dances, the Saturday Ball, an open-air Shakespeare production, a harbor cruise, and more. Accommodation on the UBC campus will be in the Gage Towers, with spectacular views of mountains and city. They even promise fine weather!

**Trip to Nova Scotia:** I departed O'Hare July 22, 1997, on my way to the wonderful province of Nova Scotia, eagerly looking forward to this renowned part of the world and a SCD workshop with the Nova Scotia Branch. I used the time between flights to catch up on some of the dance instructions for the four-day workshop, which helped a great deal later. After arriving in Halifax that evening, I caught the airbus shuttle into the city, about 30 miles distant. There were two other ladies headed for the workshop, one from Toronto and the other from Vancouver, so we shared a taxi for the five-minute ride to King's College.

As in so many other universities, the dorms are used in the summer for rental to visitors and this one actually is a B&B. As usual, the bath facilities were down the hall but were adequate. On the night of my arrival, the women's bath/showers were two doors from my room; when I got up in the morning and went "down the hall," I found the sign on the door had been changed to "Men," and the women's moved to the opposite wing, through double fire doors. (Good thing I noticed the changed signs.) The lady from Toronto was in the room just opposite and we got friendly during the four days. Hope we'll be able to get together again.

The workshop started in the afternoon the day after I arrived, so I walked back to the central area of Halifax to sightsee. There were lots of wonderful shops and restaurants along the waterfront. One big favorite is "Cow's" ice cream and there are many branches throughout Nova Scotia. Took a short ferry ride across to the town of Dartmouth, seeing the Canadian Navy yard *en route*.

During the days of the workshop, we had classes in the morning and elective classes in the afternoon, then dinner and social dancing and a *ceilidh*. One evening we loaded into school buses and took an hour's coastal drive to a small town called Blandford. Here we enjoyed a lobster dinner served by volunteers in the town firehouse. Of course, after dinner we danced again.

Our Nova Scotia hosts were great people. I got a feeling very quickly of a closeness and *camaraderie* with my intermediate class which carried through the workshop. There were people from as far away as New Zealand and a large contingent from California. John Drewry was in attendance and also wrote a dance in honor of the event. I saw the California contingent, out on the lawn, rehearsing it for the *ceilidh*. The food was catered in the university dining hall/cafeteria, was for three meals a day, and was all you can eat! And eat we did. Guess all that dancing really builds an appetite.

The cafeteria was transformed into a beautiful dining area for the final night banquet, with the use of white linen and candles. We were piped into the room and filed to our seats. The menu included, among other things, poached salmon and, of course, haggis. After dinner, we were again piped to the ball. One of the many nice things on the program was a dance where the Basic class had the right to ask people to dance first, so that they were sure to find a partner for a certain dance they had worked hard to learn. Nice idea. [I concur!]

We learned a new dance called the "Kiltmaker," which is a lot of fun and descriptive of the weaving of a tartan. (Notice it is on the program for an upcoming social dance.) Just to make me feel at home, there was a repair crew working on the street outside my dorm window, just like the repair crew working on the street under my window at home. There were four of us representing the Chicago Branch and we devised a take-off on the TV program Jeopardy for a *ceilidh* act. Lots of fun and there were many clever skits and songs done by the dancers. [Liz Stake; her account of her subsequent tour of Nova Scotia and adjacent regions will continue next issue.]

**Update on Myrtle:** Beloved former dancer Myrtle Herman is in a different care facility where her daughter says she is very happy and convinced she is with a group of dancers! She doesn't have a phone but would welcome a visit, if you're in the area, or at least a note: Myrtle Herman, 2045 E. 170th St., South Holland IL 60473.

#### CALENDAR:

<i>Loch Mich--</i>	<i>Silk &amp; Thistle--</i>	<i>ScotReel--</i>
Jan. 3*****	<b>New Year's Ball</b> *****	
4*****	<b>Brunch and Tea Dance</b> *****	

	11	Class resumes.	
			13, 20, 27 Class.
	18, 25	Class.	
Feb.	1	Class.	Resumes this month!
			3, 10, 17, 24 Class.
	<b>8</b>	<b>Open House.</b>	
	15, 22	Class.	
Mar.	1, 8	Class.	
			3, 10, 17, 24, 31 Class.
	<b>14</b>	<b>*****Spring Dance*****</b>	
	15	No class.	
	22, 29	Class.	
Apr.	5, 12?, 19, 26	Class.	
			7, 14, 21, 28 Class.
May	<b>3</b>	<b>*****Annual General Meeting/Social dancing*****</b>	
			5, 12, 19, 26 Class.
	10, 17	Class.	
	<b>29-31</b>	<b>*****Workshop*****</b>	

(from *Scotland for Beginners: Bannockburn an' a' that* by Rupert Besley)