

RSCDS, Chicago Branch



The Blethers

Ree Grisham, Chair

October 1999

Sue McKinnell, Editor

1999 Semi-Annual General Meeting: This is official notice, pursuant to the Constitution and by-laws of the Chicago Branch of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society, that the Semi-Annual General Meeting will be held on Sunday, November 7. The meeting will be held in the parish hall at St. Josaphat's Church, Belden and Southport, Chicago, Illinois, starting at 6:00 p.m. The main item on the agenda will be review and approval of the treasurer's report. You must be a member of the Chicago Branch to vote at the meeting (but others interested in the Branch are invited to attend).

We will have one other major topic at the SAGM. At Summer School in St. Andrews this year, the chair and vice chair of the RSCDS presented a plan for reorganizing the Society and asked that we discuss it with the Branches and report back. There basically are two parts to the plan:

1. The governing body of the Society currently numbers more than 170 members. Each Branch has at least one representative, and the larger Branches have more. As anyone who has worked on a committee knows, a group of this size can be unwieldy. The proposal is to have an Executive Committee of approximately 30 people who will be elected by the branches and the voting members of the Society (see Part 2 for this definition). After the first year, one-third of the Executive Committee would be elected each year, to create in effect a rolling committee. (The initial Committee would be made up of people elected to one, two or three year terms.) Much of the work of the Society is done in committees of the main group, such as the Publications Committee, and currently members of these committees must come from the larger group. Under the new proposal, people not part of the Executive Committee would be eligible for these committees and, indeed, would be encouraged to participate.

2. The new plan creates three levels of membership in the RSCDS. (Currently there is one main membership category, with some people opting for long-term or life memberships, which are prepaid memberships.) The leadership has decided there are three levels of interest in the RSCDS by dancers: (A) people who are very interested in the operation and activities of the Society; (B) people who are dedicated dancers, perhaps interested in local Branch operations, but not concerned with the international operations; and (C) people who show up to dance occasionally but have no interest in the operations of the group. Suggested dues for Category A people would be £35, dues for Category B would be £6 and dues for Category C would be £2. Category C would include the benefits of belonging to the RSCDS, such as being able to purchase Society publications at a discount, but nothing more. Category B would include the discounts and the annual

newsletter from the Society distributed by the Branch secretaries, but would not include an annual book of new dances. Category A, along with the above, would include the right to vote for members of the Executive Committee and the annual book of dances, with mailing coming directly from Headquarters in Edinburgh (which supposedly will speed up the distribution).

The thinking at Headquarters is that approximately 10% of the current membership will opt for the Category A membership, approximately 10% will drop out of the Society, and the rest will remain in the Category B group. If that is the way things work out, Linda Gaul says it will take care of the Society's long-running financial problems.

This is a highly abbreviated version of the hour-long presentation. There obviously are a number of aspects to discuss on this proposal. If you cannot make the SAGM on November 7, or if you wish to discuss it privately, please feel free to contact Ree Grisham. Both Ree and Noel Chavez can fill in some of the missing details from the above-summation.

Another proposal from the Summer School meeting: Branch-sponsored activities. The cost of converting some of the Society's early recordings to CD is fairly significant. It would be more financially feasible if one or more Branches underwrite a CD, such as "Book 2 on CD, underwritten by the Chicago Branch of the RSCDS." The brass would like feedback on this idea.

Halloween Dance at St. Josaphat's: The class at St. Josaphat on Sunday, October 31, will be costume-optional. Tom and Noel remind dancers that this will be a regular class, so please make sure that your costume will allow you to do step practice, too.

New Year's Ball help needed: Ingrid Kendall and Ken Schoon are looking for volunteers to help with the New Year's Ball. Please give them a call -- Ingrid (708) 957-4494, Ken (219) 836-8593.

Branch memberships: Enclosed is the Branch membership form. We encourage everyone to become regular members of the Branch, but please take a mailing membership to keep in touch if a full membership is not for you.

Basic level class available in LaGrange: Melissa Whitson is running a basic level class on Wednesday's, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. at Lyons Township High School - North Campus (corner of Brainard and Cossitt Streets in LaGrange, parking adjacent to the building). This class is offered through the Lyons Township Continuing Education Program and runs in ten-week sessions. The classroom is a big room with mirrors and a wood floor. See or call Melissa for more information; (312) 461-2491 (days) or (708) 784-9011 (eves), or send email to MAWhitson@mindspring.com or Melissa.Whitson@HarrisBank.com.

Revels Chicago organizing: To find out about this, contact revelschic@aol.com or visit their website www.revels.org.

1999-2000 Committee of Management: Ree Grisham, Honorary Chair; Dorothy Pesch, Honorary Secretary; Greg Canfield, Honorary Treasurer; Jeanne and Mike Millen and Mike Fitak, Members at Large.

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Cincinnati Branch Biennial Workshop: The Cincinnati Biennial Workshop and Ball is scheduled for Friday, March 10 - Sunday, March 12, 2000. They've scheduled Ruth Jappy and Mel Briscoe as teachers, with The Music Makars providing the music. The workshop will be held at the Manchester Inn in Middletown, Ohio. Full weekend package is \$170. For more information, go to <http://www.infinet.com/~plindsay/rscds> or contact the registrar Catherine Kolkmeier as cathkolk@go-concepts.com.

Millennium Event: The Royal Lancers Vintage Dance Troupe and the Highland Mist Scottish Country Dancers of St. Charles, MO are hosting a Millennium Event Thursday, December 30, 1999 - Saturday, January 1, 2000 at the Airport Marriott in St. Louis, MO. The event will consist of Two Dance Workshops, a Waltz Workshop, a Soiree (afternoon party), Formal Dinner, Masquerade Ball, and a Crystal-Tartan Ball in honor of Queen Victoria. Cost for the three-day event is \$180. Contact Karen Chartrand at (636) 978-3266 or GrandBall@aol.com for more information or to sign up.