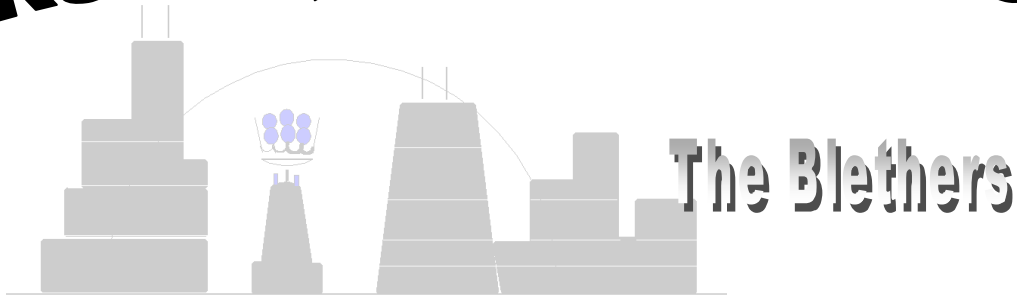


RSCDS, Chicago Branch



SEPTEMBER 2009

Class Updates: An exciting program is being planned for Loch Michigan classes this season, including work on improving dancing skills through learning some of the dances in the new Roy Goldring Graded and Social Dances 3 book which Noel learned at Thistle School in North Carolina. At the TAC AGM, Noel also purchased some great new CDs that dancers will enjoy, and during one class this season plans are to focus on music for dancers.

Additional faces at all Loch Michigan classes are warmly invited. Classes are held on Sundays, at Bethany United Church of Christ Hall, 4250 North Paulina, Chicago, Illinois, starting at 6:00 p.m.

A note about Thistle School, from Noel: This is a week long school that is held in Banner Elk, NC (northwest corner of the state) and leads into the Grandfather Mountain Highland Games. The site is lovely, near the Blue Ridge Parkway, and there are opportunities to go exploring in the area in the afternoons (scenery, hikes, crafts, etc.) Teaching is done at multiple levels, with some classes having live music. Going to the Grandfather Mountain Games is quite a treat. They have a covered spot with dancing and teaching (for new dancers) between about 9 and 4 which is a lot of fun. One special note is that during this week veteran musician Bobby Brown will take on apprentices who already know how to play but who want to learn to play for class. Both of this year's apprentices thought the week was wonderful! Going to Thistle School makes for a unique holiday with dancing, teaching and sightseeing offered.

Switching from Thistle School to Silk and Thistle, Doug reports that over the summer, "as the warm weather came, many people also came and went, as visitors came and regulars disappeared into the hinterlands for vacation. The number of dancers varied from a low of about 5 couples to once and a while up to three sets (making a very full stage...) When there were visitors (perhaps bringing friends new to dancing), we often did a number of easy dances. And it was of course fun to revisit old friends now and then.

This year, after assorted discussions and suggestions, we decided that - when there was an appropriate group of dancers, we would explore some dances by John Drewry (and a few others of that ilk!) Checking on the web, seems Drewry has written some 735 dances, and by now, probably more! We visited some old friends like 'Haunt of the Gnomes', Ian Powery's Farwell to Auchterauder, Dunsmir Strathspey. (There is now a waltz time English dance of the same name that is almost identical.) We worked through many of the dances in the Book/CD 'Dancing Forth' like 'The Dancing Master' - a Gwen suggestion, There was a whole Drewry program at the Abernathy Scottish Country Dancing Club - which includes a nice selection of dances. We also danced a number of two couple dances, often with an interesting Drewry twist. And we discovered that not all Drewry dances are difficult.

Other interesting dances we worked on included 'The Silver Link' by Terry Glaspool (has a 5 couple set and link), Tapsalteerie from the Scottish archives by Roy Clowes (two 3C sets side by side with dancers crossing between sets to end up with the sets inverted) and 'The Kelpie of Loch Coruisk' -

another Gwen suggestion - a 7 couple dance with 3 couples active - ultimately doing Mari's Wedding reels (I refer to this dance as Mari's Wedding on Steroids!)

Dave Neuffer brought back the dance program from the Oxford and Cambridge Highland Ball. We did a number of dances from that list, including 'Lamp Black Lizzie' which has axum reels (16 bar reels involving a full four couple set!) This led Dave to write a dance that uses axum reels which worked very nicely and was much enjoyed by the class. Axum reels do not seem to be widely danced!"

As fall arrives, Doug looks forward to preparing for dances in the area, and to continue exploring a wide variety of dances. Silk and Thistle convenes each Tuesday at 7:30 pm in the Fermilab Barn in Batavia. As always, everybody is welcome to join the dancing and bring suggestions and ideas for interesting dances to explore.

Wedding Announcement: Hannah Newfield-Plunkett and Joshua P. Bowman celebrated their marriage on August 1, 2009 at 1:30 p.m. in Ithaca, New York. The wedding was performed at Christ Chapel in Ithaca by Rev. Stephen D. Felker, the pastor of Christ Chapel. The Rev. Barbara G. Schmitz, who formerly was an Episcopal chaplain at Cornell University, also participated.

Hannah looked regal, wearing a wedding gown sewn by her mother, Mady. The dress was topped by an 8 foot cathedral length lace trimmed veil, borrowed from a friend. In honor of Hannah's Jewish heritage, the wedding party stood under a chuppah, which was painted with a dove, a symbol of both Judaism and Christianity, by the bride's mother. The music for the ceremony was provided by woodwind quintet, with some of the arrangements by Josh. The hymns in the ceremony were played by the bride's grandmother, Linda Newfield, on the piano.

Hannah dances with the Silk and Thistle group whenever she is in town, and Hannah and Josh have attended the Chicago weekend workshop. Their new residence is Selden, Long Island, NY., where we wish them the very best!

News From the Committee of Management: The COM met on August 22 and, with the much-appreciated help of Liz Stake, Corinne McArdle and Doug Jensen, we finally embarked on the task of sorting through some dozen boxes of Branch archives which Noel had been kindly storing in the Branch cabinet in her garage. Preliminary sorting and discarding of duplicates was accomplished, and some gems of Branch history were found in the process (such as a newspaper spread on Avril and David Quarrie dancing at Fermilab in 1985, and a fine newspaper picture of Kent Smith and Barbara Cool learning Highland Dancing.) The search also turned up useful guidelines for carrying out various Branch functions, which will be archived and updated and can help us to encourage involvement.

The COM reviewed the rising cost of Society membership and determined that we must raise membership dues enough to provide the Branch with some funds for its own functioning, or we risk heading towards a deficit. The decision was made to restructure membership categories to accord with current Society categories, but we opted to include full-time students (regardless of exact age) in the "young adult" category, and give younger members relatively more of a financial break. Robin has provided a template for a budget, and the COM will endeavor is to better understand our overall financial picture by comparisons of past years and improved projections for the future.

The New Year's Ball and Weekend workshop were discussed. Some progress has been made towards the planning of the former, with the arrangement to have Earl Gaddis and Karen Axelrod as musicians for a Ball and Tea Dance. Earl and Karen will also play for English country dancing for a full Saturday afternoon dance and part of the Sunday Tea Dance, which will increase their revenue and offset their travel costs. It is hoped that this will encourage more dancers to come in for a fuller program of

activities. As for the Weekend workshop, while there is general agreement from Madison and Milwaukee towards shared responsibility and planning for the workshop, the details and delegates have not yet been fully decided, so specific plans, beyond the reservation of Beloit for the second weekend in June 2010, have not yet been made.

Editor's note: Please take a moment to fill out the enclosed/attached membership form. The form and your check may be sent to: RSCDS Chicago (c/o Marsha Spurlock), PO Box 174, Warrenville, IL 60555, or you may drop it off when you come to dance. As always, thank you for your support.

Farewell and "Fair Winds": A couple who is very special to the Branch, Mel Whitson and Ken Heinemann, is relocating to Singapore, where they will be living for the next two years. Singapore's gain is our loss - we will miss Mel and Ken very much, and we wish them all the best. (And several of us are extremely envious of the new vistas which they are going to experience!)

Did You Know?: Did you know that there are currently 172 RSCDS Branches located around the world. In addition to these branches, there are currently 332 affiliated groups of Scottish Country dancers around the globe? To learn more about these groups, you can go to <http://www.rscds.org/contacts/branches>.

Tribute to Mary Lou Woods: Mary Lou Woods, a long-time Chicago Branch member and friend, passed away on Friday, July 31, 2009, at Mercy Hospital Hospice in Chicago. Mary Lou was a regular dancer at the Loch Michigan class on Sundays starting in the early 1990's. She also introduced Liz Stake to Scottish Country Dancing at that time. She attended many Branch events and also attended SCD events in Madison and Milwaukee. Mary Lou told me last year that she had never missed a New Year's Ball since she started dancing.

Mary Lou served the Branch as Honorary Secretary for two years and provided assistance with Branch publicity for several years. She supported the Branch weekends during the Valparaiso years in a variety of ways. A memory I have is of her picking up one of the weekend teachers, Mary Murray, at O'Hare Airport. Liz and I were along, and we had difficulty locating Mary in the airport. By the time we found Mary and headed to Valpo, we were into Friday afternoon rush hour and the usual construction issues, but Mary Lou took it all in her stride. At another weekend workshop, Mary Lou and Liz were the food coordinators, generously giving of their time to prepare and cut masses of cheese and fruit for the after dance parties. Another memory is of Mary Lou along with Liz Stake and Gary Hay doing a ceilidh act involving a unique, costumed rendition of the three witches' scene from "Macbeth."

Most importantly I remember Mary Lou's wonderful, ready laugh and gracious manner. She was kind and charming to everyone. Even when she wasn't able to do all of the dances, she loved the music and being around other dancers. Mary Lou will be missed by her Loch Michigan class mates and Branch friends. A memorial service and mass for Mary Lou will be held at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 15th at St. Gertrude Catholic Church, 1420 W. Granville, Chicago, IL. - Submitted by R. Gaston

Upcoming Dates of Note:

Sunday, September 13 -Loch Michigan class resumes, 6 pm, at Bethany Church
Sunday, September 13 - Demo group performs at Celtic Fest, Grant Park, Chicago, 12:30 pm
Saturday, October 31, Milwaukee Halloween Party, 2 pm
Monday, November 16 - COM meeting at Users' Center Fermilab
Sunday, November 22 - SAGM at Bethany Church, 7:30 pm (with dancing beginning at 6)
Sunday, January 10 - Ball walk-through at Bethany Church, 6 pm

Saturday, January 16 -New Year's Ball at Ukrainian Center

Sunday, January 17 - Scottish/English Tea Dance (at Bethany Church or location TBA)

Tuesday, April 6 - Tartan Day Party at Silk & Thistle

2009-2010 Committee of Management: David Neuffer, Honorary Chairman; Mady Newfield Honorary Secretary; Marsha Spurlock, Honorary Treasurer; Gwen Leyffer, Noel Chavez and Robin Gaston, Members at Large.

Website: <http://rscds-chicago.org> Webmaster: Sue McKinnell Blethers Editor: Carlyn Bromann