

Minutes of San Francisco Scottish Dancers Annual Class Meeting Thursday April 21, 2011, 7:30-10:00pm, Polish Club

Present: Bruce, Patti, Sylvain, Trina, Ortha, Tom, Mella, Tim, Donna, Isabel, Peter, Sid, Susie, Mary, Roberta, Linnea, Ken, Debbie, Eileen, Miriam, Claire, Gary, Michael

Class manager Linnea Johnson chaired the meeting. Meeting called to order approx. 7:40pm.

Announcements:

- Donations (wine, cheese, fruit) are needed for Wine & Cheese fundraiser for Asilomar – see Donna
- Angels needed for candidate class – see Sylvain
- Give preferences for summer teachers to Tim
- Give suggestions for Solstice Party dances to Bruce
- May 1 – sunrise dancing on Twin Peaks – see Miriam

Committee Reports

Finance Committee: Roberta distributed copies of Profit & Loss report to the group covering financials for Mar 31, 2010 - Mar 31, 2011 and prior year for comparison.

Patti highlighted some details in these reports:

- Finance committee members are Patti, Roberta, Linnea, Trina and Sid is Treasurer
- \$1376.88 deficit this year compared to deficit of \$1164.63 last year
- Deficit growth due to continuing decline in class attendance
- Teachers cost \$245 more this year as had two classes (basic/basic + and experienced) running most of the year. 2011/12 cost projected to be similar to this year.
- Increased revenue from parties, especially Winter Solstice party (due to Red Thistle dancers attendance) and Valentines Ball preview
- Rent this year, while similar to prior year, includes a \$300 deposit for Polish Club – running rate is about half of Noe Valley Ministry with projected 2011/12 rent ca. \$3K lower.
- As of Mar 31, 2011 bank account balance is \$878.54 – this is of concern as historically it has been of the order of \$2-\$3K

Discussion centered on class attendance and how to increase revenue and/or cut costs. Suggestions included: getting more dancers (best financial option); raising fees (not recommended, especially with reduced rent @ Polish Club); having fundraisers (challenging); selling the party books Susie already has; collecting hat by musicians to offset their payment; encouraging those who can/want to pay a premium. More publicity should be given to the fact that donations to the branch are tax-deductible.

Sign-ins have become erratic causing difficulties with tracking full vs. subsidized rates, cf. varia.

Regarding class attendance, it was noted that some dancers have moved away and others come less frequently to the new site. It was suggested that personal invitations be given to those that hadn't come in a while.

The Finance Committee plans to meet after June 30 if there is still concern over the bank balance; if not, then they will meet after the next series.

Publicity Committee: Eileen reviewed types of publicity used this past year including: paid advertising in neighborhood publications (e.g. Noe Valley Voice, websites (e.g. Craigs List, Zevents/SF Chronicle), flyers (posted by Thumbtack Bugle for \$75 and also by class members). The \$250 budget was overspent mostly due to the cost of color copies. Trina's donation of photocopying helped defer flyer costs.

Susie asked the entire class to share postering and flyer distribution.

Discussion centered on most effective publicity methods to attract new dancers and their retention. Publicity comments/suggestions included: classes in NYC use meetup successfully; "marketing to other dance groups is not good"; "person-to-person stuff is most effective"; joint advertising with other dance groups; listing Scottish Dance in the International Folk dance community; targeted flyers for Math/Sci/Eng dept. boards in area colleges ("Dancing for Geeks") and local gyms; business cards; bookmarks; simplifying flyers for communication of key messages.

Retention comments/suggestions included: social aspect important; "used to go out after class"; too late to go out after class; social break in middle of class; stay in & socialize; meet up before class for dinner/coffee; used to have tea (long ago); changing class time to 7:30-9:30pm so that it is not too late to go out afterwards.

Publicity committee meets next Friday, 4/29 @ 11am to consider an act on comments - anyone interested is welcome to attend.

Class Manager: Linnea stated that she is very happy to have Sylvain as co-Class Manager and thanked Claire & Miriam for their help in celebrating birthdays. Per discussion above, she will survey class members regarding changing to a 7:30pm start time for September.

Music: Patti noted that she is de-facto music co-ordinator having acquired this role when David Strong left. A suggestion was made re. the formation of a music committee. Patti stated that Michael had found Susan. It was commented that it is wonderful to have live music for class.

Susie thanked all the musicians on behalf of the class.

Publications: Tim reported that ten books (Measures of Pleasure) have been sold to Jane Muirhead (Branch) for TACBooks.

The original Solstice Party Book (out of print) has been scanned to create a digital version of the book. He suggested that it be noted that a \$5.00 donation is welcome and that we put both an address to mail a donation to and a PayPal button on the website.

Linnea noted that she is planning to re-organize & re-vitalize the website.

Teachers For Next Year's Classes

All teachers expressed their wishes and availability for 2011-2012.

Patti is not interested in active teaching but is happy to fill in as needed.

Bruce loves to teach and is excited by the idea of the possible gender-free class. Likes to teach both basic and experienced class and is thinking about innovations in basic class teaching for 2011.

Trina would like a chunk of time in the experienced class and also the basic class.

Susie would like to do the basic class and has no desire to teach the experienced. Available for most of the summer. Likes to dance. Wants to try children's class again – had a phone call from interested mother with child and friend(s).

Tim enjoys both classes but would like to have a break and not teach the entire year.

The teachers left while those remaining discussed the teachers' preferences and perceived class needs. Sid commented that we are very fortunate to have some world-class teachers in our group.

The following recommendations were made for September 2011 - June 2012.

<u>Session</u>	<u>Basic Class</u>	<u>Experienced Class</u>
1 st	Trina	Bruce
2 nd	Bruce	Tim
3 rd	Tim	Bruce

Trina will be the teacher/impresario for the social nights cf. varia.

Susie will focus on a children's class.

Varia:

- Linnea & Trina reminded everyone that branch insurance requires us all to sign in at class and said that it would help financial record-keeping too if people also noted what they had paid.
- Bruce reported that he, Patti & Alan Twigg had done a demo class for Bex (dancer in Berkeley) who is keen to start a gender-free class. He clarified that it would not be a gay or orientation-specific class group such as the Gay Gordons. If the class starts in the summer and is located at our branch this could be offered to our basic + students. It has the potential to augment our ongoing attendance if continued into classes starting in September.

Consensus was that we would be happy to have/host a gender-free class if we have a teacher to teach it.

- The Pleasanton Games has new leadership but it thought unlikely to affect the adjudication teams program. Basic + class members should be encouraged to get involved in the adjudication team.
- While teachers were absent, class members discussed having some class nights that were more dancing/social with less teaching. Suggestions as to how often to have these ranged from “during the months with 5 Thursdays”; every month; every other month. It was decided, nearly unanimously, to have a social night in the months of November, January, March & May. They should be listed in the Branch calendar and we will review their success in February.
- Bruce suggested celebrating birthdays every other month; consensus was that it stay as is, celebrating monthly.

Meeting adjourned at 10:08pm.

Minutes prepared by Debbie Saunders