

## **2020 AGM Vice Chair & Volunteers Report (Louis Racic, Vice-Chair & Director)**

### **Vice Chair**

In the first year of the 2019-2024 strategic plan we have gathered much of the information we require for both benchmarking our attendance and participation and for ongoing trend analysis. We have also created a survey to better understand the dancing activity and requirements of our membership.

We continue to maintain contact with the Police Services Board concerning the list of contact people with reference to the Toronto Association Child and Vulnerable Persons Policy. Police Checks are not required however we are required to have a declaration in writing. Our Secretary is the custodian of these Declaration Forms.

Thanks to the staff at the Forest Parkway, Armour Heights and Broadlands Community Centres where we managed to juggle a very hectic schedule of events. These included demo pool practices, special classes, Tartan Ball practices and various meetings. The DAA classes were to take place at Broadlands Community Centre but were cancelled due to the Covid-19 crisis.

### **Volunteers**

The Toronto Association continues to benefit from a committed, hard-working body of volunteers who give generously of their skills and time. The Volunteer Appreciation Dance and the Volunteer Awards both endeavour to celebrate that generosity.

The 2020 Volunteer Appreciation Dance, with a program devised by Jane Robinson, was to be combined with the AGM. Unfortunately, this dance was cancelled due to the Covid-19 crisis.

The 2020 Volunteer Awards will be presented at a future dance, once we are able to, most likely in the autumn of 2020.

## **2020 AGM Communications report (Andrew Henderson, Director)**

Our newsletter, *Set & Link*, is published 10 times a year and emailed to most of our members as well as branches around the world. The newsletter team decides on content, solicits articles from contributors and edits the final copy, the editorial group of Donald Holmes (editor), Judy Williams, Marian White, Rob Lockhart and Teresa Lockhart continue to dedicate time and skill to produce a very informative and interesting newsletter for us all.

Thank you again to Muriel Nicoll, who for a number of years has looked after mailing the print copies of *Set & Link* (now only about 50) and to Rob Lockhart, who handles the emailed copies and manages our website.

As Communications Director, I work with the Set & Link team, relaying major Board decisions and concerns. I also liaise with Caroline Brockbank in Edinburgh, providing articles highlighting TA activities for the Scottish Country Dancer newsletter. For example, this past year were articles about Brigadoon at the Shaw Festival and Anne with an 'E'.

Rob Lockhart continues to liaise with Reuben Freemantle who runs the Scottish Country Dance Dictionary website, 22 videos were uploaded during the last 12 months and posted by Reuben. The total views for that group of videos was 5286.

I provided reports to Social Group attendees throughout the year, on major decisions and important issues discussed by the Toronto Board sent via e-notes after the Board's monthly meetings. In support of further communications, a Social Group Liaison meeting took place in November 2019, which was attended by teachers/leaders of 10 of our 16 associated Social Groups. Issues discussed included: declining attendance (mostly age/health related): Need for a broader base of teachers, How do we get into the Universities? The Millennial classes were advertised in student newspapers but didn't get much response: Ceilidh dancing is more appealing to students.

## **2020 AGM E & T Report (Tony Szeto, Director)**

### ***Highlights***

- \* Association Classes**
- \* Dancing Achievement Award Course**
- \* Youth Events**
- \* Tutor Succession**

### ***Association Classes***

In Fall 2019, Levels 1, 2, and 3 were offered at Eastminster, with respectively 14 attendees (12 of whom new, 2 returnees), 24 (17 new, 7 returnees), and 14 (2 new, 2 from Level 2, 10 returnees). Level 1 was also offered at St Leonard's, with 18 attendees (11 new, 7 returnees).

In Winter 2020, Eastminster offered Levels 1 and 2 again, with respective enrolments being 26 (22 new, 4 returnees), and 17 (2 new, 15 returnees). Level 1 was also offered at St Leonard's, with 25 attendees (19 new, 6 returnees). Level 3 as well as Extension Class have been cancelled.

Since the last AGM we have therefore recruited some 53 new beginners and 19 new Level 2s. We need to maximize our effort to retain them and help them progress along the learning curve.

Sincere appreciation goes to our Association Classes Convener, Sue Ann Bryce, for coordinating the classes, and to the many volunteers who helped with the registration and weekly sign-in, as well as joining sets on the dance floor to even out numbers. Special mentions go to Class Reps Anne Bishop and Cheryl Catt for their continual support, regular attendance, and tireless administration.

### ***Dancing Achievement Award Course***

Sufficient numbers were gathered for a DAA advanced class to take place in Mar-Apr 2020. Unfortunately, the class had to be cancelled due to COV-19.

### ***Youth Events***

Maureen Richardson was Chair and Secretary of the Youth Committee.

Youth Ball took place on May 4, 2019. The program was devised by Deirdre MacCuish Bark, and emceed by Keith Bark.

Family Ceilidh was held on September 21, 2019. The event was reasonably well-attended and enjoyed by all. The program was both devised and emceed by Keith Bark.

Moira Korus and Halyna Sydorenko were co-chairs of a sub-committee dedicated to Spring Fling/Fringe 2020. This sub-committee consisted of most members of the Youth Committee, as well as several individuals recruited to assist with various aspects of this event. RSCDS HQ acted as sponsor and financial backstop to the Fling. "Grants" from HQ, Toronto Association, and TAC, as well as sponsorships and donations, allowed the event to be a stand-alone event, independent of RSCDS TA. Healthy numbers registered. Seven scholarships were secured from HQ. The event was up and ready to go when the sub-committee had to cancel due to COVID-19. It was felt that the health and safety of participants was paramount. Physical distancing and international travel were major factors behind the cancellation. All registrants will have been fully reimbursed by the time the AGM is scheduled to take place. Due to the cancellation of the event, complete financial details, that would include any incurred cancellation fees for accommodation and service providers (teachers and musicians), are unavailable at this time.

A series of classes for millennials was mounted in Fall 2019. Another series began in Winter 2020 but was cut short as a response to COVID-19. These series were designed to create buzz in anticipation of the Fling, and to prepare young and/or new dancers for the March Beginners Dance, and possibly for the Fling. Cancellation of the March Beginners Dance and the Fling rendered these series moot in the near term. One can only hope that the new young dancers we attracted during these series may continue their interest in SCD. In terms of finances, the Fall series lost about \$900, which the TA Board regarded as a reasonable investment in the future. The Winter series ran for only half its intended duration and sustained a small loss. The loss was covered by an anonymous donor, who had undertaken to underwrite the event in advance of its being mounted.

### ***Tutor Succession***

Having no current process in place, TA Board has struck a panel to identify individuals suitable for the role of Tutor in Teacher Candidate Class under the jurisdiction of TA over the next number of years. The process is for the panel to consult widely with Toronto Area teachers and relevant stakeholders – “consultants” – in a two-stage process. A list of desirable qualities in a tutor will be determined and ranked with input from these consultants. Then this list will be circulated to the same group for the purpose of soliciting names of prospective individuals. The panel will compile a short list of candidates in accordance with this input and present the list to the Board. It is anticipated that two teachers from the short list will be appointed “shadows” to the Tutor in an upcoming Teacher Candidate Class tentatively scheduled in 2020-2021. Shadowing is regarded as highly desirable experience for the grooming of a Tutor.

### ***E&T Executive Committee***

Tony Szeto appreciates advice and support from Moira Korus, Maureen Richardson, Sue Ann Bryce, and Vicky Zeltins.

## **2020 AGM Membership Report (Bill Barber, Director)**

There has been a slight decrease in membership for the 2019-2020 year. Membership stands at 280 full members with voting privileges. Junior memberships stand at 12. Keep-in-Touch associate members number 13.

At last year's AGM, the members approved a change to the Young Adult membership category. The age range was changed from 18 to 24 to 18 to 34.

This year, we welcomed 24 new members, both new dancers and transfers from other Branches. Our members continuing and enthusiastic attention to welcoming new dancers at social groups and association events is appreciated.

The New Members Tea was postponed to a later date due to Covid 19.

In January, there was a large influx of new dancers joining the Branch classes, numbering around 50 people. This bodes well for the future of the Association.

This year, following a temporary suspension of our Paypal account, we instituted payments via Interac e-Transfer. There is no charge to the Association for the latter method. Forty percent of membership payments were made by Interac e-Transfer, 20 percent by Paypal, and the remainder by cheque.

I would like to thank Rosalind Gilbert for her assistance with the promotion of SCD at the St. Andrew's Charity Ball practices and Anne Pennington of the St. Andrew's Society for notifying members of the St. Andrew's Society about SCD Branch classes.

Bill Barber

## **2020 AGM Outreach/Marketing Report (Ron Macnaughton, Director)**

### **Demo Pool**

The demo pool has performed to 11 groups since last April, including the performance of Brigadoon in Niagara on the Lake. They not only showcase dancing; they also raise funds for the Association. Thanks to Caroline Gentles for being the Convenor, Stella Henderson, Halyna Sydorenko, Deirdre and Keith Bark for their planning and organization; May Webster for getting more material to make more white dresses; Louis Racic for organizing practice locations; and to Arlene Koteff for running the 8 practices.

### **Culture Day**

Sue Ann Bryce organized a successful event for Culture Day last September. During the rain, Ellen Mole piped while Rosalind Gilbert and Anne Bishop persuaded many to go into the church to enjoy the fun of Scottish Country Dancing.

### **Promotion**

Events have been promoted in a variety of ways this year. Dancing in the Park was promoted when members distributed packages of materials to neighbourhood libraries, community centres, stores etc.... Over the summer many dancers were given envelopes of materials promoting September SCD activities such as Association and Youth classes. A paid ad was put in a local paper to promote Dancing in the Park, and several were put in student newspapers to promote the Millennial Class. Thanks especially to Paul Barber for organizing paid and free advertising. Brochures have also been created for specific events such as Dufferin Grove. Word of mouth and personal contact remain a great way to attract new members. Thanks go to Bill Barber and Rosalind Gilbert for talking to people at the St. Andrews Ball practices and encouraging several to join the classes in January. Our members talk to people at ceilidhs, demos and Dancing in the Park, trying to attract new dancers. Our Brigadoon Ad last year resulted in hits to our website, but no new dancers in the Toronto Association yet.

### **Website**

Rob Lockhart added a Resources section to our website this year. Members can access and print brochures and photos to use to promote our events and classes.

### **Social Media**

We have continued our presence on social media. We have a paid membership on Meetup, a service scanned by people looking for new activities. There are 160 people following us on Meetup. We have a Facebook and an Instagram page with a total of 346 followers, although some people may be following us on more than one platform. These pages have interesting content including announcements of new activities such as Association classes and Dancing in the Park. During the social distancing they also have puzzles to entertain us at home and keep our organization in people's minds. Thanks go to Kendra Beliveau, Theresa Malek and John Clark for running our social media sites.

We have done some trials to reach people with Scottish Country Dancing messages using paid Facebook advertising. It's possible to deliver to cell phones a carousel of images or videos describing features of SCD. Viewers are then directed to our website. Each impression (ad on a phone once) costs about a half cent.

Submitted by Ron Macnaughton Outreach/Marketing Director, March 30, 2020

## **2020 AGM Program Report (Kevin Moloney, Director)**

### **Summary**

RSCDS Toronto had yet another successful season of dancing for the period June 2019 to May 2020. We delivered four excellent dance programs- Dancing in the Park (DITP), monthly dances, workshop and the Tartan Ball.

None of this is possible of course without the hard work and dedication of the convenors and their volunteer committees. On behalf of the Board and myself I would like to thank all those involved in running the programs – Dave Drewette (DITP), Christy Barber (Toronto Workshop), Max Fothergill (Monthly Dance), Laurie McConachie (Tartan Ball) and the unsung heroes on the various committees.

Great music was provided at all the events by

Scotch Mist – DITP, Toronto Workshop, Tartan Ball and Monthly Dances

Don Bartlett and the Scottish Heirs - Toronto Workshop, and Monthly Dances

Fred Moyes- Toronto Workshop

### **Dancing in the Park**

Good weather allowed us to have DITP on each Tuesday in June 2019 at Edward's Gardens in Sunnybrook Park. Attendance was good over the four nights and members and non-member audience participation was excellent with evidence of great enjoyment of people trying Scottish Country dancing for the first time. Thanks go to Colin Campbell for devising the programs.

A condition of the City permit for using the park is that we cannot charge an entrance fee. We are therefore dependent on donations to our "donation box" at DITP and the proceeds of our 50/50 draw at the monthly dances to cover the costs of DITP program. Our donations at the June 2019 DITP increased to \$2,298 compared to \$2,052 the previous June.

### **Monthly Dances**

The dance season started with the monthly dance in October 2019 at Crescent School and then the November monthly dance which was held on the afternoon of the annual Toronto workshop at Branksome Hall. We also held the Christmas dance at Branksome Hall due to date conflict with Crescent School. The January dance was held at Crescent School.

Great music, great dance programs provided by Andrew Collins, and excellent food ensured all had a great time at the dances.

The attendance numbers were similar to last year but still not sufficient to ensure breakeven for the dance season. See numbers below.

Unfortunately, the beginners dance in March and the Volunteers/AGM dance in April were cancelled due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

## Attendance at Monthly Dances

	Oct		Nov		Dec		Jan	
	2018	2019	2018	2019	2018	2019	2019	2020
members	78	78	116	102	104	86	78	61
non members	1		12	12		2		
Beginners					8	14		
Youth + students	2	3	2	17	7	21	3	5
Spectators	6	4			8	2	2	4
Total	87	85	130	131	127	125	83	70

### Toronto Workshop

We continue to have very successful and popular workshops in November of each year. Branksome Hall was again our venue for the 4<sup>th</sup> consecutive year. Attendance was up slightly from last year with 130 registering compared to 127 the previous year

Teachers Angela Young (Scotland), Claire Collier (USA), Colin Campbell (Toronto) provided excellent tuition to eager students in beginner, intermediate and advanced levels. Feedback from attendees was excellent overall.

We again offered a free introductory dance lesson for those interested in checking out Scottish Country Dancing. Thanks to Teresa Lockhart for taking on the task and all attendees seemed to enjoy themselves. Some of the attendees even participated at the dances geared for beginners at the afternoon dance. Unfortunately, none have taken the next step to join beginner classes.

The search for a convener for the workshop continues. Continuation of this great event is in jeopardy if we cannot fill this position.

The Dancewear Bazar sale, now in its 12<sup>th</sup> year, brought in a record \$2,350 in sales receipts. The sale continues to be one of the highlights of the Toronto workshop. A huge thank you to the dedication of Margaret Rieger and the team!

### Tartan Ball

The 57<sup>th</sup> Tartan Ball was held on February 15, 2020, at The Old Mill, Toronto. This was the second year it was held at this location. Ladies and gentlemen decked out in their finery, delicious food, excellent music and wonderful wooden dance floor contributed to the electric atmosphere and ensured a great night was had by all, including spectators! There was great support from members from home and afar and the feedback from attendees was very positive. This event continues to be the premium event of the RSCDS dance calendar.

Unfortunately, the number of tickets sold -110, was significantly lower than the previous year's 140 resulting in a deficit which had to be subsidized by RSCDS reserves. Hopefully more members will renew their support for this great event in the future.