

# RSCDS, Chicago Branch

## The Blethers

Carlyn Bromann, Chair

September 2005

Sue McKinnell, Editor

<http://rscds-chicago.org>

### Greetings from the Committee of Management:

We have 6 members, elected in May and serving a one year term: The current members are: Greg Canfield, Treasurer; Noel Chávez, Secretary; Doug Jensen, Member at Large; Mady Newfield, Member at Large; Mary Pankonen, Member at Large; and Carlyn Bromann, Chair. We each will try to be available for input and feedback from members of the group about the Branch and its activities. As the fall season approaches, we would like to highlight three upcoming dates: on Saturday, October 1, Silk and Thistle presents Frolic on the Fox 10, at the Baker Center in St. Charles. On Saturday, January 14, 2006, the Chicago Branch's New Year's Ball will be back at the Ukrainian Cultural Center in Chicago. And on June 9-11, 2006, the annual weekend workshop will again be held at Beloit College. Below, and in future editions of the Blethers, there will be updates on all of these events, but for now, please save these dates. - Carlyn Bromann

---

**A New Season of Dancing:** September 11<sup>th</sup> starts the new season of dancing for the Loch Mich class with an Open House. The class meets at St. Josaphat's Parish Hall at Belden and Southport on Chicago's north side at 6:00 p.m.. Loch Mich teachers also plan to continue the tradition of presenting a special class each month. See the Branch calendar later in this newsletter for the dates of the first two special classes.

The Silk and Thistle class continues to meet every Tuesday evening from 7:30 p.m. - 10:00 p.m. at the Fermilab Barn. This year the Silk and Thistle class is proud to present Frolic on the Fox 10 on October 1<sup>st</sup> (see below).

Scotreeel meets Thursday evenings in the southern suburbs at a park district location in Homewood. Call Ingrid Kendall for information. (708-957-4494 or e-mail [IMK9999@yahoo.com](mailto:IMK9999@yahoo.com))

### "A Beginner's Plea"

Be kind, be considerate, be caring for the new ones on the scene

When a reel becomes a hazard and you feel you'd like to scream

Remember when you were learning and never thought you'd know

How long it took to allemande and that strathspeys must be slow.

The feet, the hands, the eyes, the head must all do things in time

When just to find your partner is the major thing in mind!

We look the same in snow-white frocks, in kilts and pumps and tartan socks

But some are old hands, some are new with lots to learn, so before you do

Frown or growl, or push or pull, sneer or snarl, remember too

That once, perhaps, long, long ago you were new and didn't know

Your heart would thump, your brain would freeze  
Your legs would knock about your knees.

You knew you were the only one who'd mess the reels up one by one!

So be kind, be considerate, be caring for the new ones on the scene

Then clubs will grow in numbers which was Miss Milligan's hope and dream.

From the Strathspey list in 1996 - Noel Chávez

---

**New Year's Ball 2006:** This year the New Year's Ball returns to the Ukrainian Cultural Center. Musicians for the Ball are The Music Makars - always favorites for dance events. The Ball is Saturday, January 14<sup>th</sup>, Watch your mailboxes and the website for more information.

---

---

**2005-2006 Committee of Management:** Carlyn Bromann, Honorary Chair; Noel Chávez, Honorary Secretary; Greg Canfield, Honorary Treasurer; Doug Jensen, Mady Newfield, and Mary Pankonen - Members at Large.

**Frolic on the Fox 10:** The Silk and Thistle class is proud to announce that Frolic on the Fox turns 10 this year! The dance occurs on Saturday, October 1<sup>st</sup> at 7:30 p.m. at the Baker Community Center, 101 South Second Street (one block south of Rt. 64, on Rt. 31), St. Charles, IL. Once again, O'er the Border provides the music for the dance. Details, including the dance program and instructions, are available on the Silk and Thistle website (<http://suedan.com/scd> - or link from the Branch website). The dance program is also listed later in this newsletter.

**Highland Games 2005:** The demo team continued its tradition of performing at this year's Highland Games at the Oak Brook Polo Grounds. This year's festival featured a dedicated dance stage for Country, Highland, and other dance performances. Three new dances were added to this year's repertoire, all successfully navigated before an appreciative audience.

Doug Jensen also conducted an introductory participatory workshop at the dance stage which was well-attended. Our RSCDS tent provided welcome refuge, as well as meet 'n greet opportunities with festival patrons. The contacts we made at the tent, and at Doug's workshop, are hoped to lead to some new faces at this fall's open house and at our other venues.

As a whole, this year's Games featured record attendance and weather nothing short of spectacular. One of the highlights was a performance by acclaimed violinist Rachel Barton Pine. Rachel has recently completed "Scottish Fantasies," a collaboration with Alasdair Fraser and the Scottish Chamber Orchestra. Rachel and her husband Greg have recently become life members of the St. Andrews Society, so expect to see more of them.

Thanks to all who helped pitch the tent, or pitched in otherwise. - Bryan Luce

**TAC AGM Meeting:** The Teacher's Association of Canada (TAC) is the North American organization for RSCDS teachers. One of their key activities is to sponsor teacher training courses and teacher examinations for the Society, at their annual Summer School (even numbered years) as well as on an examination tour (odd numbered years). Other activities include TACBooks and TACSound which offer SCD books and music, as well as serving as a support source for teachers.

There were several topics of general interest presented at the recent AGM in Shawnigan Lake, Vancouver Island, BC.

- The 2006 TAC Candidate's Course and Summer School will be held at Wilfred Laurier University in Waterloo, ON. This college is located near the University of Waterloo site used in 2004. The Candidate Course will begin the week of July 31, while the Summer School will begin on August 6.
  - Anyone wanting to purchase CDs, videos or SCD books, TACSound and TACBooks now will accept Visa as a payment form. The easiest way to place an order is through the TAC website at
  - TACTalk is the quarterly newsletter of the TAC, and subscriptions are available to interested dancers who aren't teachers. TACBooks and TACSound managers usually list the new items they have received, and there are usually articles about dancing and teaching by experienced teachers. Annual subscriptions are \$18US, and can be sent to J'ina Middleton, 37 Paradise Road South, Hamilton, ON L8S 1S2. A subscription form is under the TACTalk listing on the TAC website.
- Noel Chávez

#### MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM



**2005-2006 Committee of Management:** Carlyn Bromann, Honorary Chair; Noel Chávez, Honorary Secretary; Greg Canfield, Honorary Treasurer; Doug Jensen, Mady Newfield, and Mary Pankonen - Members at Large.

## Local Dancers Inspired by Scottish Spirit

Kilts swirl and dresses fly. The masses of dancers going through figures - reeling, casting, and setting - look exactly like the dancers at any ball or dance. You can easily think that they are just Scottish Country Dancers from your home town...until you look up above them at the castle, towering high above the dancers on the very high hill.



Last month, during our trip to England and Scotland, my mother and I had a chance to dance in Princes Street Gardens, Edinburgh with their local branch dancers. It was an amazing experience not only because of the evocative scenery, but because of the wonderfully friendly dancers we met.

Princes Street Gardens, the main park in the center of town, sits directly underneath the hill that holds the castle. The entire city seems built on a vertical plan, and nowhere does it show more clearly than directly in the center. I could probably better describe the hill as a cliff - its sides rear up straight from the verdant park below.

The dancing takes place in front of the bandshell within the gardens. Within the bandshell itself, they invite live music to play. And rather than try to walk through every dance with the one hundred or so people who come, they invite a demo set from a local branch to demo each dance, and then dance it. In a group that big, it's an extremely satisfying hybrid between a class and a ball, and everyone gets to dance.

The best part of this group, however, is the dancers themselves. While the group is on average more elderly than many groups in this country, its energy rivaled that of any group I have been to. And not only were all the dancers enthusiastic in their dancing, they were also ready and willing to welcome newcomers to their midst.

At one point in the evening, for example, they had programmed a dance, The Reel of the A68, which a member of their group had written. We had planned to sit it out since it wasn't a dance either of us had ever seen, but two members of the demo set came out into the seating area and pulled us into the dance. The dance itself, incidentally, was one of the most fun of the evening.

Later on, before we left, we were met by the official keeper of the guestbook (an actual title on their Committee of Management) who had every visitor in his log.

The next day, after getting some sleep to recover from the day of walking and dancing, we decided to try our luck at finding RSCDS Headquarters at 12 Coates Crescent. After a short time driving through the convoluted thoroughfares of the city, we made it to Coates Crescent and found the very building. Leaving our car parked illegally, we went in briefly.

Once again I was impressed with how friendly everyone was. We were greeted right away, and encouraged to get our photograph taken under the picture of Miss Milligan. We were a bit reluctant to do this, until we were informed that it was absolutely normal and, in fact, popular with all the Japanese tourists who visited (and many others as well). In the end, though, it provided a great souvenir.

Both visiting Headquarters and dancing in the shadow of Edinburgh Castle really impressed us, even reviving my interest in Scottish dancing. Not only did it let us try dancing in the center of the Scottish dance sphere, but it also made our trip to Scotland truly unique. We were no longer simply tourists, we were suddenly and completely at home in Edinburgh.



by Hannah Newfield-Plunkett

**2005-2006 Committee of Management:** Carlyn Bromann, Honorary Chair; Noel Chávez, Honorary Secretary; Greg Canfield, Honorary Treasurer; Doug Jensen, Mady Newfield, and Mary Pankonen - Members at Large.

<b>RCSDS Chicago Branch 2005/2006 Calendar</b>	
Loch Mich classes begin	Sunday, 9/11 6:00 p.m.
<b><i>Frolic on the Fox 10</i></b>	Saturday, 10/1 7:30 p.m.
Special class: Dances with Unusual Sets	Sunday, 10/16 6:00 p.m.
Semi-Annual General Meeting	Sunday, 11/6 6:00 p.m.
Special class: Reel to Reel	Sunday, 11/20 6:00 p.m.
Holiday Party	Sunday, 12/18 6:00 p.m.
NO DANCING (Loch Mich)	Sunday, 12/25 & 1/1
Ball Walkthrough	Sunday, 1/8/2006 6:00 p.m.
<b><i>New Years Ball</i></b>	Saturday, 1/14
Weekend Workshop	Friday, 6/9 – Sunday, 6/11

<b>Frolic on the Fox 10 Program</b>		
<b>Opening Waltz</b>		
Miss Allie Anderson	32J3	RSCDS Leaflet #14
Culla Bay	32S4 Square	41 #2
Lucy's Fancy	32R3	Chicago 25th
Ellie's Jig	32J3	Slip Knot Collection
The Rose of the North	32S3	Leeds Silver Jubilee
Black Mountain Reel	32R5 Set	3 <sup>rd</sup> Carnforth
The Cranberry Tart	32J3	Dances from the Seven Year Itch
A Year of Dance	32S3	Chicago 25th
The Reel of the 51st Division	32R3	13 #10
<b>Interval: La Bastringue</b>		
Burns Night	32J2 (6X)	Celebrate 50 Years with the Boston Branch
Sugar on Snow	32S3	McKinnell: Leaflet
Catch the Wind	32H3	Island Bay Collection
MacDonald of the Isles	32S3 Set	2 <sup>nd</sup> Carnforth
Shiftin' Bobbins	32R3	Ormskirk Scottish Dances
The Nurseryman	32J3	37 #7
The Lea Rig	32S2 (6X)	21 #5
Mairi's Wedding	40R3	22 SCD
<b>Closing Waltz</b>		

**2005-2006 Committee of Management:** Carlyn Bromann, Honorary Chair; Noel Chávez, Honorary Secretary; Greg Canfield, Honorary Treasurer; Doug Jensen, Mady Newfield, and Mary Pankonen - Members at Large.