

The Ghillie Callum

Volume 52 Number 2

December 2020

HALLOWEEN COSTUME CONTEST



Clockwise from top left: Steve Kaplan, Deresa Kenney, Tony McQuilkin, Kathrin Segal. Additional photos on pages 3 and 4.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Hello fellow dancers ...

Reflecting on the events of the past year, I realized just how incredibly the thread of Scottish Country Dancing wound around us and brought us together in these times of isolation.

We began with the experiment of a “virtual” AGM and went on to host an Ice Cream Social, a Hawaiian Luau and then a fun-filled Halloween evening complete with costumes, dances and stories.

With the success of these virtual events, I am pleased to share that the Branch hosted a virtual St. Andrews Ball on Nov. 28. While we celebrated the patron saint of Scotland, we also used the occasion to celebrate the 90th birthday of an extraordinary L.A. Branch member, Jack Rennie.

Doris Fisher and Kris McGinnis co-chaired

the event and although we didn't have their usual sumptuous dinner, we did enjoy dancing to music of the Thistle Band (on CD), a photo-montage and sharing of stories and memories about Jack. The evening was nostalgic and fun.

Not only have we been keeping in touch as a branch, but many of our teachers have been keeping in touch with their classes through either dance-at-home evenings or simple chat sessions. This is the real spirit of the RSCDS.

Plans are underway to host a virtual Hogmanay event – details of which will be shared with everyone at a later date.

In the meantime, be well, be safe and keep in touch with one another. Best wishes to everyone for the holiday season ahead.

Ann McBride

ZOOM CHATS AND CLASSES

Since the lockdown began last March, Zoom has become a popular way to keep in touch with friends, learn new skills and continue with our favorite activities.

The Torrance class, which is open to anyone who wishes to participate, includes a short chat followed by an hour of dancing. The format for the dancing is the same as the dancing we enjoyed at the Interbranch Dance in September and the L.A. Halloween dance in October.

The dances are chosen by the teachers and include old favorites, current favorites and dances previously unknown to everyone. All dances are taught during the class.

The Santa Barbara class has been meeting on a regular basis since last spring. Please contact Ilse Gilbert for more information.

The Ventura class is hosting regular monthly chats and would welcome participation by others who would like to join in. Please contact Lisa Sage for more information.

In November the Valley College began holding chats via Zoom for those who were class members as of March. Please contact Aase Hansen for more information.

Deanna St. Amand

CALENDAR

All in-person events are on hold until the “stay at home” orders are lifted and our dance venues become available once again.

2020 VIRTUAL FESTIVAL

Adapting to the challenges of dancing this year, the Society created the 2020 Virtual Festival — check it out at RSCDS.org/blog/virtual-festival-2020.

The Lyon Branch took advantage of technology to create a very clever video — rscds.org/blog/virtual-festival.

Roberta Gotfried

SCD-SoCal-mail

Regular e-mails about all local dance events, links to videos of dances, commentary about newly introduced dances and occasional tidbits of Scottish history, geography and culture are provided by Robb Quint.

To be added to the mailing list, contact Robb at volleyballjerry@aol.com.

HALLOWEEN COSTUME CONTEST



For the Halloween dance costume parade Tony McQuilkin was dapper as The Gentleman. The Hartungs gave us two variations on a theme with Nancy's Gypsy Shawl and Bill's Gypsy Rover. They were awarded Best Group. Bill taught both dances the following Friday at the Torrance Zoom class.

Kathrin Segal offered an encore of her "Dei'l Amang the Tailors" with a red dress and dazzling makeup.

Jon Reeves presented his shadowy, mysterious Lady in Red, while Doris Fisher's version

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Clockwise from top left: Kris and Mike McGinnis, Nancy and Bill Hartung, Eric and Doris Fisher, Ilse Gilbert, Jon Reeves.

OBITUARY

We are sad to report that former Los Angeles Branch chair Ray Tucker passed away in October. He was chair from 2008 to 2010.

Ray and his wife Susie had moved from the Los Angeles area to Oregon.

Condolences may be sent to:
Susie Tucker
2830 NW 29th St.
Corvallis, OR 97330-3548



Ray and Susie dancing at their wedding.

TWA ROGUISH EEN – the story behind the title of the poem and the dance

*“Her voice is like the ev’ning thrush
That sings on Cessnock banks unseen,
While his mate sits nestling on the bush;
An’ she has twa sparkling, roguish een.”*

(Notice that Robert Burns has a different spelling of “roguish” than dance deviser John Drewry.)

It is believed that this poem was addressed to a Miss Alison (or Ellison) Begbie, the 18-year-old daughter of a local farmer; she was said to be a serving maid at a farm near the river Cessnock, close by Robert Burns’ farm at Lochlea.

In his history of Robert Burns, Dr. Currie tells us that the poet proposed to Miss Begbie on at least four occasions, but she turned him down every time.

In his proposal, the poet says: “If you will be so good and so generous as to admit me for your partner, your companion, your bosom friend through life, there is nothing on this side of eternity shall give me greater transport.” A passionate proposal indeed!

But Miss Begbie married someone else and moved to Glasgow.

Ann McBride

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of Lady in Red was sassy in a beautiful hat and fluffy boa.

Ilse Gilbert was an elegant witch in formal Scottish dress with accessories denoting Carlin’s Cairn, while husband John also opted for traditional Scottish dress.

Eric Fisher chose to look forward to the dances that will be devised to mark the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic.

Deresa Kenney received accolades for Best Costume for her spooky mask and animated props. She came without a name, but was quickly dubbed Just as I Was in the Morning.

Our Zoom hosts for the evening were Kris and Mike McGinnis. Kris selected Black Magic, a

dance she taught during the evening, and Mike was Prof. Snape of Slytherin House and won the coveted Best Interpretation of a Scottish Dance.

But the topper for the night was Steve Kaplan’s Dream Catcher. Steve chose to go all out to honor his beloved New York Mets with full fan wardrobe and fielder’s mitt in front of a Zoom background of the Mets logo. (Really a gutsy choice with the L.A. Dodgers in the World Series.) For this effort, Steve was awarded Funniest Costume.

Some of the other other Zoom participants chose not to identify with a specific dance, but added seasonal touches to their attire.

Nancy Myers and Alice Allen

CLASSES

Torrance/Redondo Beach

Following the example of the RSCDS' "Dance Scottish at Home," the innovative teachers of the Friday night Torrance class collaborated in a unique way to keep the class camaraderie alive.

Kris McGinnis, Rosemary Abend and Bill Hartung banded together to conduct a weekly "class" of dancing and sharing. The format centered around warm-ups and teaching dances old and new with the class members participating from their living rooms, kitchens, dens and even

garages!

The teaching staff expanded with the addition of Deanna St. Amand and myself joining the fun. Scheduled from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m., the session has become a ritual for Friday nights.

If you would like to join in and see what it's all about, please contact Kris McGinnis at krismcginnis@gmail.com and she will add you to the Zoom list. Hoping to see you on the Friday "floor"!

Ann McBride

Santa Barbara

The class has continued to meet on Zoom each week for a half-hour chat and a half hour of dancing. Attendance varies, but we always have at least enough people to make a set — counting ghosts, of course!

Frances and Randy sometimes join us from their second home in the mountains, but we didn't expect to see them when they set off on Amtrak to visit friends and family on the East Coast, a trip of several weeks, taking them through San Francisco, Chicago, Virginia, New Orleans and Washington, D.C.

Imagine our surprise on Day 1 of their

journey when they joined the session from their berth on the train!

They even joined the warm-up waltz, although all we could see were their belt buckles! They pointed the camera out the window so we could enjoy the passing scenery and hear the dining car announcement of the seating times.

They continued to join the Thursday class and also the opera group and movie group whenever they were able, from hotels around the country. It was a vicarious adventure for all of us staying at home!

Ilse Gilbert

Valley College

Lynette Kay drove up to Seattle to visit her daughter, son-in-law and 2 ½-year-old granddaughter, with lots of sightseeing and hiking on the drive (four days each way).

Stops included the Silver Falls State Park in Oregon (seven waterfalls), Lake Shasta Caverns and Umpqua National Forest and the Umpqua Hot Springs. Lynette said she soon discovered she was driving through an area that burned down the week before and was still smoldering! "It was a little scary to be surrounded by smoke and not have internet."

Claudia Pedersen reported that a large branch fell from a cedar tree in her backyard, so that has entailed a lot of cleanup.

Jon Reeves has his crew building the Burbank float for the 2022 Rose Parade (the 2021 parade is cancelled). He's enjoyed taking ethnic

cooking classes online from the Fowler Museum.

Lindsey Courtney visited Idyllwild in the San Bernardino National Forest for a few days in September — "it was great to be surrounded by trees and cute woodland creatures." She's started a program at CSUN to get a master's degree in secondary English education and has been tutoring a former student in French.

Deanna St. Amand has been teaching some dances for the Friday night Torrance class on Zoom. At the branch Halloween social she gave a thumbnail history lesson on the origins of Halloween and how the night got its name.

Terry Schaeffer says she hasn't made much headway clearing the dining table of paperwork brought home from LACMA at the end of January (before some buildings were torn down). However, most of her Christmas shopping is already done — by mail order.

Betty Petit is in charge of the Directors Guild Women's Student Film Awards (her 26th year). She needed to coordinate 25 judges to get 50 films judged by Thanksgiving. The winning film gets \$2,500, to be presented at a Zoom ceremony in January.

Steve Kaplan has adapted his comedy screenwriting seminar for Zoom and is about to start his second series of weekend classes. He and wife Kathrin sing at a Zoom performing gathering every two weeks.

Alice Allen said, "When it comes to travel, my trip to Pierce College to drop off my ballot was the farthest I have driven lately." But she is also spending lots of time volunteering. For the Los Angeles Conservancy, she has a project updating a photo file of historic buildings. And she's learning new skills for her work with Learning Ally.

"My status as a 20th-century technology dinosaur seems to be diminishing." (Alice has also helped some of us become more Zoom literate.)

Robyn MacGarva George said she had a very positive experience working at a vote center — "wonderful co-workers, voters and neighbors dropping off snacks and homemade baking."

And at one point a flat-bed truck parked outside with a band celebrating poll workers and the privilege to vote. She said she felt lucky to have been a small part of it. After the election, she and Dave and dog Buddy spent a few days at a cabin in Big Bear.

Carmen Silva-Corvalán and her husband Scott missed the Halloween dance event because they were out of town: Arizona (Flagstaff was cold) and the nicely warmer Palm Desert.

Audrey Prest also keeps busy with genealogy and volunteer work. As of mid-October she had donated 400 handmade scarves and hats to Operation Gratitude. She's trying "balance and vestibular physical therapy" to deal with the dizziness she experiences dancing — without much success yet.

Aase Hansen

**Deadline for the March 2021 issue of the
Ghillie Callum is Feb. 1.**

Demonstration Team

Rather than struggle to report three months of the same thing, we decided to give you a sample of our creative cooperation. Roberta started us off, and each person added something to create a story.

Here's the result:

It is summer 2021 and everyone on Team is so happy to be dancing again. In fact, to celebrate, we've decided to go together to attend St. Andrews Summer School. Some of us have attended before, but for others it is the first time to St. Andrews, or even to Scotland ...

The monitor reflects a smiling face. "So, they plan to go to Summer School. All of them. Excellent!" Meanwhile ...

A hand picks up a cell phone. It immediately begins to ring.

Elon Musk is calling. He wants to know if the team would like to be the first group to dance on Mars.

The team is totally excited and votes unanimously to go. We need to contact NASA to find out what kind of shoes to get.

We are told we can wear our ghillies but that they need lead soles to keep us from leaping from the surface. One thing that is an obvious no-no: kilts. Now what are men going to wear?!

NASA is very excited to design Space Ghillies, and "kilt enhanced" Kevlar spacesuits for us. Team members are busy practicing "bunny hop pas de basques" and perfecting their moon-walk skip-change.

It's time to make a plan! Gosh, which dances shall we choose? Should we use the RSCDS tartan in our space suit design? Can we bring haggis? Does it have to be freeze-dried? What about libations?

We all decide that we need to get away from our everyday lives to make these critical decisions. Pitlochry, Scotland, is the perfect place to go — the river, the walking trails, Schiehallion Mountain, the distilleries, Atholl Castle, so much.

How wonderful that Dana has retired in such a beautiful place! (Exhausted by U.S. politics, Dana has not returned to the U.S. after St. Andrews ... so she purchased a home in Pitlochry with a guest house and is ready for visitors.)

Roberta awakes with a start when the pilot announces that they'll be landing at Heathrow in a half hour.

"Heathrow? What? On Mars?" And she slowly realizes that Mars had been a dream. It's been very pleasant to sleep on the plane. She didn't think she'd be able to sleep after The Incident.

Jim had been very apologetic. He hadn't realized John's alcohol tolerance was so low. If he'd realized John was going to break out the pipes and play "I'll Gang Nae Mair to Yon Toon" up and down the aisle and into the first class cabin, he never would've stood him that fourth dram.

Even though some of the passengers were appreciative, he wouldn't stop playing when requested. And then one of the cabin personnel who played with Shotts and Dykehead in her free time, claimed he was playing the second part all wrong. That went pear-shaped rather quickly.

In the end they'd had to land in Greenland and John was last seen somewhere in custody.

Of course, everyone's luggage is labeled "RSCDS," which has all the other passengers wondering what it stands for. The consensus seems to be Revolutionary Scottish something or other. That makes Roberta wonder whether there will be an anti-terrorist squad waiting for them at Heathrow.

And now what to do? She'd planned all those six-couple dances. What on earth is she was going to do with only 11 dancers?

At which point her phone lights up. She can't imagine why Elon Musk would be calling her ...

Contributions from Alice Allen, John Cahill, Grant Clark, Dana Dunaway, Roberta Gotfried, Martina Hanson, Jim Bell, Connie Walker and Kris and Mike McGinnis.

Alice Allen

NEW MEMBERS

The Los Angeles Branch welcomes new member Emily Aaronson.

Melinda Brown

MEMORIAL FUND

The branch has money in a Memorial Fund, to be used for equipment purchases or special events. It can be used for scholarships to help members attend a workshop or something related to Scottish Country Dancing but who cannot afford the whole cost on their own. Applications are available from branch teachers.

AMAZON SMILE

The branch has yet another opportunity to earn donations. AmazonSmile will make a contribution when you shop using our account number. Learn how by going to <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/51-0205054>.

RALPHS REWARDS PROGRAM

The branch earns a contribution from the Ralphs Rewards Community Contribution Program when members register to benefit the Branch, while they continue to earn their own Ralphs Rewards points. To register, call 800-443-4438. You may need to re-register in September. Our Organization Number is AV732. Then use your Ralphs Rewards card (or phone number) every time you shop.



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