

**Royal Scottish Country Dance Society
Northern Virginia Branch
Annual Report, 2015-2016
Annual General Meeting, April 27, 2016**

State of the Branch: Our Branch has continued to thrive since our last AGM in April 2015. Overall membership is steady from last year and additional dancers joined us on a drop-in basis to give us, generally, three sets of dancers. The Branch sponsored 4 major dance events, plus our annual Argyle Weekend. Monthly class night dance parties, including our Burns Night celebration, were well attended throughout the year. (Details in the separate Membership and Teacher Director reports.) Our finances are sound (details in the separate Treasurer's Report).

Changes since last AGM: In July 2015, for the first time, the Durant Center began to charge fees for our weekly room use. As a result, the Branch Board instituted a new trimester payment plan, offering those who join the RSCDS through the Branch, for \$40 annually, a reduced tuition rate of \$60 per trimester: September-December; January through April; May through August. The Board felt that the benefits of RSCDS membership (see paragraph on the RSCDS, below) warranted offering the reduced tuition rate. Those not wishing to join the RSCDS or pay by trimester still can pay the drop-in fee of \$5, which will amount to more than trimester tuition if you dance weekly.

The new tuition structure helped keep our finances sound this year and will help us to continue both a General and FUNdamentals class, and our major dance events, in the coming year.

Highlights since last AGM: The Branch Board in February 2016 adopted a new set of bylaws to replace the previous bylaws dating from 1990. The new bylaws updated some Branch Board job descriptions and added language to reflect how we are currently doing business, especially with regard to our fee structure, membership categories, and nomination of candidates for Branch Board positions. In accordance with our Articles of Incorporation, adopted at the 2013 AGM, the new bylaws became effective as of the Board's vote in February 2016, but are required also to be voted on by our membership at the soonest AGM (April 27, 2016, tonight) after the Board's vote.

This past year, new dancers joined us mainly through our FUNdamentals class and our continuing outreach efforts via our "MeetUp" website, Virginia Scottish Games and Athenaeum demos, and our website at rscds-greaterdc. Our branch was featured in the December issue of "Northern Virginia" magazine, with a photo, promoting our Christmas Walk Tea Dance.

The RSCDS: The RSCDS (Royal Scottish Country Dance Society), headquartered in Edinburgh, of which we are a branch, instituted a new email newsletter format this

spring. E-Mailed to all RSCDS members twice monthly, the newsletter conveys up-to-date information from RSCDS Headquarters regarding its activities and has information about branches throughout the world, including individual branch events and highlights. The email newsletters are just one benefit of RSCDS membership, which can be obtained through our Branch. As an RSCDS member, one receives the bi-annual "Scottish Country Dancer" magazine, member-only access to the RSCDS website, and information about RSCDS branches and activities worldwide. RSCDS membership fees also support the training of class teachers.

Collaboration with local branches: Members of our branch – Maria Ward, Jay Andrews, and Yvonne Yang – are working with the Washington Branch on use of the "Between the Rivers" fund. The fund, generated by sales of the locally devised dance book by the same name, is intended as a source of scholarships for local dance events such as Capital Weekend and Argyle. Consideration is being given to producing another book of locally devised dances, proceeds of which would also go to the fund.

In Conclusion: Looking ahead to the coming year, we'll continue efforts to recruit new dancers, keep our current members dancing happily, and preserve our ties to the Durant Center, while keeping costs stable. Ours is an active branch, thanks to participation by every dancer – all of you – in our classes and parties. The Branch Board appreciates those who contribute refreshments weekly, promoting opportunities to socialize. We rely on help from everyone to run our events and offer ideas. The Board thanks everyone for a successful and rewarding year.