

CDSS Governing Board Annual Meeting

April 23-24, 2015

by Lynn Ackerson (out-going Board member)

The whole CDSS Board only meets in person once a year, and so the agenda is packed. It's a time for us to get caught up on the activities and finances of the organization, discuss plans for the future, and renew our enthusiasm for the mission and vision of CDSS. It's also a time to welcome new members and bid farewell to exiting members. This year, six new members joined the Board: Craig Meltzner (California) who is also the new treasurer, Pam Paulson (Wisconsin), Mark Galipeau (California), Donald Hughes (North Carolina), Doug Plummer (Washington), and David Shewmaker (District of Columbia). New Board member Diane Shaw (Florida) was unable to attend.

Before the formal meeting started, an optional session was held on Wednesday afternoon "for as many as will" to discuss three questions:

- What does CDSS do or could do that your local or regional group cannot?
- What alternative revenue sources could CDSS explore?
- What measures could help us determine the effectiveness of current programs?

With current operations well in hand and the various Centennial events all on track, our goal in these sessions was to take a broad look ahead. We filled the walls of the entryway to the CDSS office with ideas brainstormed by those present.

That evening, a number of us enjoyed dancing at the weekly Amherst contra dance with music by Nor'easter and calling by Nils Fredland. Thursday evening, Darlene Ninos and George McKee hosted a potluck dinner for the Board with food provided by many community members. The community was also wonderful in providing hospitality for our Board members. Thank you so much to all of these special people!

Both mornings, we started the day with a song—one led by Natty Smith and one led by Lorraine Hammond. Thursday morning, David Millstone, our president, opened the meeting by stating that the work of the Board is to set direction and keep the organization healthy, but we all know that it is the staff that does most of the actual work. The staff is working very hard and doing very good work. He thanked the staff and Rima (who were present during the majority of the two-day meeting). The Board is also functioning really well, in particular through its hard-working committees and task groups.

Over the course of the two days, we had three entire sessions focused on the **finances of the organization**. We are so grateful for all of the donations from our members and supporters in the past year. Without you, CDSS could not continue all of its programs. Our new treasurer Craig Meltzer, along with our Business Manager Bob Blondin and our Executive Director Rima Dael, provided several very clear reports (verbal, numerical, and graphical) on the state of the organization, the budget for the next year, and the profit/loss of each of our programs. When discussing the profit/loss of each program, we also factored in how much each program promoted the mission of CDSS. In 2014, we exceeded the Centennial fundraising goals, an effort spearheaded by Robin Hayden, our Director of Development. Unfortunately, we also had a net loss of \$36,000 from our normal operations budget; thanks to intensive recruiting and last-minute camp registrations, the shortfall was less than we had predicted it would be when we adopted a revised budget last summer.

The **Spread the Joy campaign** has raised enough so far to pay for all of the Centennial Programs. Funds raised during the final two years of the campaign, among other things, will help us rebuild our cash reserves. CDSS's income is very cyclical over the course of a year, with the majority of the money coming in during the spring, before camps. So, during the winter, with much less money coming in, we are forced to draw on our line of credit to pay for normal operating expenses.

We hope that we can build up our cash reserves so this will not be necessary in the future. We hope it will also provide funding for Rima to go back to working full-time. Both she and Bob graciously cut their hours in order to reduce the shortfall of the budget. The good news from Steve Howe, our Director of Programs, is that camp registrations are up compared to last year at this time.

Several issues of note were raised in the **Executive Director's Report**. First, is that 2016 will be the Year of Song at CDSS. She hopes that there will be a theme for each year in the future. Second, the goal for 2016 is to sponsor two conferences—one a conference on song, and one a regional conference (geographic area yet to be determined). Third, we are in great need of an upgrade in our technology platforms, but are currently hindered by lack of funding. There were several major crashes this past year affecting the store and the membership list. There is also a pilot program working with local PE and music teachers to help them bring music, song, and dance into the schools.

A whole session was dedicated to a discussion of the **relationship between CDSS and Pinewoods Camp, Inc. (PCI)**. CDSS has the largest number of representatives on the PCI board compared to the other groups that use the camp. Recent practice has been for PCI to tell us who they want us to nominate as our representatives to their board; we'll want to revisit that. We acknowledged that we need to do a better job in letting our representatives know what our needs/concerns are with regard to our relationship with PCI. Since CDSS played the key role forty years ago in creating PCI, we agreed that we should have a meeting with our representatives once or twice a year to give them an idea of the history of the relationship and any current issues. We agreed that there should always be at least one person who is on both boards simultaneously. Natty Smith, who is on both boards and is chair of the PCI nominating committee, agreed to chair a Pinewoods committee for CDSS that will look at ways to strengthen relationships between the two organizations.

The **Great Lakes Camp organizing committee**, about a dozen individuals, is making great progress. The Board received an informative report and participated via telephone conference call with Debbie Jackson, committee chair, and Peter Baker, the Camp Manager. After a short Q&A session, the Board voted to give the go-ahead to continue the planning. Carol Ormand will be the Program Director for the new CDSS Dance, Music, and Spice Week, at Camp Cavell near Lexington, Michigan, slated to be held August 14-21, 2016. The camp will include both American and English dance, as well as a track of activities for non-dancers so spouses and friends of dancers can also attend.

The **Fund Development** committee is also doing a wonderful job. They are enthusiastic and have provided a long list of possible revenue generators. Each Board member is committed to raising funds, soliciting new members, and building better relationships with major donors.

The Board approved the recommendations of the **Awards Committee** for the first posthumous Lifetime Contribution Award (LCA), and next year's LCA award. Stay tuned!

The **Nominating Committee** will need to nominate members for six Board positions held currently by Board members completing their second term. Two additional Board members are eligible for re-election to a second term. As always, the Nominating Committee requests all CDSS members across North America to submit the names of possible nominees as soon as possible.

The **Board approved the make-up of three committees**: the Nominations Committee, the Personnel Committee, and the Executive Committee. The approved committee members are: Nominations: Bev Bernbaum (Board member, chair), David Macemon (community member), Pam Paulson (Board member), Mark Galipeau (Board member), Chloe Mohr (community member), and Nate Puffer (non-voting Board member). Personnel: Donald Hughes, Dorcas Hand, John Mayberry, and Nancy Boyd (chair). Executive: David Millstone (president), Jenny Beer (vice president), Brooke Friendly (secretary), Craig Meltzner (treasurer), Jill Allen (liaison with host communities), Pam Paulson, Michael Hamilton, John Mayberry, David Shewmaker, and Dorcas Hand.

The **Governance Committee** recommended that we keep the size of the Board and the Executive Committee the same as it is currently. Recommended changes are that the Executive Committee should meet once a month, mostly by teleconference, with our current pattern of two Traveling Execs. They also recommend that we change the Annual Meeting to more of a Conference format. In addition to time set aside for the business of the Board, there will be sessions that look at “big picture” or “special focus” issues that will be opened to staff, to outgoing Board members, and to people who have a particular stake or wisdom in that area. There may also be a time slot for committees and/or task groups to have in-person meetings. These recommendations were approved by the Board.

The Annual Meeting closed with the Board and staff singing the Centennial Song written by Jonathan Jensen. All were re-energized and excited about another wonderful and productive year for CDSS.

This has just been an overview of the activities at the Annual Meeting. Numerous other task group reports were given, brainstorming sessions were held, and friendships built and strengthened.