

Minutes of Folkdance Federation of California, South,
Council Meeting on August 6, 2023

Meeting was called to order at 9:31 a.m.

In Attendance:

OFFICERS: President: Diane Baker; Vice-President: Greg Solloway (Newly elected); Secretary: Margaret Lange; Treasurer: Mindy Belli; Historian: Wen-Li Chiang; Sergeant-at-Arms: Terry Gucwa; Parliamentarian: Marshall Cates. STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRS: Budget & Finance: Marshall Cates; Fall Camp: Jan Rayman & Kelley O'Neill ; Folk Dance Scene and Visiting Master Teacher Program: Jay Michtom; Insurance: Julith Neff; Scholarship: Carol Smith. PAST PRESIDENTS: Marshall Cates. ASSOCIATE MEMBERS: Steve Himel. CLUB DELEGATES: Bay Osos: Margaret Lange; Cabrillo: Jody Stern; Cerritos Folk Dancers: Sue Chen; Conejo Valley: Marcy Tamaye; International Folk Dancers of Laguna Woods: Terry Gucwa; Laguna International Dancers: Greg Solloway; Narodni International Dancers: Julith Neff; Pasadena Co-op: Rick Bingle; San Diego Folk Dance Center : Mary Marshall; Ventura: Carol Smith; Veselo Selo: Shana Winokur; Vintage Israel: Jim Rothman; West Valley Folkdancers: Jay Michtom; Westside Folkdancers: Sandy Helperin

Approval of minutes from April 16, 2023. Corrections: from Jim Rothman — misspelling of Dick Oakes last name, and first name of person who started dancing at 15 should be Jim not Joe. Motion to approve minutes as corrected was seconded and approved.

ELECTED OFFICER REPORTS

President Diane Baker

Federation Directory. Bob Altman has mailed the federation directory. It will not be posted online. She recommended saving a copy, printing it if desired. And if at any time during the year, a member needs additional contact information, they can contact her.

Outreach Opportunity. Federation has been invited to present a folk dance session at Far-West Folk Alliance 20th annual Music Conference October 14, 2023, 4-5:00 p.m. She promised we would have an enthusiastic group of folk dancers, so the conference director provided us with the ballroom, which has speakers and an audio technician on site, which will be great for our band, which is Sans Frontières.

Location was clarified as Warner Center Marriott, Woodland Hills, CA, west San Fernando Valley. Terry and Mindy gave background on Far West: organization is enormous, was founded by Clark and Elaine, has been around 40 or 50 years, is active in Washington, Oregon, California, maybe Nevada. Diane suggested carpooling. She hopes to see a good attendance and to show that recreational folk dance is alive and we are happy to be dancing together. Admission and parking are free. The pass code is "folk dance." Valerie Daley will lead the dances. Playlist being worked out by Valerie and Terri. If playlist is known in advance, it will be published on our website. Shana asked about the allocation of funds for the outreach. Diane responded that the allocation of funds is to pay the band and to give Valerie a stipend. She will contribute some money from her personal funds. Diane has asked fiscal committee for \$500. Mindy noted that she and Terry will forfeit the \$100 each as band members, but other members of band need compensation. Diane mentioned that the Far West website has a nice entry on Sans Frontières and thanked Terry for submitting this. She asked for a motion to approve \$550 to support folk dance at Far West. Marcy moved to approve. Marshall

noted that the fiscal committee studied the request and voted to approve the \$550 for participation. However, he wanted to wait for discussion and motion during the fiscal committee report. Diane postponed the motion.

Fall Camp. Fall Camp is now featured on the Federation website. Further discussion was deferred until the report from Fall Camp committee.

Statewide. Photos from Statewide 2023 have been posted on Federation website. Statewide 2025 location options were discussed. Pasadena, Solvang, and San Diego were mentioned as possibilities.

Capoeira Club. Federation received an application in May by a capoeira club. The application divided the council members. The issue was resolved by the club leader withdrawing his application and joining the National Folk Organization directly.

Proposed Youth Initiative. Diane has proposed a youth initiative to promote folk dance. She noted that people lament that folk dance isn't included in schools anymore. Referred to the article about Henry Rosof and his mother and her passion for working with children professionally and on a volunteer basis. Diane said she has previously asked if anyone wanted to join her in researching promoting folk dancing among the youth, and no one responded, so she has started research and will report at a later date. Secondly, the Westchester Lariats, who have been a long-time member of the federation, have slowly declined and now are in need of a folk dance consultant. Their artistic director currently doesn't have a lot of free time and doesn't know much about folk dancing. Diane wants to pursue this during the coming year.

Statewide 2025. Planning needs to begin for Statewide 2025. Toti O'Brien has volunteered to be co-chair. A co-chair is needed now. Toti is looking for a location in the Pasadena area. They are also exploring returning to the Veterans Hall in Solvang. Attendees discussed previous festivals held in San Diego at Balboa Park, and a potential new location there, the San Diego Folk Dance Center. Questions were posed regarding the size of the facilities and the average attendance at previous festivals. Mindy noted that attendance from 2015 to 2023 has been up and down and so it is hard to get a true average, but attendance could be projected in the range of 50 to 100.

Vice President Greg Solloway

Upcoming Federation-sponsored events. We will hear about Ojai Day of Dance September 23, 2023. We've already discussed Far West Folk Alliance Conference Outreach. And we'll have a report on Fall Camp, Simi Valley, November 10 – 12, 2023. Then Wen-Li submitted two festivals in Cerritos for approval: the East West Chinese New Year festival on Feb. 17, 2024, and the Anniversary Festival on June 8, 2024.

A motion to approve the two submittals by the Cerritos Club was seconded and carried.

Treasurer Mindy Belli

Statewide Festival summary. Attendance was approximately 63 unique persons. This was lower than in 2019 where we had about 100 people attend. Fewer than 48 people purchased a package ticket which is where the money comes in to help pay expenses. The need for a sound technician was discussed. Mindy noted that the sound technician was hired to ensure the sound didn't malfunction. Marshall questioned the need, saying that previous problems with sound were due to band's setup at Reseda Statewide. Diane asked that further questions about the sound technician be addressed later during the Statewide report.

APPOINTED OFFICERS' REPORTS

Insurance Chairperson, Julith Neff

No new action needed; everything is current. Will be putting in insurance requests for Ojai Day of Dance and Far West festival.

Sergeant-at-Arms, Terry Gucwa

We have a quorum.

Historian, Wen-Li Chiang

No report.

STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORTS

Finance, Marshall Cates

Fall Camp. As fiscal chair, he is adjusting the checking account which now involves Kelley O'Neill and Lee Otterholt. The fiscal committee approved a \$6000 infusion to Fall Camp because, for the first time, we had to pay a deposit for next year's, not this upcoming camp but the one after that. So the \$6,000 deposit that was requested was on top of regular anticipated expenses. The fiscal committee approved the \$6,000. He didn't think it's just a loan because next year, the \$6,000 will come out of the operating expenses, but another \$6000 will be needed for the following year's down payment. So it's a rolling down payment as long as Brandeis doesn't increase the cost. If the request goes up to \$7000 or \$8000, then hopefully the Fall camp will be able to absorb a \$1000 \$2000 increase. But the committee figured they could not absorb a \$6,000 increase in cost. The \$70,000 is meant to support camps and dancing.

Far West. The money requested to support the Far West Alliance outreach was approved. The \$550 was not lowered when Mindy and Terry turned down their honorarium. It's up to the organizers to determine use of the funds. The finance committee had a healthy debate as to whether or not this was really what the money in the bank is for, and it was decided it was close enough and was approved. He cautioned against approving all money that is requested, as the money in the bank took decades to accumulate and hopefully will take decades to spend. He noted that he could use another member on the finance committee. Diane said that before requesting the money for Far West, she looked in the budget but realized that there is no category for outreach in the budget. She suggested that if we want to recruit dancers we need to allocate funds for outreach. Jan noted that the finance committee is focused on preserving funds for the future. But there will be no future without new dancers, and we need to be bold, aggressive, and take risks. There are not many opportunities to promote folk dancing so when one comes along even if imperfect and risky, we should take it. If we want to preserve the Federation, we need to be active.

Further discussion of outreach and the current state of folk dancing. Mary: at Folk Dance Center's new location, Martha Awdziewicz has a morning class with good promotion and has gotten a few new dancers. Shana: suggested forming an outreach committee, she was willing to help get it started, and proposed meeting via zoom. Marcy: community colleges are a great place to include folk dance programs, classes, and outreach of events. Diane summarized: suggestion to form committee for outreach; ideas presented were working through senior centers and community college classes; Shana offered to initiate ideas. She asked if anyone would like to join Shana. Jim: attendance is down due to Covid by a third to a half, and a lot of patterns have changed because of the pandemic. Jan: she has five Meetup groups, and more people, some young people, are expressing interest in folk dance. Suggested starting entirely new groups where the dances can be kept simple and accessible. Once we've made plans, we can use Meetup, maybe allocate money for advertising. Margaret: at folk dance in Santa Maria at the senior center, we keep dances simple

enough that dancers feel the joy of dance and don't feel frustrated or self-conscious, we make dances accessible, allowing time for breaks and encouraging discussion of cultural heritage. Suggested working with Parks and Recreation to have folk dance demonstrations included in festivals. The pros and cons of couple dances were discussed among members. Diane suggested using the new federation directory for outreach, to message Shana if you are interested and she will develop a committee of attendees for future meetings, and will report for the next council meeting. Shana said she will propose a meeting to take place over Zoom and will ask Diane to send the announcement to the group.

Scene, Jay Michtom

Jay acknowledged the generous subsidy from the Federation. The Scene is always losing some money and some subscribers, but that's okay. He is happy with the mailings.

Visiting Master Teacher, Jay Michtom

Master Teachers Leanne and Todd are coming. They will give ten workshops in the south, seven of which are Federation clubs, which means they will be eligible for the \$200 reimbursement of their fee. No other visiting teachers are on the horizon.

Scholarship, Carol Smith

There were two recipients for 2023: Toti O'Brien for Fall Camp, and Santa Barbara dancer Nicole Lynch to attend North South Folk Dance Teachers' Seminar.

AD HOC COMMITTEE REPORTS

Harbor View Statewide 2023

From Diane Baker: She reviewed the outreach for Statewide; it included high schools, senior centers, dance studios, and various organizations in San Pedro. Two attendees who were new dancers indicated that they would continue to dance. Diane acknowledged and thanked everyone on the committee for their work: The DJs helped with music programs, Sherri Cochran created a teaser video and publicized on social media. Dick Oakes collated the syllabus and published materials online, Anthony's silent Kolo was a moving experience. The special appearance of the Serbian ensemble was made possible by Henry Rasof. Audio at the festival and the need in general for an audio technician was discussed with the conclusion that in situations where there are live bands with various microphone needs, a professional audio technician is necessary. Diane noted that attendance was disappointing, which might have been due to the location and that there was no parking onsite. She described the difficulties with providing parking. Mary thanked Diane for running around and getting it all done. She said that as a band member she enjoyed the experience. Marshall thanked Diane for thinking on her feet and dealing with unexpected problems.

Ojai Day of Dance September 23, 2023, Ojai Art Center

From Carol Smith: Ojai Day of Dance is in September this year as opposed to October previously. The decision was made to keep it as a daytime event, with the same hours. The morning session will be with teachers, and the afternoon dancing will go to 5 or 6 p.m. Valerie Daley, Toti O'Brien, Joan Hantman, and Asako Oshiro are the teachers. Flyers have been distributed to be brought to various dance groups for publicity. We are no longer requiring Covid vaccinations. We are fortunate to be "in the black" for the last two years and hopefully will be for this year. The dance floor is excellent and the studio is air-conditioned.

Fall Camp November 10 – 12, 2023

From Jan Rayman: Completed a major email advertising campaign; 700 emails were sent. Articles were placed in the Scene, NFO, and Let's Dance publications. Airline reservations have been made for master teacher Gergana Panova using her and Marc Rayman's United miles. Marc is working with master teacher Steve Kotansky to make his airline reservations. Decorations are being coordinated by herself and Mindy Belli. Volunteers are needed to help with specific tasks: transporting and hosting teachers, posting signs on doors, printing materials on home computers, and transporting banners from Orange County to camp.

From Kelley O'Neill: Registration is trickling in at a nice pace. Currently, there are 25 registrants. The maximum attendance will be 60 because of the use of the smaller Wapner room. She is about to pay \$9,500, the second payment and then the deposit for 2024 of \$6000. We've built up enough cushion from the 25 registrants and cash flow is going well. We will probably come out where we started as far as the bank account balance, but it's early to say. Steve asked if the deposit is refundable? Diane said that it is all refundable at 3 months in advance. Shana questioned why the increased cost but with less room, and asked about previous location of Fall Camp at Hess Cramer. In response, Diane and Jan said return to HC was being considered. Jan said that the use of only the Wapner room is due to climate change. The recreation hall gets hot and cold and can flood. And that the increase in costs is a combination of additional fees and cabin cost increase. Kelley noted that to save costs, we are bringing in our own snacks for happy hour.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Regarding screening of the film in which Pasadena folk dancers appeared, Marshall is waiting for a more refined draft before it is released to the group. He doesn't know what the tone of the presentation will be as folk dancing was in the background and the film is a comedy.
2. Youth Initiative. Diane appealed to folks to join her. She noted that the ideas she has won't take place until next summer. Diane said that at the last meeting, she recalled in 2017 event where different teachers taught simple dances with girl scouts. It was successful. She's worked on other ideas including outreach to youth clubs such as Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Boys and Girls Clubs, and YMCA, to see where folk dancing would fit into their program. She found a match with Wooden Floor, a non-profit youth organization in Santa Ana. A proposal has been outlined and sent to the director of WF. Youth dance groups from the Greek and Serbian Orthodox churches in Irvine would be included. Diane invited anyone who is interested to be part of the Initiative. As soon as she has anything concrete, she will bring it to the Federation.

NEW BUSINESS

1. The option of combining the Statewide and Laguna festivals when Statewide is in Southern California in 2025 was discussed. It was noted that then Statewide would be on Laguna's schedule in March. Federation would work on the Laguna committee, as volunteers and support them with our funds. Some doubt was expressed as to whether Laguna Club would be open to the idea. Diane said the option would need to be posed to the president of the Laguna club, Miriam. Marshall noted that Laguna might need Statewide's partnership as Laguna lost \$1,500 last year. Statewide would be a cash influx. Greg agreed to raise the option at the next Laguna board meeting. It was suggested to delay the discussion until after Fall Camp. Diane agreed to leave it to Greg's discretion as to when to bring it up but noted the importance of moving forward to secure facilities as soon as possible.

2. Mindy addressed the renewal campaign pertaining to upcoming membership or club renewal, and associate member renewal. The campaign begins in the fall with packages being sent to clubs by November 1st. She emphasized the need for a change in procedure regarding the receiving of the membership mail. She requested that mail, which includes checks and forms identifying the purpose of the funds, come directly to her. She will then scan and send pertinent forms to the insurance chair and to Diane. Without this method, she cannot be sure of the purpose of the funds. Julith proposed that Mindy's plan be adopted. Diane agreed to change the mailing address to Mindy and also to direct electronic mail to her email address.
3. The roles of membership chairperson and treasurer were discussed. Mindy said it is her understanding that membership chairperson maintains the membership registration spreadsheet, produces the directory, and does other jobs like recruiting clubs. She said she thinks that previously treasurer and membership chair duties were split between two people.

Next meeting proposed for Sunday October 22, 2023 9:30 a.m., virtual via zoom.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:16 a.m.