

**Dan Pearl Gets Life
(membership)**

**The President Reports
Minutes Aplenty!**

NEFFA
NEW ENGLAND FOLK
FESTIVAL ASSOCIATION
NEWS

Winter 2013 – Vol. XXXIX #4

**Don't Forget: The
NEFFA Festival is in
Mansfield, MA**

April 25-27, 2014

OUR 70th YEAR!

Dan Pearl Awarded Life Membership

The NEFFA Board unanimously decided to award Dan Pearl a NEFFA Lifetime Membership. Since the start of the organization, Lifetime Membership has been a rare honor. But Dan's contributions have spanned 30 years. Most contra dancers know him as a caller and as an organizer of the Thursday night dance held at the Concord Scout House. Longtime caller Sue Rosen said that Dan had done more behind the scenes for contra dancing in the Boston area than anyone else she knew. For NEFFA, Dan has had his hands in every piece of the Festival, serving as Site Coordinator, Director of Operations and Outside Facilities, Editor-in-Chief of the newsletter, a long time Board Member, and myriad other positions. Board Member Terry Huffaker's recommendation to the rest of the board to extend the honor summed it up: "I think we can all agree that his dedication is unquestionable and that the service he has provided was and is extraordinary."

The NEFFA News sat down with its Editor-in-Chief to hear about what has kept him dedicated to the organization for so long.

NEFFA News: So this is a big honor. There's only a handful of people who have been given Lifetime Membership. Can you start by telling me how you got involved with NEFFA?

Dan Pearl: Very casually. I was at a dance, and I hadn't been dancing long – maybe half a year. Sam Alexander, who is more associated with CDS Boston, approached me. He was running Arrangements at the Festival (which is setting up the furniture, music stands, that kind of stuff) and he needed help, so he recruited me in advance. I didn't know anything about NEFFA, didn't know anything about the Festival. It sounded like it was interesting. During set-up that Thursday for the Festival, it looked like a very big and attractive thing; I took a look at the program and said "Well, this is something I'm interested in."

NEFFA News: What year was that?

Dan: That was in 1979 or '80. I actually made it into the program book! In those years, they used to put in the names of casual volunteers.

NEFFA News: You said you were recruited at a dance. Can you tell me what your involvement was in the dance scene at that time?

Dan: At that point, I was just dancing. I wasn't a caller or anything like that. I was starting my calling career maybe around that time but I certainly had no reputation as a dance leader or administrator. I was just a dancer, just a civilian, but a regular attendee. So I guess Sam recognized me and thought, "That's my kind of person, someone who I recognize as a regular." I was trying to think which dance it was. My guess it was probably the Monday night dance in Concord with Tony Parkes and Yankee Ingenuity.



Terry Huffaker

NEFFA News: Can you describe what the dance was like at that time and also the Festival, and how it is different than it is today?

Dan: The Monday dance was really popular. It was almost so crowded the dancers were unable to move. It was the real big thing! Monday nights and Tony Parkes and Yankee Ingenuity every week! It was simply the place to be. There weren't the embarrassment of dance riches we have these days, what with neighborhood dances in almost every other community. If you wanted a big dance you had to travel a great distance and people did.

NEFFA News: And the Festival?

Dan: The Festival was smaller. I remember the first few Festivals I attended. I'm pretty sure we had the Lower Hall in operation, but it was actually a relatively new thing at that point. In Natick, you had the Main Hall and the Lower Hall. They were still experimenting with different rooms. They had some programming in the teachers' cafeteria right off of the main cafeteria, little things like that. But it just wasn't as well attended. I would say the peak Festival attendance was the Festival that I was the Program Chair for, which was 1986.

NEFFA News: Tell me about getting more involved with the Festival. You started as a casual volunteer, and now you're the go-to person for every single thing that goes on in the Festival.

Dan: That comes with longevity I guess and a willingness to open one's mouth to do something. I guess I'm the personality type where I don't like to do a lot of changing, so I'll stick with a job maybe longer than I should. I found that NEFFA was an organization which suited my personality: It was not fancy, it could get by with minimal resources, and volunteerism resonated with me. Eventually I was asked to be on the board and said "Sure, why not," and there was no turning back. I don't think I have missed many board meetings since I was first on the board, which was shortly thereafter, 1980 or so. (laughs)

NEFFA News: What are some of the things you've enjoyed about being on the board?

Dan: I think I get the most gratification from having an organization that works well. The processes are in place, they're

effective and not too expensive and people are working harmoniously. The NEFFA board is kind of unusual in the sense that the various committees kind of do their own thing. Occasionally when there are problems or issues that come up, they bring it to the board as a whole. And that's OK with me because there are just so many moving parts to the Festival. I can't learn about everything, but being around for 30 years lets

you get to know all the parts whether you like it or not. (laughs) I think that has made me particularly valuable to NEFFA. Before me, the keeper of the organizational memory was Larry Jennings. Larry was great about that. I was so naïve that I was looking over some old minutes when I first got on and I looked and I saw "Capitalization of the Festival." I thought, oh this is some complicated financial thing,

and then I looked more into it and no, it was a discussion on spelling "festival" with an upper case "F" when you refer to the NEFFA Festival! I have been the keeper of that policy forever. So whenever I review or see a piece of literature going out, I will always capitalize the F.

NEFFA News: So you're an expert in capitalization.

Dan: Yes. Yes, I can put that on my résumé and people will be very impressed.

NEFFA News: (laughs) Can you tell me about Larry Jennings? He was a recipient of this same honor and you worked with him for a number of years on the board.

Dan: Yes, on the board, but mostly on the Thursday Night Dance Committee. We were both founding members of that committee, and maybe the Thursday night dance exists in its current form under NEFFA's aegis probably because of Larry's energy and enthusiasm for keeping it going. If I had to cite anyone it would be Larry. He sensed that some people didn't want the dance to go away when Tod Whittemore, the previous proprietor of the series, got burned out and moved away. Larry was the mover and the shaker there to make it happen.

NEFFA News: When was that?

Dan: That was 1990.

NEFFA News: What was Larry like to work with?

"I get the most gratification from having an organization that works well. The processes are in place, they're effective and not too expensive, and people are working harmoniously."



Editor: **Dan Pearl** Mailing: **Dayle Watts**
Editorial Review: **Bill Cowie, Shelagh Ellman-Pearl,**
Lisa Greenleaf, Maureen Carey

The NEFFA News, a publication of the New England Folk Festival Association, Inc., is published four times a year to communicate with its membership and other interested persons. **Please send all editorial submissions to neffa_news@neffa.org**. Opinions of individuals are not necessarily the opinion of the NEFFA Executive Board.

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Spring	Feb. 1
Summer	May 15
Fall	Aug. 15
Winter	Nov. 1

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Irish, Old-Time, Acadian



Liz Carroll



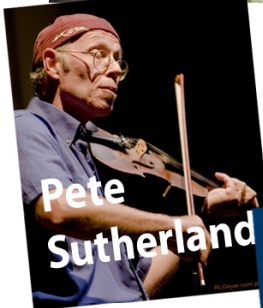
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Dan: Larry was a singular individual, I'll say. He was pretty staid and unyielding in his idea of how the world should work. He was inflexible but highly principled, and because of that people couldn't help but admire him. Even though Larry was sometimes blunt when communicating with people, he still commanded respect. Larry wrote an influential book on contra dancing, a couple of books actually: "Zesty Contras" and "Give and Take", and he was quite respected in the contra dance community. I think people are dancing the way they are dancing today possibly because of Larry Jennings and his influence. His concept of "modern urban" contra dancing involving energy and "zest" (as he called it) was instrumental in propelling contra dancing forward from where it was, which was kind of a low energy activity back in the 1960s and mid-'70s.

I started dancing during an interesting time, kind of the transition into this more modern, zesty, and appealing dancing. I'd say the transition was completed probably in the early '80s. At that point, a lot more choreographers came online and a torrent of great dance sequences came from people like Tom Hinds, Gene Hubert, Steve Zakon-Anderson, and such. The repertoire we had when I started dancing was still pretty small, maybe 500 dances all told, and now there's tens of thousands.

NEFFA News: Can you tell me about what you think your legacy has been, or what you'd like your legacy to be?

Dan: I guess for contra dancing I'll say I was a good leader at a time when the previous generation was kind of fading away. I was like a transitional leader. I'm not the Young Turk anymore – I haven't been for some time – but I think I bridged the gap in an effective way. It's kind of a similar theme with NEFFA. I helped them bridge the gap between the way things had been done and the way things are done now, which is to say, set up a lot of computerization with the programming and the webpage, and things like that. We will never go back again to the old ways and I was there to contribute and help set up processes and procedures and programs to make things easier for people, like the Program committee and the Volunteer committee. That kind of legacy I think pays off year after year. At some point, some smart person might junk what I've done, but it's OK. We've gotten to the place where we can see that it can always be better.

One particular example apropos of nothing, when I did the program in 1986 – talk about transitional technology – we didn't really have desktop publishing. Now we can do the layout of the program booklet and grid at our desks but we didn't have that then. What we had was batch processing of typesetting and (laughs) I spent a lot of time on it. I wanted to typeset the grid, which never been typeset before. I had learned from a lovely woman named

Mary Stafford how to use the services of a company called Typotech in Cambridge. They provided typesetting on very expensive machines. They submitted your file to the typesetting machine and in a photographic process it exposed the paper, developed it, they gave you the output that came out of the machine and they charged per inch of output. You had to specify what goes into the typesetting machine with this arcane language. It wasn't so bad to figure out. What I really needed to set the grid was the precise width in pixels of each character. So I got that information and I essentially wrote my own program to do the simulated typesetting to make sure all the text fit into the boxes where I wanted it to fit in.

"I think people are dancing the way they are dancing today possibly because of Larry Jennings and his influence.."

The process was expensive so I wanted to make sure it was right. I don't think I've ever desk-checked a piece of code quite as much as I did that time. With expense a concern, and the deadline approaching, I wanted to make sure it worked. And glory be: it worked! That might be my most proud accomplishment in my association with NEFFA, and it was completely invisible to people. (laughs) It's something that sticks with me.

NEFFA News: That's interesting what you say about the invisible, because I think a lot of the work that volunteers, organizers, board members do is invisible to a lot of people, but it still is important.

Dan: Yeah, I guess there's the obvious – the performers – who get behind the microphones and they are all too visible. Then the people that do the planning and the support are mostly invisible and maybe underappreciated. I don't think that we demonstrate our appreciation to our volunteers quite enough. I know of other organizations that hold spaghetti dinners for their volunteers and I think we should be doing more of that, especially for the people who do a lot of work doing the hours of planning, the countless hours of planning.

NEFFA News: With your work in software and your volunteer work working with basically folkies, did that ever cause any kind of conflict? Were you ever trying to drag along people who were not interested in technology? How did that work out?

Dan: Working with people who don't always understand the technology is sometimes a challenge but it appeals to my ability to teach, the way that I teach when I'm doing dance instruction. When I was growing up, I was a counselor at a camp where I taught photography. So I honed my teaching chops fairly early on. Getting people to understand and use the technology that I brought to NEFFA was sometimes a challenge and occasionally I have to

help out or educate and it's really okay with me. But, you know, that call for education is happening less and less because technology is just pervading everybody's lives. When people pick up a smart phone, they've crossed the line. It's not your grandfather's phone anymore. They understand that this stuff is out there and they can relate to it because they use it every day.

You need to present the technology in an easy-to-use way. If you've done that and you've succeeded and it works, and it's less



work than it was before, then that's what you want to do. Our volunteers are really dedicated and really work hard at their jobs. There jobs should be made easier, and that's another legacy that I wish to be recognized for: making things easier for people.

NEFFA News: What are your prime considerations now for the Festival today? What would you like to see improved in the Festival or maybe even just kept the same?

Dan: The Festival is a pretty good product, but I would love to see it take a few more risks. I have been advocating for many years to embrace some sort of special theme each year. I want to make it so that it is simply a not-to-be-missed kind of event.

NEFFA News: What about the things that should not be changed?

Dan: Well, some things will probably never change like the contra medleys. They are beloved and they were first presented at NEFFA. They were invented by Susan Elberger. She gets full credit for that innovation, which has swept the contra world. That will never change. I'd hope the essentially all-volunteer aspect of it doesn't change. That harkens back to one of Larry Jennings' principles, the "we're all in this together" feeling. That's elicited by all of the volunteerism that goes on. Larry's idea was that the people who are performers are not kept in a separate room. They are among us and they should interact with us. That was his idea of the way the Festival should feel. That, I think, is maybe the most important thing about the Festival which differentiates us from the Flurry and other fine festivals. Being paid and being the "professional talent" makes for a different dynamic.

NEFFA News: What would be your advice to someone thinking about getting involved in organizing, on the edge of getting involved like you were in 1979/80?

Dan: At that level, I was not interested in joining an organization for 30 years. (laughs) That was not the commitment I was making at that point. All I thought was that I was going to be pushing around a few tables and chairs and that was fine for me. But I just liked what the organization was doing. I was amazed when I got to the Festival and saw it in operation. I was flabbergasted. And the things that happened then still happen now and those are some things I also don't want to change about the Festival – the music, the jam sessions, the camaraderie, the seeing friends, and making new ones. This has been an issue with getting people to commit to being on the NEFFA board and other organizations. The amount of commitment required is sometimes frightening for people and they don't think they have the time to do it. Although they might have the inclination, they might realize they don't have the time. Had I known how much of my life would be taken up by this, I would

have worked studiously to avoid getting overcommitted. But, you know, being associated with NEFFA has enhanced my life. Maybe it's a certain personality type which gets personal warmth from volunteering and helping out, but I felt like I was benefiting from going to dances and I felt like, "sure, I'll give back a little." Over the years I've certainly given back a lot. I'd say it's a good investment as far as NEFFA is concerned in me. I still enjoy the events that I help produce; it's not just a job for me. If I'm allowing people to be exposed to all of this stuff – the dances, the music, the singing – it might change their lives, too, for the better. It certainly did for me.

NEFFA News: Do you have anything else that you want to add about your service to the organization, the organization itself, or the recognition that you're getting?

Dan: It's certainly an honor, but I can say that I've probably earned it considering the amount of my life that I've devoted to NEFFA, and the number of hours per week I devote to it. Considering the Thursday night dance going on for upwards of 20 years, that's six hours per week going to NEFFA, which is a good portion of my life. I guess it's reasonable to be recognized for this. I realize that, but I still feel honored.

NEFFA News: What keeps you going? Is it just you don't like change and those six hours are your NEFFA hours?

Dan: It's partly that I don't like to change and also – maybe this is another part of my personality – if I can see something not quite being done the way it should, I kind of step in and make it the way that it should be. A concrete example is attending an event and I don't think the sound is being run quite the way it should. There's something wrong with the sound. I will take appropriate action to try to address that, even though it's not my responsibility. (laughs) Sometimes it's hard to back away from stuff like that. Just going to a dance and letting them run it the way they want to run it is sometimes a challenge for me.

NEFFA News: So in some ways it's almost like you couldn't help but be involved for 30 years because there were all these things coming up.

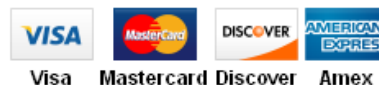
Dan: (laughs) Yeah, I guess that's true. Maybe that's what drove me to calling, but I didn't really have the experience back then to know if things could be better. I kind of developed that along the way.

Article written by Dave Eisenstadter



NEFFA Festival Mansfield Mass. April 25-27

Advance sales open March 1, 2014 at
<http://Tickets.neffa.org>



From the President's Desk

Bill Cowie



We have closed the financial books on the 2013 Festival, and I am pleased to tell you that NEFFA ended the fiscal year with a small surplus. Ticket sales were up about 10% this year, which is especially gratifying in light of the unfortunate drama playing out near Boston on the Friday of the Festival. We are truly happy that so many of you joined together once again in a peaceful and joyous celebration of music, song, dance, art and friendship.

On behalf of the Board, I want to thank each of you for your continuing financial support of NEFFA, through your continuing memberships and your generous contributions. As you may know, it has been the policy of the NEFFA Board to keep the Festival as affordable as possible and as inclusive as possible. So each year, we knowingly set ticket prices below what we estimate will be needed to cover the costs of the Festival. We then work to bring in other sources of income, like program book advertising and T-Shirt sales. And we also ask those of you who can afford to do so, to help by making whatever donations you can. Once again this year, you responded by renewing your memberships and increasing your donations. And once again, your generosity made up for the revenue shortfall, with a few dollars to spare.

I am also pleased to announce that after reviewing the financial results for 2013, the Board has voted to freeze ticket prices for the 2014 Festival.

We feel that it is important to our mission to continue to reach out to the younger generation of singers and dancers and musicians. We are very happy to see the increasing number of younger faces in attendance over the past few years, and we realize that the cost of the Festival can be a challenge for this group.

Many of them contribute their enthusiasm and energy as hard-working volunteers, and receive full or partial tickets for their efforts. We hope to encourage their enthusiasm and attendance by continuing to provide volunteer opportunities and doing our best to offer affordable admission.

On another note, I am also very pleased to announce that the NEFFA Board of Directors has awarded a Lifetime Membership to Dan Pearl. Many of you know Dan, whether as a caller, a dancer, a musician, or the producer of the Thursday night contra dances.

Every successful non-profit organization has a "backbone", the person who works tirelessly to make sure that the organization thrives. The person who is passionately committed to the mission of the organization. The person who provides continuity and wisdom and perspective. For NEFFA, that person is Dan Pearl.

As you will read in the accompanying article, Dan has been involved in the organizing and running of both the Festival and the Thursday Night Dance series for several decades. In my time on the Board of NEFFA, it has truly been an honor to work with Dan.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to thank Dan for his many years of hard work, and congratulate him on receiving NEFFA's highest honor.

As I write this, the Board and the many volunteer committees are already hard at work planning the 2014 Festival. Performer applications were strong again this year, with many old favorites and quite a number of new faces joining the mix. Be sure to mark your calendars for April 25 – 27, and we'll look forward to seeing you at the 70th New England Folk Festival!

Summaries of the Minutes of the NEFFA Executive Board

June 9, 2013

Treasurer's Report

Ralph: I have not received an invoice from the school yet. It has been \$34,000 in the past, but this year it should be more because it will include the electrician. Concerning the fire department invoice: I noticed that last year had two people working 15 hours and they charged us the base rate. This year they charged us 50% more as overtime. Dan: is it because of a shift differential? Bill: Harold is working on it. Ralph: this increased our cost by 18%.

Income was \$10,000 up over the prior year.

Advertising

Bill: Marge did her usual great job. Ad income was up \$800 from last year. We keep our records on a Google doc so we have a record available. Dan: I would like to encourage Marge to find an assistant to share the job and be available to take over if needed. This could also help her do the job longer.

Children's activity room

Bill: we got a report from Susan. 8-12 kids using the room. The instrument petting zoo went well. We need to consider locking the room when not staffed. We could close a bit earlier on Sunday. She asked if we should have an age under which children must have an adult with them. Shelagh: we have a policy that children must be supervised by an adult. Dan: so the burden of supervision is on the parent. Shelagh: we do not assume responsibility for children.

Crafts

Ann: We had the same hours as last year. This went very well. We did not have demos this year and I only saw one comment asking about them. We were happy without them. We had a jamming area which we handled informally. It worked out very well, the vendors liked it. That is something we will continue.

The problem we continue to have is locking the doors at night. I check this at about 9:10 and there is always a door that is not locked. I have communicated this issue with Harold. We also had an issue with someone needing to get back in after the doors were closed because they left stuff in booths and thought they could get it at the end of the Festival. The custodian allowed an attendee into the room after it was secured. I am sure we can work this out. The custodian needs to accompany anyone who needs to get in. Shelagh: you can probably work something out. The information table is the best central location. Jenna: we had people ask on Friday and I knew the policy. We need to make the policy of getting a board member involved. Shelagh: the issue is Friday and Saturday night and we will need to have some names of board members who are "on call" to handle this kind of thing. Bill: Harold needs to make it clear to the custodians that it requires a NEFFA person to let someone into secure areas. Ralph: should Ann put a sheet of paper over the lock with the policy to communicate.

Evaluations

Shelagh: The numbers are tipping more toward online rather than paper. The paper were much fewer this year which is great since they are the data-input intensive piece. We received just under 300 total.

Access

There is an action item of using the performer entrance as an alternate handicapped entrance. We had a person who received a free admission in order to do sign language.

Folk Bazaar

Angela: I had no complaints. People seemed satisfied.

Food

Julia: We had 12 participating vendors. 6 were new. Thank you to those who helped with locations on site. Carol in the kitchen gave me good feedback about the kitchen. I tried to do spot checks on volunteers throughout the weekend. We didn't have anyone cancel, but it was difficult to get people used to the new system. I think it will be easier next year to get new vendors because I understand how things work.

I have one issue with one local vendor. I feel their food is not exciting and I would like to replace them but I am concerned about how the board would react. Bill: so you want board approval to replace them? Shelagh: I think having a local vendor is very good. I would be disinclined to replace them unless we have a good replacement.

We have tended to have trouble getting vendors. I worry about being short of vendors. Julia: I got a bunch of enquiries just before the festival, and have the way to follow-up. My impression is that 12 vendors works well.

Current vendors do not want more. Dan: I appreciate the "local vendor" issue. Working with them may be better than cutting them off. Perhaps we can get them to upgrade their product. Perhaps freshly made sushi rather than pre-made for instance. Julia: I am willing to work with them for next year. Robert: you could share the comments we received with them as helpful suggestions.

Julia: there was also a health-safety concern with another vendor. This is not something that either of us caught. This was an issue of raw chicken handling. I will share this with the health department. Shelagh: the health inspector was on premises at the festival. He was probably looking for issues as well.

Dan: I needed to run out and get gloves for the volunteers. This area has been overlooked and needs to be managed a bit more. Julia: I did try to check on the volunteers. Dan: at one point the volunteers asked "where are the supplies" I don't know what the procedure is for this. Julia: I had a procedure written down on a table with the supplies. The problem appears that this job needs constant attention, so I will need to work on how to do oversight on this.

Julia: there was not enough space to walk between the schools because of the vendors. Moving them seems doable to me. Also the vendors say they need to have the program end sooner. Jenna: the day it was raining there were big mud puddles in front of the vendors. Beth: we just need to think about possibilities. Dan: perhaps some sort of queuing device.

Julia: there was some issue with the food vendor in front of the high school. People didn't know they were there. They repositioned their booth to make it more obvious. Ann: I realized the crafts vendors did not know they were there. Dan: with vendors outside the HS do we need a bistro? Julia: it is open later than the outdoor vendors.

Information

Jenna: I don't recall any major issues. Things went smoothly. The walkie-talkies worked well for communication between buildings.

Membership

Beth: I don't really have a report. Because we did a pre-festival mailing the memberships at the festival was low. Luke: do we ask for performers to be members of NEFFA? Bill: we don't usually ask

the performers to join. Linda: I can mention that to Gillian. I suspect it would do us more financial good if they donated at the table. We have been working on getting the teams to have some financial responsibility. Julia: I think they are involved in other ways.

Outside facilities

Dan: the only notable thing was a bus backup on Saturday at about 10:30 til noon. My feeling is that the bus route was very clogged with traffic. Next year we will add a bus during that time period and we will recommend a route change to avoid the clogged area. Dan: it is hard to control the spacing of the busses at peak times. It is basically "load and go."

Outside signs

Bill: Dayle was in the Watertown lockdown area and had the signs with her. The signs were missed by some people. The signs got there Saturday. We now have possession of the large banner that the town business association put up our first couple of years. Dayle is storing it for now.

Parking

Parking went smoothly. The biggest issue was lines Saturday morning. We had only 86 hours of volunteers, we need more for cleanup on Sunday.

We need an additional sign in front to indicate the handicapped parking entrance.

Program

Ralph: I am concerned about why the one group backed out after the bombing incident. Linda: they got in touch with us early in the week saying they were uncomfortable coming a distance to the festival. We will get in touch with them again for next year. They had never been to our festival before. There was also another group who cancelled due to the bombing.

Bill: you said there were instructional classes late Sunday? Linda: these were things that we are not offering at other times at the festival. We bend over backwards to make performers happy and these were both a result of performer requests.

Linda: couple dance and intro rooms are an ongoing concern about space. We do have a lack of space between the stage area and the large gyms.

In general people were very happy with the program this year. We tried a new project this year: Cathy Mason asked for a teaching room for after her class. We identified a room with no programming and scheduled it to her for the opportunity of a one on one class. She had six people sign up. This was very well received. It will never be something opened to all attendees, just a block of time after the class for the attendees of the workshop. This came about because the performers wanted to do it.

Ralph: how was the "more modern" contra accepted? Linda: it was somewhat "been there, done that" and we probably won't go there again. We can't do the full techno lighting thing, so we aren't really giving anything special. Michael: at the Flurry they did a late night event in the ball room. It was very late starting. It can be done, but there are real problems.

Linda: we discussed a late night party a couple of years ago. Audrey: BIDA discussed it and decided we wanted to attend morning sessions.

Linda: our biggest problem this year was sound bleed from the bagpipes. A well-phrased sign in the jamming room may help. Luke: I'm not clear what space we rent and can use.

Dance performances in the gym: At Natick there were dance performances in the gym. The advantage is that some groups are easier to see. Disadvantages are loss of participatory dance space.

You must get enough seating and this is a challenge. Terry Huffaker asked that this be added to the evaluation. The response was overwhelmingly that they should not move into the gym. People did not want to leave the cushy seats. Program was sympathetic to the question and we came up with the idea of a flash-mob style performance. This could act as a form of publicity for dance performance.

Harvey: this was a thing for the people in the town. We were invited into Natick. Mac: logistically this could happen during band setup. Harold: I like the idea that someone could be dancing while the band was setting up. This could be performers who will also be dancing later in the auditorium. Linda: it would definitely be a group who would be dancing later. Don: part of the interest is getting the overhead view of the dancers. Could we do something with video and displays? Dan: this great viewing experience? Where would people be watching this? Linda: it's just an idea right now.

We got lots of good comments, we were very happy. We were happy that people felt they got support in troubling times.

Performer sales

Harvey: tee-shirt sales, we ran out. The booth takes a lot of volunteers. I am concerned about selling tee shirts other than NEFFA tees.

Ann: we had a long discussion about tote bags at a previous meeting. Harvey: that was Lisa's decision. Linda: we should probably get a report from Lisa. Harvey: I sold 25 tote bags.

Printed materials mobile app

Linda: we will need a program book person for next year.

Dan: we opted for a low cost app this year. I got varied opinions about it. Some folks really liked it but some not so much. This is expected. I think it is the NEFFA tradition to go the lower cost way. For the number of users this option seems to be just fine. I can work with Linda about better categorization of events. Michael: what were the numbers? Dan: I think more people used it last year than this year.

Publicity

Bill: new: we got hooked up with Mansfield public TV. I connected with Robert Tincher and got some interviews on folk radio. We gave away two sets of tickets.

I gave you the outbound communications from our Facebook page and what got traction.

Sound

Michael: Budget, we spent similar money to last year, the bulk to the professional contractors for the dance halls. We spent a little bit more on curtains for the middle school dance hall.

Equipment: we had gear wherever we needed it.

Volunteers: we had issues with volunteers. Volunteer committee said they had a low number of volunteers. As a result we did have some less experienced people working.

We had some issues with our professional crew as well. We were slow to find out that the person we were using was not available. We did get a replacement that people knew.

Marathon bombing issues: one of our crew members was in Watertown and unavailable and was replaced by someone whose gig was cancelled due to the events.

We had a new online sound stage plot system that worked well once we got it online. Jeff Kaufman and Seth Seegar got this together.

Middle school auditorium had a committee. I had hoped that this would help make things run smoothly. We were taking it in turns to make sure the volunteers were doing OK. We tried some different hardware, including flying a speaker from the curtain track.

High school auditorium had a new person who did system design, training and ran the auditorium.

Middle school dance hall: same curtain design as last year with some increased height. We made a small change in the fill speakers. We now have some permanent supports for the bleachers for speakers.

Techno contra had some technical issues. We didn't get the subwoofers requested.

Teaching rooms we worked hard to have identical systems so volunteers could handle them.

I noticed that some of the volunteers in the concert rooms were running things a little bit loud. I will note who for next year.

Tickets

Don: We added festival shirts and tote bags to the pre sales. We also added an early will-call pickup at the Thursday dance. Order packages were created for distribution. The Thursday will-call was a challenge because we got the tee shirts at the same time. We also included member benefit and radio giveaway tickets in will-call.

We had a 30% increase in purchasers and revenue this year.

I heard the comment about sales tax. We did include sales tax on the purchase of the tote bags.

Feedback: people are happy with the system. We have some changes we can make for next year. There is a disconnect between membership purchases and pre-sales.

New business

Bill: The Scout House has kicked off a fund-drive. They would like us to send out a joint letter to the NEFFA membership requesting member support. Michael: the Scout House is a rare resource that it falls within our purview to support. Luke: would this open us up to other organizations requesting similar things? Dan: it would be handled on a case by case basis. Harvey: CDS had an insert. Robert: Assuming we go forward, how would this be sent out? Bill: we have not gotten that far. Robert: I would feel more comfortable with an insert in the NEFFA news. Dan: my opinion is the exact opposite. This should be a professional request. This is primarily the Scout House's decision. We also have additional mailing lists we can make available such as Ralph Page and even performers.

General opinion is that we do want to go forward with this.

Family dance

There has been a transition and there are questions about the process. Does the board want to continue to support the event? Audrey: I think it bears looking at the financials. Ralph: I have a contract with the Scout House for next year. Linda: I think for the time being we should support the dance and ask Marcie to come talk to us. Audrey: I've been talking to Marcie about the series. I would be glad to put something together about this.

September 15, 2013

Treasurer's Report

We finally got the bill from the school. It was \$36000, which is more than the \$34000 of 2012. It was very late being received. Linda: I would like to suggest we move the process of working with the school earlier in the annual process.

Mac: to help us find a pro-bono CPA we should hit our social media channels to see if someone would step up and help. Dan: it does not have to be pro-bono but a courtesy discount would be nice.

Program Committee

Linda: Things are going great. We've gotten about 130 applications so far. Dan: are there any foreign applicants? Linda: not so far. It's lovely if it works, but it rarely works. Harvey: Are you saying you would not help someone who had a tour? Linda: we would be glad to work with someone who was coming anyway.

Outside Signs

I have the banner from the Downtown Business Association. The manufacturer says that it is not worth cleaning.

Retreat Follow-up

Bill: there were a number of discussion topics I want to follow up on.

Board Handbook

Linda: I sent the old handbook around with possible edits. I have heard from some folks with edits. Please go through it and let me know if you have ideas for changes. Two things have come up:

We need for it to be an electronic version, not paper. Making it available electronically seems to be the prudent thing to do.

I've had comments about what committees get included. We can go forward with the major committees. Several committees are not in there. Do we update the list or leave it the way it is?

I do not want this to be a process that takes forever. I would like have things in the next two weeks.

How we organize our files on line has become a problem. The Yahoo docs are not organized well. Bill: everyone thinks it's bad but we have not found an alternative. Beth: I'm willing to do some research.

Deadline for changes to the book: October 1.

Mac: document management is very important. Controlling who can edit is also important.

Site Location

Bill: There was a lot of discussion on site. Is there someone who is taking the lead on this item? Jenna: no one seems to have the time to dedicate to this.

Outreach

Bill: there is a list of ideas how do we keep this moving forward? Dan: I think we need to review them regularly. Ron: could we use a Doodle poll to help with this? Dayle: can we put this on the public pages to get ideas. Dan: we should have someone managing that if we are publishing proposals. Bill: we need someone to investigate it and come back to the board. Dayle: someone might step and offer to help.

Senior Centers: Ron: I'm interested in senior centers; I've identified 6 senior centers that I want to contact.

Prom night: Jenna: we thought that instead of the techno we might do a prom theme. Linda: work with Lisa.

Dance and singing programs for the Mansfield and surrounding communities: Ron: I will work with that.

Specialty groups: Linda: that was a suggestion of Pat Fulton.

Specialty dance groups: Terry: the whole board should be looking for groups and send them to the application process. Linda: this

always comes up as an idea, but it's always an issue of who is spending time actually doing research on groups.

Gospel groups: Jane: I spoke to someone a couple of years ago. I could check that out again.

Remote bussing: to help larger groups who might want to come to the Festival. Jenna: we were hoping to start with a local trial. Dan: I believe we also wanted to find local coordinators. Linda: Luke said he might be willing to look into one from Burlington. Ron: I can find someone for Providence. Jenna: I will look for someone for Boston. Linda: BIDA might be a possibility. Audrey: we have coordinated rides with a signup sheet. Linda: you don't have to do one or the other. There may be a place for a bus. It is a very concrete show that we want this to happen.

Audrey: do we have a company? Dan: It's possible. Audrey: how much would this cost? Linda: I think this is why we need to research this. Audrey: I will get a feel from the community to see if people are interested.

Advertise volunteer opportunities: Jenna: there are a lot of smaller jobs that people do not know are volunteers. The idea is to put the ideas more forward so people know about other volunteers than safety. Dayle: we are the most lenient of the festivals we know of as far as volunteer hours for admission. Linda: I find it's a problem that the volunteer process does not start until after the preliminary grid is available. Perhaps we need to get information on the website now. Jenna: Last year I didn't get my volunteer confirmation until a week before the Festival. It is too late.

Demos at other locations

Demo on the green in Mansfield or founder's day

Offsite late night dance

Theme Festival

Committee Chair Approval

Motion to approve slate: Ralph, Linda seconded. Motion carries. 8-0

Ticket Prices

Anyone know any big changes in costs? Michael: sound will be up for bid this year. I would probably not approve anyone who is more than 10% more than last year. Shelagh: it would help this discussion to get clarity on the school's bill. Bill: I will try to talk to them before the next meeting.

Michael: have we discussed lowering prices to encourage attendance? Terry: the volunteer committee had some trouble filling slots, lowering prices would impact that.

Family Dance

Terry: Jacob is our family dance person and with Judith now retired it would be nice if we had another person on the committee. We basically fund this dance. FAC takes the lead in programming. We need someone to bring in more families. Shelagh: I thought Jacob was our representative? Terry: Jacob asked for someone more. Shelagh: has anyone reached out to FAC. Audrey: this is where I come in. There has been a big disconnect between FAC and NEFFA. At the party for Judith, Marcie approached Jacob and asked how she could help. She contacted me and Dana Susman. Marcie's biggest question has been "where does NEFFA come in?" Booking is 90% there, we have a good roster of callers and musicians.

Linda: Audrey are you willing to be a NEFFA representative? And we need to ask Jacob what he thinks his role is and what he would like it to be. Do you need someone to sit down with everyone and work on this? Terry: I think the committee needs to work this out themselves. Shelagh: the new committee should have the freedom

to move in whatever direction they want to. This is an opportunity to try new things and make this a developmental year. Terry: and another way to bring families to the Festival.

October 20, 2013

President's Report

Action item from last meeting: I was asked to get in touch with the school to discuss increase in rent and to try to get a more structured procedure in place. I'm working with Harold and we have not yet gotten to meet with Bob LaConte. Ralph: we also would like you to contact the fire department about the fees.

Harold: I was unable to arrange a meeting. In discussing with Bob he says that over 90% of what he charges us is custodial fees. These are union workers and it involves overtime. He is not trying to pad this. I have not seen any indication that he is bringing in excessive numbers of people, they are pretty busy. The other part is supplies: paper towels, TP, trash bags, etc. that are over and above school's regular supplies. Then there are the actual facilities costs including utilities resources and "modest" expenses. Ralph: but it was \$2000 more this year and we would like to know why.

Thursday night dance

Dan: there are two pages of numbers indicating last year's details and annual trends. The past season has been a level season in terms of attendance. We made some money and spent some money on replacement of equipment that had started to fail. We are happy with the product we are producing. We are still getting a good percentage of young people. This does affect our income. This is the type of loss that we like. The young people are the future of our activity.

As far as the detail: we listed the performers, the gate, the expenses for hall, flyer etc. Occasionally the house covers additional items such as ice cream, these are not reflected in the week by week account. We had a really bad dance on November 29, the floor was being refinished. We wanted to hold the dance because we were cancelling the following week for Thanksgiving. The dance was held in Cambridge. The Cambridge hall is expensive and there was a power failure in Cambridge that day so a lot of people did not come to the dance. This may be the worst loss for quite some time.

We are well on our way to 25 years, when we will have another party.

Terry: You used to have a report about insurance. Dan: in prior years Ralph would assess a proportion of the insurance money. This is really NEFFA's money and we don't have any designs on it so in recent time Ralph has taken the insurance out of TNDC's accounting. Fixed expenses are rent, sound, insurance and consumables like cups and flyers. Ralph: on my report you can see the Thursday net.

Dan: The construction at the Scout House should be finished soon. We might think about giving a donation to the Scout House reconstruction fund. Bill: I have been contacted by the Scout House about participating in a joint fundraiser for them. I have said yes and am waiting to hear from them. Dan: perhaps a matching gift type fundraising. Harvey: dance group should tell our dancers about supporting the Scout House. Bill: I would like to see the Scout House board drive this process.

Program committee

Bill: Linda says that everything is going well. They have gotten a good number of applications.

Dan: how firm are the dates? Harold: we are on their calendar. We do not have the signed contract yet. This is the way it has been done for the past seven years. I need to have the insurance

certificate, and we don't get that until January. In the meantime we can ask them to be proactive about dates in advance for the next 5 years. Pat: that also lets them know that we are planning on being there for a while.

Pat: what are the dates of this year: April 25, 26, 27

Old Business

Board Handbook

Linda has taken input from a number of you. She has the final draft which you have reviewed. I will post this back on NEFFA Exec. Many of us have been discussing the interface at Yahoo, which has recently changed and not entirely for the better. I did find that you need to click on More... and then Files... To get to the files. The handbook should be there this week.

New Committee members

Luke Donforth is going to join the Food Committee. He has also volunteered to work with Frank on the program book. Frank is going to do it for a while but would like an assistant. Dave Esienstadter is going to work with Dan on NEFFA News and work with Julia on the Volunteer committee. I think we need a board member to be a liaison to the board.

Audrey is going to work with Michael Bergman on sound.

Family Dance

Terry: We had a meeting. The name is changing to Community Dance. They have a full line up. It is listed on the FAC website. The first dance is on November 4th with Dudley at the Scout House.

Harold: Is there any way that social media events can just pop up in your calendar? Dan: this already happens for TNDC. There is a weekly event for each dance. Pat: it's a nice reminder that it's coming up. Susan: it is a nice reminder of who's playing.

Life Membership Recognition

Motion to offer Dan Pearl a life membership to be awarded at a later time moved and seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Ticket prices 2014

Ralph, I move no change in ticket prices, Dan seconded

Harold: I have not gone to the schools, fire or police to see if there are any anticipated increases. If it can wait a month it would help. Bill and I can see if there are changes in rates that we should consider.

Ralph: another issue is volunteers and how ticket prices affect volunteers. Dan: pricing the Festival higher to get more volunteers is an odd way of going about things. Harold: we could make it up in other ways. Pat: why are people volunteering less? Ralph: maybe because the economy is better. Pat: perhaps the volunteer committee can contact volunteers who have not come back about why. Dan: volunteering is certainly an aspect of this. We can do more advertising about volunteering. More complete job descriptions are helpful. If I had to vote today I would vote in favor of the motion because our finances are better than they have been in some time. I move to table the discussion until we have more information. Ralph seconds. Motion to table passes. Dan: I will have more information about bus costs as well which will go up.

BIDA Proposal

Bill: a couple of years ago I was invited to a BIDA board meeting with a discussion about a merger. We talked in the abstract and said if it was something they wanted to do we would discuss it. Audrey and Michael are both on our board and on the BIDA board. My sense is that they would like to approach the board about it.

Advantages and disadvantages were discussed. We will follow up at a future meeting.

November 24, 2013

Grants Committee

Robert: [Handed out a sheet of the current grants.] One of these was approved but the money was never asked for. We have had \$2000/year available. For a few years when finances were not as good it was suggested that we be more conservative, we feel that has been lifted. A number of years ago we received an anonymous donation which was earmarked for youth programs. We have had several grants since then that would qualify for that money. Linda: could you write something up for the NEFFA News about that? It would be of interest to our membership. Robert: I will try to put something together. Dan: Why are there two Youth Traditional Song Weekend listings? Robert: they are the same request for two years. Dan: I thought we didn't fund ongoing things? Robert: that will definitely come up in our discussion. Shelagh: scholarships are different from just funding. Robert: they are hoping to eventually have enough money to fund their own scholarships and are well on the way to that. We are in favor of scholarships. Dan's question is well on point. Terry: we have funded organizations over more than one year in the past. Mac: I like the idea of supporting youth programs. Pat: What would "scholarship" mean? Are we assured of our money being used the way we want it? Beth: The grants committee makes these decisions and we trust them to do their job. Bill: Many people may not know that this is the case. Robert reports to the board, but we don't make the decisions. Robert: We have been given a set amount and told that we can grant up to \$500 per grant, if a request is greater than that, we come back to the board with that. Those are our parameters.

Festival Committee Reports

Program

We have a preliminary grid. We will be adding ritual right after Thanksgiving. Performer notifications will go out after that. Something new this year: There is going to be an English Festival Orchestra and an International Dance Festival Orchestra! It is fun to have something new and exciting. We have the usual mix of old favorites and new items. Jane: how is the children's program? Linda: it is the usual dance performance thing. Sometimes we are lucky and get new things, but that experience is becoming rare. Groups want to be paid and do not want to commit this far in advance. We have enough for this year.

Bill: Robert you worked on Council on Aging outreach last year. Did that work out? Robert: Not really. I communicated with over 50 COAs in a geographical basis. I do not intend to try again this year. Harvey: I would also recommend the Lifelong Learning People (formerly Elderhostel.)

Terry: The hotel list has been given to Dan. The Unity church is going to do their hospitality offer again. They are happy with how that is working. Mac: I notice a couple of festivals have designated contacts for out of town people who would like housing. Would this be something we would like to try? Terry: this comes up every few years. At the moment we do not have the capacity to offer volunteer housing. Unity Church is basically offering a B&B. Linda: We do this for performers. Finding folks who are close by with housing is a challenge. We had 8-10 performers last year for whom we found housing. The performers themselves have to be willing to travel. Also, because of our long history, many people who attend already have people staying with them. Michael: close geography is a bit of a red herring. Terry: the last time we tried this we sent out to a large area and got a few in Rhode Island for instance but no one took advantage.

Bazaar

Angie: we have contacted all our people by phone. Next we will be getting them the information they need.

Volunteers

Dave: I have not really connected with Julia yet. Bill: if you can get together by the end of the year. Starting in January you will be asked for a timeline for things like getting the web site opened, etc. Also you will want to be here to help. Linda: Julia is getting married the weekend after NEFFA, so she will probably be a bit distracted. Linda: the web form for volunteers does not generally go live until the grid is available. I would like the volunteer signup to be available regardless. We will not be ready for a public grid out until about February 1st. Bill: there may be some notes on the NEFFA Exec site. Terry: I can send you a timeline.

Sound

Michael: we are attempting to have bids for contracts this year. I sent out RFPs last month but have not yet heard back. Eric is definitely available and interested. Ed Howe is not available, this year. He is interested in bidding for next year. Tony Hernandez has not gotten back to me yet.

Badges

Mac: I will be contacting committee heads earlier this year than before so my matrix is filled out correctly. I know there will be last minute additions/corrections.

Nominating

We have been talking. We have approached some people who have said they did not have time. The Vice President's role appears to be an issue both because it is important and because there is a question of filling from within vs. from outside. We currently have a few holes. Bill: how does the board feel about filling an exec position from outside? Dan: it has been done before, but people are mostly those who have had some experience as director. Bill: so how many positions are needed? Mac: about two board members, Nominating and VP.

Outside Facilities

Dan: you will be pleased to know that porta potties will be at the Festival again this year. The price for that will be the same. Busses will be slightly higher. We are adding a few additional hours to address the Saturday rush. The price will be around \$6300 this year. Take that into account when we discuss ticket prices. This is not a huge increase.

Linda: has any information been discovered about a bus from Porter square? Audrey: It is a good idea, but we would need a certain number to commit to make it happen. Linda: I think it is in NEFFA's best interest to support such an idea. I don't think we necessarily need to have commitments in advance to say: "We will have a bus." If it is a bust, we will have learned something. Mac: I think drawing from Somerville and Cambridge could have a major benefit. Jeff: I think selling advance tickets for \$10 each is a great idea. Terry: We don't get that many people asking for rides. It would be good to have free range tickets available. Audrey: there are so many young people who have no car. Dan: we would need to have a place to load and other details to work out, but that can be handled. Audrey: would it be appropriate to field this on our Facebook page? Board: yes. Bill: I will put you on the agenda for next month.

Ticket Prices

Dan: I move to reopen ticket prices discussion. Bill: we have a motion on hand to keep ticket prices the same as last year. Mac: how does Ralph feel about the motion? Ralph: it was my motion. Mac: what about school? Bill: my understanding is that last year we lost our discount that we had been granted. Ralph: there are two

issues: how much and having a set contract. Harvey: the issue may be union labor contracts. Bill: we want to get some transparency on the process. Linda: Michel what about sound? Michael: I do not expect more than 10% increase. Robert: what if we appoint a small group to make this decision after we have gotten the needed information. If this committee finds, say in early December, that there are not substantial increases they can go ahead. Ralph: we really want the school contract to be signed in August or September for the following year. Dan: our modus operandi has been to make our decision in arrears, based on the previous year. There are things we cannot control and we acknowledge that. If the previous Festival lost a lot of money we have raised prices. This past year with everything included, we made a little money. I feel comfortable not raising our prices a whole lot even if things may go up a little, in effect doing budgeting in arrears. Ralph: if someone has strong feelings they might suggest an alternative.

Motion carries to keep the ticket prices the same as last year.

New Business

BIDA

Audrey: There are three of us here today from BIDA: myself Jeff Kaufman and Michael Bergman. This conversation dates back a year and a half. The initial issue is that we are running a successful dance twice a month and in February we celebrate 5 years, but we are essentially not legal. We act as if we were legal, but without any legal entity. We talked to several Boston organizations. Jeff: we didn't realize we were putting our board members at as much risk as we actually were. Michael: also the amount of money involved has increased. Audrey: so we decided to approach NEFFA about joining them. Yes, we want to be legal. Jeff: at the most recent BIDA board meeting we are leaning toward incorporation as a separate entity. We have similar goals, we are more Boston focused than NEFFA. It may be lower overhead. NEFFA has more experience. Or we could just go our separate ways.

Linda: can you spell out what you feel the advantages are? Jeff: First the practical thing of running a non-profit which is difficult and by joining an existing organization we would be able to learn that more slowly over time and get advice. We have relatively good records, but we don't fully understand what the government needs.

Being able to draw on the experience of NEFFA would be helpful to us. We are still new. Advantages to NEFFA: we are a growing healthy dance that has gotten a new group of people dancing. Mostly the people who dance at BIDA were not dancing elsewhere before. We can help expand the base of people who think of NEFFA as a folk dance organization.

Robert: would you envision BIDA becoming an arm of NEFFA similar to TNDC? Jeff: Yes, that is the model we are looking at. Mostly an independent organization. Audrey: our current model is working and we do not want to change it. Jeff: If NEFFA thinks we should do something different we should know now. Mac: I talked to Lisa

Lisa Greenleaf said her gut reaction was "that would be a great idea, but we don't want to change."

Harvey: have you talked to CDSS? Jeff: that would be a different situation where we would still be entirely an independent organization. We have not talked to them yet.

Robert: I would be in favor of inviting BIDA to join NEFFA. I think they are in our area and they would have some people who would, for example, come to our Festival. It is a similar organization with similar aims. I would like to invite them.

Linda: I need a proposal with details about what the expectations and responsibilities are. The pesky dilemmas that might come up. I'm hearing your problem statement is about legal issues. There were good reasons NEFFA took over the Family dance and the

TNDC. I am not sure whether this makes sense in the long run as a role for NEFFA. I do not want to be maternalistic. I would like to see BIDA stay independent.

Shelagh: As far as a legal help. We don't have the resources to provide legal advice. If you became a part of us, we would be your umbrella. As an independent organization we couldn't help you very much. I share Linda's idea that a proposal of what you are looking for is important. The TNDC has always been a money maker, but the Ralph Page weekend has not. The family dance is a joint event where we underwrite losses. That is an important piece. BIDA is not just a regional dance. I think there is a plus for NEFFA with having a connection to the group.

Terry: I see some advantages to NEFFA. I love what BIDA does. I love the mentoring. This has pretty much stopped at the Thursday night dance. This role has done well there. I think it is a younger group with new skills that NEFFA needs. I think we have been rather lax as an organization about some of the things we need to get done. Dan: there wasn't much involved in getting the TNDC on board.

Pat: If incorporation is the biggest issue, have you looked at the steps you would need? What is the biggest barrier to not doing it independently? Jeff: There's really no hurdle to joining NEFFA. There are about 4 things at the state level, not counting the Federal level which is about 6 more. It may be unnecessary work. Dan: I would strongly encourage you to investigate CDSS affiliation. This could get you non-profit status. Linda: CDSS has paid staff. They have folks who can help with this.

Dan: the thing to be aware that the money would be NEFFA's money. It would be the NEFFA board's decision about supporting a losing period. Jeff: we currently have enough that we could run 5 dances with nothing coming in. We would want to resolve any issues on our own.

Mac: It ought to be obvious that BIDA has been succeeding for a matter of years. When two organizations become one organization they both tend to be more involved. I think it would be profitable to have the BIDA people involved with NEFFA. Harvey: does NEFFA want to start acquiring groups? Jeff: I think that is a fair question. Would there be other organizations who would want to join NEFFA? Bill: we are following the TNDC precedent on a case by case basis.

Jenna: wasn't BIDA originally started because the Thursday night dance moved out of Cambridge? Jeff: there are a lot of people who expect the Thursday dance to be in Concord.

Terry: I love the idea of one less organization. It frees some people up from the adminstrivia. I would like to see more cooperation between organizations so volunteers can do creative things.

Robert: the question of "would this set a precedent?" I don't think that is bad. I think BIDA has similar goals as

NEFFA. If there is another organization who could benefit us the same way I would be in favor of that as well. I am obviously in favor of having them join us in the same way as the Thursday night dance. Pat: there are two issues here: 1. there is a need for BIDA to become non-profit. 2. For NEFFA the question is when do you bring in other groups? If you are looking at long term success you want to make sure things do mesh well for the bigger organization. Dave: I agree we need an agreement. Linda: one of my concerns is that we have not had any interaction with the Family dance people and they have not given back to us as an organization. So what does it mean for us for our long term health to say "yes" to organizations? I am concerned about workload. Does it mean something in terms of workload?

Mac: what workload is there for the TNDC? Dan: a little incremental overhead from reports from TNDC and the overhead for the treasurer to handle the finances. It is not tons of overhead. If Ralph can handle it, and I think he could, that shouldn't be a big consideration.

Dave: is this something that BIDA has said that they actually want? Jeff: BIDA is leaning toward becoming an independent organization. If NEFFA were to come back with an invitation we would consider it.

Beth: what do you think about the "more organizations" question? Jeff: I haven't been around long enough. Audrey: I can see it both ways. I've noticed from the family dance that it is hard to work with NEFFA and FAC both. Jeff: when things are healthy having fewer is better, but when things are hard it is more helpful to spread the risk.

Bill: I propose you come back with a proposal. Jeff: I would like to know if NEFFA sees this as advantageous. Linda: I think that puts us in an awkward position. Pat: I think people need more information to make a proposal. Shelagh: are we open to a proposal along the lines of the discussion today.

A straw vote showed that we were all open to a proposal.

Jeff: I think it is very possible that we will move ahead with becoming an independent organization. Audrey: I think this has been a valuable conversation to discuss NEFFA's purpose. Dave: should we have an ongoing discussion about this? Shelagh: this is not something that we need to articulate in the abstract.

Events

Bill: Val was given the challenge to go out and think about events.

Val: I've done some footwork. I found two organizations who would be willing to work with us. One in Fitchburg. My contact said \$300-\$400. Another venue in Sturbridge. They said they needed more information.

My understanding is my mission is "community involvement, goodwill, build interest, etc." I've been hearing in the board meetings that on the lawn outside the school was more of a community area and we want to involve Mansfield more. I found pricing for small tents. They are about \$100. My thought is a few small tents with some NEFFA groups out on the lawn at the Festival I for some time.

Bill: would the groups be open to this? Linda: I'm not sure this would increase ticket sales. It would be a nice offering. I think some of the groups would be willing. Others have a come in, dance, leave MO. It never hurts to ask. This is not something we would have to do right away. I can even suggest the first group for under the tent...

Robert: this would be very weather dependent. We have the ritual dancers, this could add to that. The people who come to the Festival would love it. Dan: and sharing culture is what NEFFA is all about. The former "demo" area of the crafts room could be a place as well.

Terry: I thought external events was to go to Mansfield town days, or their Y or something to extend our visibility in Mansfield. So they see us as more than just someone who makes their traffic a mess. Dan: we can only benefit by raising the NEFFA awareness in town. Pat: and several towns around.

Red Herring at the NEFFA Festival



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