

Notes from the Office

Vibrant Dance Communities—Themes and Practical Ideas (Part 1) by Max Newman, Youth Projects Intern



After talking with many folks about what works in their community over the past few months—and showcasing some of their ideas on my Facebook page (www.facebook.com/cdss.max)—I'm beginning to highlight in the

newsletter some of the practical ideas I've encountered and themes I've drawn from them.

I've attempted to feature some that are especially unusual or representative of useful approaches. Most of the ideas are road-tested; a few are more theoretical but interesting enough that I hope you'll forgive their inclusion. Many apply to involving the younger generation and fostering intergenerational communities; most relate to sustaining vibrant communities of all sorts.

Our first topic deals with fostering volunteers.

Providing opportunities to deepen investment

Unless you are getting involved in organizing for fame and glory (ha!), your goal is to foster a community. While organizing can be, and often is, done single-handedly, there are three reasons to bring regular members in as volunteers and co-organizers.

First, it helps avoid burnout. Many hands make light work and, after some initial investment establishing a system and training individuals, you should have less work to do. Second, it opens up new possibilities. You will have more energy to pursue your other ideas and you can profit from the creative thinking of others. Third, and most important, it strengthens your community. As an organizer, sharing the weight with others deepens the sense that your event is put on by the community and for the community. It deepens the individuals' investment in that community while giving them a sense about what goes on behind the scenes, a valuable asset for the longevity of your community. They may also feel extra motivated to bring their friends if they feel more strongly that it is "their" event too.

Adopting this attitude is not without its

challenges. It takes time and thought to figure out the best ways to bring people in and patience to allow them to make mistakes. More difficult still is adapting your vision for others to accommodate ideas and approaches that may differ from your own. It is always fair to draw the line at an idea you consider impractical or detrimental, but keep an open mind and be encouraging: If someone wants to pursue an idea, is willing to do the grunt work, and the downsides are small, then let him or her run with it. Even if the idea is unsuccessful, their investment is an asset you have gained.

What kinds of ideas might you consider?

Open board meetings. Especially with food and especially before an event, these are excellent for showing what the board talks about and for inviting ideas and community involvement.

The responsibility need not be as great as a board position. Give one of your local young folks the responsibility of maintaining your Facebook events or designing a flyer for the campus. Perhaps one of your more experienced volunteers could be put in charge of organizing other volunteers. Ask that group of homeschool kids if they'd like to take care of snacks and beverages. Find the artist who wants to draw up a fun schedule.

Make "the ask." Have a sign by the door ("We want YOU!") and include the ask during announcements. Look in new places. Try asking the most removed members of your group, rather than most inside and involved. This will bring them in and they are the most likely to have friends who've never tried your activity.

Recognize your volunteers. In addition to your private or public thanks during announcements, maybe this means a special badge or annual recognition in your newsletter. Or a free or discounted dance, now and/or next time (very compelling for students). At least one group has an annual dance when that year's volunteers get in free.

Thanks! Tune in next issue for more.



More notes ►

Group Corner—Tax Time by Jeff Martell, Group Services Manager



From what I hear, there are only two things in life that one cannot avoid, and we are going to discuss one of them today. Yes, that's right, taxes. Specifically, taxes for nonprofit groups.

The first thing we should probably do is clarify what exactly a 501(c)3 nonprofit group is. According to the IRS's website (irs.gov), it must be a charitable organization, and not operated for the benefit of private interests; these organizations may accept tax deductible contributions. CDSS offers 501(c)3 status under our group umbrella to our group affiliates as an additional service at an additional charge. A group does not become tax exempt just by virtue of meeting the IRS criteria, nor does CDSS membership automatically confer 501(c)3 status. A group must apply for 501(c)3 status either from the IRS or from an umbrella organization. (See our website for more information, www.cdss.org/nonproffitax-exemption.html.)

Another point of confusion in the nonprofit world is who must file taxes. The simple answer is everyone! There was a time when groups that made under a certain amount in gross receipts didn't have to file. That law changed in 2006. Now **all** 501(c)3 organizations must file some sort of tax form, either a 990, 990ez, or if gross receipts are under \$25,000,* then a 990n or e-postcard.

The IRS will cancel the tax exempt status of any group that does not file for three consecutive years. Fiscal 2009 marks the third year. It turns out that many groups were caught unaware of this change in the laws, so the IRS has been being very understanding about not cutting groups off or fining them so far. HOWEVER, this will not continue for long. If your group has not filed taxes for your most recent fiscal year, you will want to do so before October 15, 2010.

* Next year this will change to \$50,000 for Fiscal Year 2010.



Editor's Desk—Newsletter Going Online by Caroline Batson, Editor



When the trees start budding out here again in a few months, we expect to bud out too in a new way—the *CDSS News* will go online in 2011, probably with the Spring issue. The paper copy, except for a four-page preview mailed to those members without Internet access, will no longer be printed.

The online newsletter will be for everyone who's interested, CDSS members and nonmembers alike (something we can't afford to do with paper). As of now, we expect to keep the quarterly publication schedule although some deadlines, especially for ads, may change. We regret the loss of the paper edition, but are excited by the idea of expanding our technical horizons, widening our readership, and being a stronger support for our traditional dance and music community. With the CDSS centennial only five years away (see page 4), we're taking another step toward our future.

We're in the planning stages now for the online newsletter, so if there's something you've always wanted to see in it, send your ideas to caroline@cdss.org. Also—very important—if you haven't given us your email address yet, go to the Member Sign-In section on our website, www.cdss.org, so you'll get our first cyber-issue. If you don't have email or internet access, check out your local library; they may offer free online access or loaner computers for in-library use.



Members List Now Online

By the time you read this, we expect the CDSS Members List to be available online as we migrate another of our printed periodicals to the online world. It will be more up to date (hard to do when we printed it annually) and easily searchable by name, town or state. Just as with the old paper version, our first priority is protecting your privacy: 1) the information listed will be for CDSS members only (you will have to log in as a current member to access it), 2) you must opt IN to be included, and 3) you'll be able to change what info is available about yourself. If you haven't already opted in, please contact ccompton@cdss.org.

Camp Notes

by Steve Howe, Assistant Director of Programs



A New Song and Dance Week

CDSS is pleased to announce a new week at Pinewoods Camp next summer, July 23-30, 2011. **The Harmony of Song and Dance** will be a week for singers who like to dance and dancers who like to sing. The tentative program includes traditional and contemporary songs, harmony singing by ear, choral singing from written music, instrumental music, contra and square dancing for all, a morris dance intensive, and a music teachers intensive.

Peter and Mary Alice Amidon will be program directors.

More information will be on our website, www.cdss.org/camp, as it becomes available, and registration will begin in January. Join us for this week of singing, dancing and music-making!

CDSS Summer Camps in 2011

Here are the dates and program chairs for our main weeks; special courses and intensives will be announced later. Preliminary info is at www.cdss.org/camp; an informational poster will be mailed around March 1.

OGONTZ, Lyman, NH

Family Week, July 30-August 6, Andy and Robin Davis

PINEWOODS, Plymouth, MA

Family Week, July 16-23, Becky Tracy and Keith Murphy

Harmony of Song and Dance, July 23-30, Peter and Mary Alice Amidon

American Dance and Music Week, July 30-August 6, Lisa Greenleaf

English Dance Week, August 6-13, Sharon Green

Early Music Week, August 13-20, Sheila Beardslee

Campers' Week, August 20-27, Sarah Henry and Michael Gorin

English & American Dance Week, August 27-September 3, Carol Ormand

TIMBER RIDGE, High View, WV

Adult & Family Week, August 14-21, Gaye Fifer

Camp Jobs Available

Each year we need help running our summer dance and music camps. If one of the following appeals to you, write to Steve Howe, CDSS Office, PO Box 338, Haydenville, MA 01039, or camp@cdss.org.

Sound system operators are needed at all weeks, with compensation ranging from full scholarship to paid staff, depending on the session.

Office positions are available at Pinewoods, from July 16-September 3, at Timber Ridge from August 13-21, and at Ogontz from July 30-August 6.

In exchange for full scholarships, we need lifeguards with CPR/First Aid certificates for all sessions, dining hall managers for all sessions, and a doctor or nurse for Family and Campers' weeks. Some full scholarships are also available at Ogontz for kitchen and/or grounds work and some evening monitoring of sleeping children. In exchange for partial scholarships, we need assistant lifeguards and evening monitors for all Family and Campers' weeks.

**Camp registration for 2011
will begin in January.**



Morris class at Pinewoods; photo by David Green.