

Notes from the Office

Group Corner—Sound Engineers

by Jeff Martell, Group Services Manager



I have heard from a few different groups as of late that they have been having problems finding someone to run sound for their dances. A good sound engineer can make the difference between a wonderful evening of music and an ear rattling cacophony. The reality of

doing sound is that most people don't notice it at all unless something has gone awry. If your dance has an experienced sound engineer, do whatever you can to keep them happy! They are worth their weight in gold. They show up early, set up all the equipment, make sure the band sounds great, work all night (yes, even if they are dancing they are still listening), then they put it all away after everyone has left. Keeping them happy may include paying them if you can at all afford it, feeding them or giving them free admission to other events.

If your group does not have a sound engineer on hand, you still have some options. For a bigger event it is often best to hire a sound company. They are professionals, have the right tools for bigger shows, but that can get expensive. Before hiring anyone, get some references. Another idea is to get the band to supply the sound for the night. The up side of this option is it is their stuff, and they are used to it. The down side is that if they don't have a sound engineer either and are mixing from the stage, they are the ONLY ones in the room that cannot hear what is going on in the room.

Possibly the best idea is to train one, or a few, people in basic sound reinforcement. Most of our groups are not running huge sound systems, nor are they using complicated pieces of equipment, so most anyone with a basic to good ear can be trained in how to use it. There are a few options for this. You could send your sound people to a sound training held at an event or festival near you. It might be hard to find one, or expensive to do however. One of the better options is to hire a sound engineer to come out and do a training, or several, with your system at your site. The benefits of this are that people get hands-on time with your particular system and hall, and it is probably less expensive than sending a group to a larger event. The CDSS store has copies of *All Mixed*

Up: A Guide to Sound Production for Folk and Dance Music (Rev. Ed), by Bob Mills, which is a great basic sound engineering primer for a pretty reasonable price. There are also CDSS-funded grants that a group could apply for to help fund such a training in their area. Information on these can be found at www.cdss.org/grantguidelines.

In closing, if you have a sound person, thank them! If you are looking for one, it might just work best to grow your own!

From the Youth Desk

by Max Newman, Youth Projects Intern



As the Youth Intern, I get to work in a number of different arenas. Lots of time is spent communicating with people, finding out what's going on, answering questions, and connecting people with similar experiences and ideas. My eleven day visit through Colorado is a fine example. People shared some clever ideas and I was able to connect some with useful resources. I just heard, for example, the Midwest Morris Ale will be receiving a grant from CDSS scholarships. Read Jane Srivastava's article on page 29, for a little more about what was going on at Stellar.

I'm also sure many of you have noticed my Youth Intern Facebook page. I'm now happy to unveil a similar resource we're premiering: the CDSS Blog at www.cdss.org/blog.

Why Does CDSS Have a Blog? Our blog is going to be another resource to provide a forum for connecting people and sharing ideas, as well as a place to hear a little more about what happens at CDSS. It will be updated regularly and highlight some things that we can't quite address with the newsletter. Some of these will be updates about the goings on in the office, while others will take advantage of all the web resources that we and others have compiled. Look out for our video-of-the-month feature! Our hope is that this will be a fun, informative, and even informal place you can check into regularly for news, ideas and memes (our community has memes, doesn't it?).

But We Need Your Help! In order to create a place with the aforementioned "fun, informative"

content, I need your help. If you know of a cool link, have an experience/problem/solution to share, or have any other idea you think would make an interesting post, please send me an email. Some posts will be small, others will be longer, so I welcome anything and everything.

I'm really looking forward to seeing where the blog takes us and hope you are, too.

Visit the CDSS Blog at www.cdss.org/blog. To find out what else Max is up to, check out www.facebook.com/cdss.max.

Outreach

by Linda Henry, Outreach Manager



Greetings from the Outreach corner of the CDSS office where we offer grants, scholarships, advice and more! Here's a glimpse of current news and projects on the horizon.

Current outreach grants are supporting these exciting events:

- scholarships for the thirtieth Annual Midwest Morris Ale (Boulder, Colorado)
- a new community dance series starting up (Providence, Rhode Island)
- the first Great Bear Groove dance weekend (Fulton, New York)
- the Nelson Strings Program to train young musicians (Nelson, New Hampshire)
- a new contra dance series (Wallingford, Connecticut)
- scholarships for young dancers attending DERT, the Dancing England Rapper Tournament (Derby, England)
- the Second Annual Open Band Contra Dance culminating a six-month project to train musicians (Peace Dale, Rhode Island)

How/When to Apply—If you are planning a music or dance-related event or project and need financial support, we encourage you to apply for CDSS outreach funding. Our next grant deadline is October 1. See www.cdss.org/grantguidelines for guidelines and an application. If you have questions and/or need advice, feel free to be in touch. (See contact information below.)

We are especially eager to offer grants for projects/events beyond the northeastern United States.

And for groups that would like to offer workshops for your English country dance musicians, we encourage you to apply for assistance from the Chuck Ward Fund; see www.cdss.org/grantguidelines.

Leadership Conferences—Another important aspect of our outreach work is to initiate and support regional leadership conferences. These events generate and strengthen networks between music and dance communities that can help them thrive.* For a first-hand account, see Gaye Fifer's article on the Virginia Dance Leadership Conference in the last issue or in the online newsletter archives after July 15, www.cdss.org/newsletter-archives.html.

Our goal is to help several conferences happen each year throughout the U.S. and Canada. We are actively seeking organizers interested in running these events. We offer a variety of support to help design and run events based on the needs of the region. If you would like to create a conference for your area or know others who might be interested, I'd love to hear from you—outreach@cdss.org, 413-268-7426 x 105.

* For ideas about creating a conference, see Shawn Brenneman's suggestions soon to be on our website, www.cdss.org, under Outreach.