



Royal Scottish Country Dance Society New York Branch

SPRING 2018



**Classes**

Thursdays at 7:30 pm



**Pawling**

May 11-13, 2018

## Message from the President — Ellen Sears

In preparing dance programs recently, and looking at many dance videos, I am surprised at how often I know the dancers. There are videos from the Toronto Branch with many friends from Pawling and the TAC Summer School; videos from St. Andrew's Summer School with teachers and dancers who have been to Pawling, Pinewoods, and other workshops; videos of the New Haven Ball where I know nearly everyone in the room. The dance community is as varied as any group could be, including librarians, engineers, nurses, teachers, gardeners, cooks, rocket scientists – interesting and interested people, who like to have a good time. I encourage all to expand your dancing to include outside events, beyond Thursday night, and meet these wonderful people. Pawling Weekend, the Jeannie Carmichael Ball, Brooklyn's John Drewry Night, Westchester's Hogmanay, the New Jersey Branch Workshop and Tea Dance, and the Rerr Terr are just a few of the nearby dances where you can increase your dancing friendships. But don't neglect Thursday evenings at the Branch. We have a wonderful group continuing in the basic class and want to support them as they attain the skills and comfort to attend the balls, parties, and schools mentioned above. Lastly, thanks to all the former and current board members for their dedication to the running of the Branch. There are lots of invisible jobs performed by these dedicated people, which are unseen only because someone has taken responsibility. See you at the Branch Thursday! All the best for the New Year - shall we do the next dance?



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### In this edition

- Meet your Pawling teachers and the Pawling musicians.
- Discover the AGM.
- Learn about recent dance activities.
- Plan your upcoming dance adventures.

## The 55th Annual Pawling Weekend — 2018

Pawling Weekend 2018 is approaching fast and may feel even sooner than expected as the weekend is scheduled earlier in May this year: MAY 11-13, 2018! We will again be gathering in Copake, NY, for a weekend of Scottish Country Dancing fun.

Registration is currently open. Early bird discount is available until March 31, 2018.

Registration materials are available at:

- <https://pawlingweekend.ticketleap.com/>
- <http://www.rscdsnewyork.org/pawling/Pawling2018Application.pdf>

## Pawling 2018 Teachers

### **Ellie Briscoe (Alexandria VA, USA)**

Ellie discovered Scottish Country dancing in San Francisco, and later danced in the Boston area before moving to Alexandria.

She took her Teacher's Certificate at the TAC Summer School at St. Catharine's in 1982, where she met her husband Mel, and has taught at workshops across North America and in Japan and Cyprus.

She has tutored teacher candidates for many years, recently became an Examiner for the RSCDS, and serves on the Society's Education and Training Committee.

Her favorite aspects of SCD are the music and how it drives the covering and phrasing, the teamwork, and the way people grin when they "get it." Before she retired, Ellie was a manager in the National Geographic Society Library in Washington, DC for 25 years, and enjoys singing in a chorus, reading, and taking photographs while scuba diving.



### **Linda Henderson (San Francisco CA, USA)**

Originally from North Berwick, near Edinburgh, Linda now lives in the San Francisco Bay Area. She began Scottish Country Dancing at Primary School and is a former competitive Highland dancer. Linda grew up in a musical household; her father plays accordion and she played piano in a Scottish Country Dance Band. Linda took her RSCDS Teaching Certificate at St. Andrews. She is married, has 3 grown-up children and works in Elementary School.

Linda has taught adult and youth classes in the San Francisco Branch, and workshops throughout Europe, the United States (including Hawaii), and Canada. She has been on staff at St. Andrews Summer School, Pinewoods Dance Camp and TAC Summer School.

Linda is also an experienced ceilidh caller and can often be found leading the dances at weddings and parties in the Bay Area and beyond. It gives her great pleasure to share her heritage, and to inspire others to enjoy the music, fun and friendships made through Scottish Country Dancing.



### **William Williamson (Amisfield, Scotland)**

William learned Scottish Highland and Country Dancing as a child and sang as a chorister at St. John's Scottish Episcopal Church in his native Dumfries. William studied music in Edinburgh and worked as a music teacher.

Away from education, William was a freelance broadcaster with the local BBC radio station where he presented the early morning breakfast news programme Solway Report and produced and presented many different programmes, some for the national station including the popular Macgregor's Gathering. He has also been a guest on the BBC's Saturday night dance music programme, Take the Floor.

Scottish Country Dancing has always played a large part in William's life and he performs and teaches in many parts of the world. In 1980 he danced for the Royal Family at Holyrood Palace for the Queen Mother's 80th birthday.

William is a long-time member of the Dumfries Branch of The Royal Scottish Country Dance Society and has taught at the AGM, Winter School, Summer School and overseas.



## Pawling 2018 Musicians

### Hanneke Cassel

Effervescent and engaging, Hanneke Cassel's style fuses influences from the Isle of Skye and Cape Breton Island with Americana grooves and musical innovations, creating a cutting-edge acoustic sound that retains the integrity and spirit of the Scottish tradition. A native of Port Orford, Oregon, Hanneke started out as a Texas-style fiddler and went on to win the U.S. National Scottish Fiddle Championship. She teaches regularly at Alasdair Fraser's Valley of the Moon and Sierra Fiddle Camps, Silk Road's Global Musician Workshop, the Mike Block String Camp, and Harald Haugaard's International Fiddle School. She holds a Bachelors in Violin Performance from the Berklee College of Music and has returned there as guest clinician in their American Roots Department. Hanneke is a sought-after performer and has performed across North America, Europe, Australia and Asia.



### Dave Wiesler

Newark, DE, pianist Dave Wiesler is highly regarded for his rhythmic and innovative playing, his versatility in different styles of music, and his expansive musical imagination. A regular performer for over two decades throughout the mid-Atlantic, Dave is at home in music for contra dance, English dance, Scottish dance, waltz, Viennese and vintage ballroom, classical and romantic music, swing dance, and as a concert and choral accompanist. He has played at numerous music and dance camps and festivals across the country, as well as in Canada, Scotland, England, and France, and his playing and compositions are featured on two dozen recordings.



### Katie McNally

"The new face of Scottish fiddling in the USA" (The Living Tradition), Katie McNally has made waves in both the American folk music scene and abroad since the release of her debut album, Flourish, in 2013. Her latest project synthesizes her elegant and powerful fiddle playing with the talents of genre-crossing pianist Neil Pearlman and bluegrass phenom Shauncey Ali on viola. In addition to her busy touring schedule, she is a devoted educator whose teaching style was molded by years of attendance at fiddle camps where learning music is about joy and community and fun! This is her approach whether working with her private students, in workshops, at fiddle camps, in musical outreach programs or at Boston's Symphony Hall.



### Neil Pearlman

Pianist and mandolinist Neil Pearlman is rapidly distinguishing himself as a uniquely innovative artist in the contemporary traditional music scene. Called a tremendous pianist on BBC Radio Scotland and a force to be reckoned with by WGBH's Brian O'Donovan, Neil is recognized in many Celtic music circles for his unique approach to the piano. Rooted in traditional Cape Breton piano styles, Neil brings in ideas from many other genres and the result is an exciting new sound that remains true to its traditional roots. It was this fresh approach that led legendary Cape Breton fiddler Jerry Holland to say watching Neil's hands on the piano was like watching two spiders on crack!



## Pawling Unplugged — Pawling 2017

I like to think of myself as capable, open, and brave but really I'm an idiot. No story could illustrate this better than my first trip to the new Pawling venue. Half an hour after passing the old Sylvan Lake turnoff, it was lucky I had some carpooling dancers with me, otherwise I might have turned around, scaled the fence at Circle Lodge, and spent the weekend sitting in the Adirondack chairs by the lake. Why should this be hard? It's only a beloved dance venue minus hot water, glass in the windows, and coffee. Maybe it's Stockholm Syndrome.

On we drove. My passengers had the good sense not to ask if we were there yet. There were wide open vistas, and miles of clear blue skies against the Berkshire mountains backdrop. For a mallrat like myself, the response to nature's majesty was sheer terror. Dr. Nicole was on hand when we arrived to do some reassuring counseling and look at my bug bite. Having achieved the relative security of the camp, and wary of the new kitchen, I felt compelled to lay in extra supplies. This is particularly pathetic in light of my weighing 250. I could have

gone six months without food but I got directions to the closest supermarket. By suburban standards it was four or five towns away. By Jersey standards it was out of state. My GPS lost signal during the trip but I made it there and back. It was only 4 turns.

My room was too clean, the water too hot. We had heat and or air conditioning at the touch of a button. The hardest thing to cope with initially though was the loss of cell signal. It was still early Resistance time and I jumped every time the phone buzzed to see what the next march would be against. I'm labeling these paragraphs "Pawling Unplugged" because by Sunday AM, when I connected to the wireless at breakfast, I couldn't remember why I wanted to do that. After a great Friday and Saturday of parties, dances, workshops, and friends, I couldn't have cared less about my email or the news. My world was Scottish Country Dance and I was happy. Can't wait to get back.

—Theresa Forbes

*"My world was Scottish Country Dance and I was happy."*



## RSCDS AGM

**Chris and I** were in the UK for the autumn this year and were able to go up to the city of Perth in Scotland for the RSCDS Annual General Meeting which was held on Saturday 4th November. These meetings have a reputation for lasting over 3 hours, but this year, much to everyone's delight, it was over in 45 minutes due to a different format over the weekend. Open forums were held on Saturday morning where reports and updates from the various committees were given, which kept the AGM agenda to a manageable length. The only motion, which was not contentious, was to keep the annual membership subscription for next year (2018-2019) at £20, so this went through without any difficulty!

The results of the elections to the various RSCDS committees are announced at the AGM and this year Deborah Leary was elected to the RSCDS Education and Training Committee and I was elected onto the RSCDS Management Board. Both posts are for three years. So if you have any issues with or suggestions for the RSCDS let us know – we're there (by a video link to meetings) to represent you!

There was an open teaching conference held on the Friday that Chris and I both attended and I outlined a proposal from the Education and Training Committee for a new teaching qualification that will better prepare our dancers to teach in the real world with mixed ability classes and an emphasis on fun rather than footwork. It's a



new and challenging idea that is still being drafted and many conference attendees offered comments and suggestions that are being incorporated into a final proposal. During the weekend there were also archive displays, RSCDS shop stalls, a talk on Scottish dance music, two dance classes on Saturday and Sunday mornings with live music, a display of dancing in the town on Saturday morning, and a Civic Reception with presentations before the

ball. Needless to say we didn't get to everything!

A highlight of the weekend was dancing with 500 or more dancers from all over the world in the main arena in the Bell's Sports Centre on Friday and Saturday evenings. All the dances were recapped. Friday night's music was provided by Scott Band and his Scottish Dance band and Saturday night's formal ball was danced to the music of Colin Dewar and his band. The music was lively and danced in wide sets (it's a very big hall – see photo) with everyone in their formal attire. Videos of the event will soon be appearing on the HQ website and YouTube. There was, for the first time this year, an alternative ceilidh held on the Friday night that attracted over 60 dancers, many of whom would otherwise not have attended the event. Hopefully some will be curious about the RSCDS-style dancing happening in an adjacent hall and check out a local group – perhaps something we could try in New York?

—Sue Ronald

*“...and an emphasis on fun...”*

### Burns Night 2018

On January 25, 2018, we welcomed more than 120 people at our Burns Night celebration. A fun night of dancing, performance, neeps, tatties, and haggis was enjoyed by all. Special thanks to Isabelle Smith, Ellen Sears, and Audrey Paul for organizing the event and to Wendy Pally for your expertise. Thank you to all who contributed!



### Puerto Rican Hurricane Relief Fundraiser

On November 11, 2017, Scotia Dancers and the New York Branch of the RSCDS co-sponsored an evening dance at the Metro Baptist Church, the proceeds of which were donated to Oxfam USA Puerto Rico relief fund. Forty-seven people attended. Charlotte Holton made the first half of the program newcomer friendly and the new folks who attended happily danced. The second half of the evening was more challenging for experienced dancers. Mary Gray arranged for the hall, with a discounted rate for a Saturday, ran the auction, and managed other details ensuring success. Lorrie Rosario brought flags for decorating the hall and numerous family members to support the event. Nadezda Borisova and Jack Cole dealt with the financial end of things. Several teachers and advanced dancers did the talk throughs including Keira Hartstein, Marc Hartstein, and Vivian Anapol. Many folks brought refreshments.

However, all of this was only part of the evening's success. The event was financially successful thanks to the contributions not only of those who attended, but even of those who weren't able to attend. Seventy-one dancers contributed, including not only dancers from Scotia and the Branch, but folks who dance in Westchester, Connecticut, and New Jersey. To all who supported the event a very grateful thank you for the \$1500 profit we were able to send to Oxfam USA earmarked for Puerto Rican hurricane relief.

—Vivian Anapol,

Chairperson, Puerto Rican Hurricane Relief Fundraiser



## RSCDS Dancing Achievement Award

### Jeannie Carmichael Ball

In 2017 the Jeannie Carmichael Ball and Brunch was held in a new venue — Edith Macy Conference Center in Briarcliff Manor — and in a different month — October (instead of November). As if that was not enough newness, this was the first RSCDS NY event to use online ticket purchasing! Via Ticketleap, many tickets were purchased.

All attendees had a wonderful time. The band — Liz Donaldson and David Knight — was exceptional. The food was delicious. There was a fire in the fireplace as well as a bonfire outdoors. The weather, fortunately, was good. The after party was held in the dormitory lobby with many attendees. All in all, the event went well. It is a fine way for me to end my tenure as Co-chair. This was my third JC Ball & Brunch as lead Co-chair. I had one year as Co-chair with Wendy Pally, making four years of service. If anyone is interested in being lead Co-chair for 2018, please let Ellen Sears know. I have promised her that I would assist the new lead Co-chair. I have learned much from this experience. I am proud to have served you all.

—Maureen Ocasio



**Dancing in New York**, and in branches and groups in many places, has changed a lot in the last fifty years. There was a time when the average dancer was considerably younger than is now the case, and classes were high energy and many dancers were eager to learn the fine points of technique. Now, however, we have more social classes — still fun, still good exercise, still a mental challenge, and still offering that essential element of good social contact, but also recognizing that not everyone aspires to become a dancer of performance standard, with 90 degree turnout, pointed toes, etc. Consequently, the teachers have a challenge to meet the needs of the varied types of dancer we now find in our classes.

How can we offer something for everyone? The fun, exercise, and mental challenges are available to all by careful choice from the ever-growing number of new and innovative dances being devised all over the world, and the stimulating music from the many and varied bands and musicians playing today. We should not forget the tried and true old favourites too. The social contact remains the same as always with informal chatter before and after sessions, during “tea” and the occasional trip to the pub and at special events. The challenge comes, however, when we have class members who do really want to work on their three-beat pas de basques, their strathspey pull-through, etc. We want to help and encourage them, but not alienate those who come mostly for all the other aspects of our social dancing.

We have had an idea for some time that we would like to start an advanced technique class and to focus our teaching around the syllabus for the newly created RSCDS Dancing Achievement Award (DAA). This is a dancing exam that has been offered by the RSCDS in the last two or three years and is becoming popular worldwide. It can be taken at three levels — Intermediate, Advanced, and Very Advanced. It is similar to Unit 2 of the exam to obtain the RSCDS teaching certificate but in some ways is more demanding than that exam because in addition to learning the prescribed dances the dancers are expected to know a wide range of formations and be able to dance them without any reminder.

A major challenge for starting any group activity in Manhattan is finding an affordable venue and we were very fortunate to have access to a room in a central location. It involves moving chairs and carpets, the floor is a little hard, and the room rather narrow with a limited size that will only accommodate two longwise sets — but it’s free! We invited a number of dancers from the NY Branch, Scotia, and the NJ Branch who we thought might be interested in improving their dancing technique. We explained that we needed

real commitment to attend twice a month and to be ready to work energetically on the fine points of RSCDS-style Scottish dancing. We were rather surprised, and happy, when we had 20 enthusiastic dancers who were prepared to commit to the class.

We began biweekly classes last September and by Christmas had introduced all the DAA Advanced level dances (see <http://my.strathspey.org/dd/list/2691/>) and, with Ellen Sears’s help, had worked a lot on dancing technique. Half of the class decided they would actually like to take the DAA exam and on the 24th June they were examined and all passed. The successful candidates were Daniel Potter, Debbie Saunders, Emily Russell, Margaret MacKenzie, Mary Gray, Nicole Wimberger, Sarah Stefanski, Shelby Peak, Sue Trapp, and Wang. We are very grateful to Debbie Saunders, who handled the complex administrative job of liaising with RSCDS headquarters, and Debbie and Ken also hosted our two examiners.

The advanced technique classes are continuing and in our absence the group has organized their own sessions and begun work on pieces that the class members can learn for demonstrations. We hope to continue the class in 2018. Anyone who would like to make progress with their own dancing technique and is happy to work less on social dancing than our regular classes is welcome to contact us. As we have already mentioned the number of dancers our room can accommodate is limited and we are restricting the size of the class accordingly.

Independent of the technique class, we are planning to begin a class to train for the RSCDS teaching certificate. Anyone who is interested can check out the RSCDS website (<https://www.rscds.org/article/teaching-certificate-2>) to learn more. And please let us know if you would be interested in more information.

Happy dancing ,everyone!

— Sue and Chris

## Upcoming Events

### **April 14, 2018**

Rerr Terr, Ho-Ho-Kus, NJ  
<http://www.rscds-nj.org/>

### **April 28, 2018**

Kilts and Ghillies Tea Dance, Southbury, CT  
<http://www.nhrscds.com/kilts-and-ghillies-tea-dance/>

### **May 11-13, 2018**

55th Annual Pawling Weekend, New York Branch, Berkshire Hills, Copake, NY  
<https://pawlingweekend.ticketleap.com/>  
<http://www.rscdsnewyork.org/pawling/Pawling2018Application.pdf>

### **May 18-20, 2018**

Boston Highland Ball, Melrose, MA  
<http://www.rscdsboston.org/event-highland-ball.html>

### **May 26-27, 2018**

Memorial Day Weekend Party, Belfast and Bucksport, ME  
Contact Gayle Koyanagi at [gkoyanagi20@gmail.com](mailto:gkoyanagi20@gmail.com)

### **July 2-6 2018:** English-Scottish-Contra, Pinewoods, MA

<http://rscdsboston.org/pinewoods.html>

### **July 6-14, 2018:** Scottish Session I and II, Pinewoods, MA

<http://rscdsboston.org/pinewoods.html>

### **July 29-August 5, 2018**

TAC Summer School 2018, Twin Cities, MN  
<https://www.tac-rscds.org/index.php/tac-summer-school>

### **Area classes:**

New York Branch, Thursdays, <http://www.rscdsnewyork.org/classes.html>

Scotia Dancers, Mondays, <http://www.scotiadancers.org>

New Jersey Branch, various days/locations, <http://www.rscds-nj.org/>

Brooklyn class, Tuesdays, <http://www.rscdsnewyork.org/brooklyn.html>

Westchester, Wednesdays, <http://www.rscdsnewyork.org/westchester.html>



## Dancing at the Branch

Bring your friends!

***Basic Class  
Registration Opened  
February 15, 2018!!!!***

Our current series of classes started February 15, 2018, and ends April 12, 2018.

The basic class is \$50 and is held as a progressive series.

Beginners must be registered by the third week to participate.

Class is held on Thursdays, beginning at 7:30 pm.

### **Location:**

Community Center of  
St. Bartholomew's  
Episcopal Church,  
109 East 50th Street,  
NY, NY 10022

### **For more information:**

<http://www.rscdsnewyork.org/classes.html>

## Trivia

The New York Branch was founded in 1950 and is the second oldest Branch of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society in the United States.

The first Pawling Weekend was held in 1963 at Holiday Hills in Pawling, New York.

Jeannie Carmichael was a mathematician who worked in space rocketry at the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory in Cambridge.

## Letter From the Editor

**As many of you know**, I moved to northern Maine at the end of June. Prior to accepting the job that brought me here, I knew no one in the area. However, through dance events I was introduced to several of the Belfast and Blue Hill dancers, the groups nearest where I would be living and working.

At the time of my move, I'd lived in NYC for 18 years, but having grown up in the relatively rural Midwest I expected to be able to adjust fairly quickly to the lifestyle. However, I was not prepared for the cultural differences of rural Maine life.

In New York, I had grown accustomed to waking as late as 7am and being out at dance events regularly until fairly late. In Maine, people wake very early and the rare evening events are over early, too.

Despite the early hours, I've still gotten lost in the middle of a 1.5 hour drive to dance after work, in the dark, on barely paved unlit roads, with random deer and raccoons crossing unexpectedly, in an area of trees and few houses, with no GPS signal or even radio reception. Thankfully, I had some Scottish Country Dance music saved on my phone with which I comforted myself, knowing I was lost, as I drove deeper into the isolated dark depths before reaching an area of cell service where I could call local dancers

for directions. Apparently the Google Maps destination pointer is often a bit off in this part of the world, cell/GPS reception is spotty, and the routes offered are...not the best to follow. I must buy paper maps and remind myself how to use them, I suppose.

I am grateful that the dance groups here in Maine have taken me under their wing. I've learned the importance of long johns and good winter boots, wearing bright orange in the fall, and snow tires on the car. I've learned how to survive by properly hitting a moose should I encounter one I cannot avoid on the road. I have not had this pleasure yet. The dancers have helped me find fresh produce, wider varieties of cheese, some international food options, and decent coffee -- my basics that are not easily found if you don't know where to look up here. Over the years, many of you in the New York and New Jersey Branches have become good friends and like family to me. I've experienced such joy and hygge in my time with you. With this move, I've also learned, like perhaps many of you have over the years, the great value of the extended Scottish Country Dance community we have available.

—Nicole

RSCDS New York

<http://www.rscdsnewyork.org/>  
Email: [contact@rscdsnewyork.org](mailto:contact@rscdsnewyork.org)  
Phone: 212-849-8282

## Announcements

### Joan Treble Fund

*Scholarship assistance is available for Pawling Weekend.*

*Applicants must be a RSCDS member committed to Scottish Country Dancing in the New York Area.*

Further details, requirements, and the application are available through the NY Branch website at:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeClg5daHogo-i69oR8bgEipK3iLfl4y-myyLuJ8aE68GZT7w/viewform>



RSCDS NEW YORK