

**RSCDS Branch: Madison Scottish Country Dancers (Wisconsin, USA)**

**Number of years established as a branch: 21**

**Annual Report (July 2023 - June 2024)**

**Respectfully submitted by Corinna Gries, Secretary**

Madison Scottish Country Dancers (MSCD) has had yet another event-filled year. We often had about 20 or more enthusiastic dancers showing up for our weekly Sunday dance sessions.

**Membership:** Our official membership fluctuated downward slightly from past years to 32 this reporting period.

**MSCR Classes:** The Beginner Scottish Country Dance classes taught through the Madison School and Community Recreation program continue to be a great success and are generally fully booked. A 'try it' evening precedes the official class and was well attended. A graduation party with live music followed the class during regular Sunday evening dancing. Several participants from the Fall and Winter sessions have joined up and have been regularly dancing at our Sunday evening classes. Thanks to Nancy McClements and Janice Lacock for providing enthusiastic and expert instruction and Bethany Wolkoff and Isabella Palange for extra support to beginning dancers.

**Teachers:** Between the Madison and Milwaukee branches we are very lucky to have several amazing teachers, who are regularly traveling to provide excellent instruction to both groups, taking on new and challenging dances and preparing us well for upcoming events. In October many of the long-time dancers celebrated Chuck Snowdon's life, a long-time member and excellent teacher, who passed away last year. We contributed many photos and Nancy McClements spoke about Chuck's Scottish country dance life. Earlier we devoted a Sunday night's class to some of Chuck's favorite dances.

**Dance Parties and Other Events:** On December 2nd we held our annual Winter Dance Party at the Wil-Mar Neighborhood Center. We had live music provided by Dave and Liam Mullen and a potluck dinner afterwards. On January 21 we hosted a family dance party introducing Scottish country dancing to the next generation of dancers. In April a large group of us attended a fabulous concert at the Bur Oak by Alasdair Fraser and Natalie Haas, the musicians from our 40th annual ball. During the summer months we hosted four Socials on Sunday evenings. Live music was provided by Dave Mullen and dancing was followed by potluck, ice cream, and other activities.

**St. Andrew's Society of Madison:** Our connection with the St. Andrew's Society has been enhanced by having a member of their board on our board. Their Burns dinner in January has become an annual event and dancers from the MSCD performed and led several audience participation dances. The Society also held two well-attended Ceilidh dances. The latter, The Tartan Day Ceilidh, featured the Lochanside Ceilidh Band at a local watering hole in April. Lochanside includes our musicians Dave Mullen and Andy Seevers.

**Annual Ball:** Our big event every year is our ball weekend in March in the beautiful Great Hall in the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Memorial Union. This year the 44th annual ball's theme was 'combining the new and the old!' (As the camp song goes, "one is silver and

the other gold.”) The evening before the ball we hosted a piano and fiddle (and musical saw!) concert by Andy Imbrie and Caroline McCaskey from the San Francisco Bay area’s Reel of Seven. Adorable little Highland dance students added to the evening by performing dances mid-concert. Dave Mullen, our resident fiddler, joined Caroline and Andy for a lively set of tunes at the ball, which was preceded by toasts, dinner and a grand march for which Andy Servers provided the piping. After an evening of delightful dancing, a party was held at a member’s home (where the dancing continued!), as was a Sunday morning brunch. A total of 82 attendees (77 dancers) from several states attended the ball, including several new dancers from the MSCR class. Another highlight of the ball was a very successful silent auction, which contributed greatly to our scholarship fund.

**Midwest Scottish Weekend:** In June of 2024, the Chicago, Madison, and Milwaukee Scottish Country Dance Groups hosted the 13th annual Midwest Scottish Weekend at the Wayland Academy in Beaver Dam, Wisconsin. About 60 dancers joined us for a fun-filled weekend of dance, instruction, great food, ceilidh acts, and camaraderie. Beautiful music for the dances and classes was provided by Elke Baker, Liz Donaldson, and Ralph Gordon. Dance instruction was provided by Arthur McNair and Jennifer Reiner.

**National and International Scottish Dance Workshops:** Members of the MSCD are increasingly traveling to other national and international Scottish dance workshops. A sizable contingent from Madison and Milwaukee attended the Teacher’s Association of Canada’s summer school in Halifax. Some members traveled out of state for balls and workshops to learn from new teachers and expand their repertoire of dances and friends.

**Scholarships:** The MSCD provides generous scholarships for travel to and registration at various events. The application procedure was formalized with a scholarship request form.

**We look forward to another full and fun year of dancing together!**



**Dancers at the after-ball party at Ann’s**