



Minutes of the Folkdance Federation of California, South Council Meeting on June 22, 2025

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m.

In Attendance:

OFFICERS - President: Diane Baker; Vice President: Greg Solloway; Secretary: Margaret Lange; Treasurer: Mindy Belli; Insurance Chair: Julith Neff; Historian: Wen-Li Chiang; Sergeant-at-Arms: Terry Gucwa; Parliamentarian: Marshal Cates.

STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRS - Budget & Finance: Marshall Cates; Fall Camp: Terry Gucwa. Folk Dance *Scene*: Michael Wright. Scholarship: Carol Smith. Statewide: Margaret Lange.

PAST PRESIDENTS- Marshall Cates.

CLUB DELEGATES - Bay Osos Dancers: Margaret Lange; Cerritos Folk Dancers: Sue Chen; International Folk Dancers of Laguna Woods: Terry Gucwa; Laguna International Dancers: Greg Solloway; Narodni International Folkdancers: Julith Neff; Pasadena Co-op: Marshall Cates; San Diego Folk Dance Center: Mary Marshall; Ventura International Folk Dancers: Carol Smith; Vintage Israel: Jim Rothman.

GUESTS - Jan Rayman and Marc Rayman.

Approval of minutes from February 16, 2024. The minutes were approved as written.

ELECTED OFFICER REPORTS

President Diane Baker

President Baker reported as follows:

The successful events this spring, such as the Statewide Festival, generated a positive force for the Federation. A new administration will add to the momentum. She thanked officers, committee chairs, delegates, and members. She shared a favorite quote by Francis Willard: “The world is wide! I will not waste my life in friction when it could be turned into momentum.” Let’s continue to combine our skills, ideas, and labor to achieve Federation goals. **MOMENTUM WILL CARRY IT!**

Visiting dancers to the Big Island of Hawaii are invited to guest teach. The folkdance club there has lost its teacher. Anyone who is going to the Big Island and is willing to show the group some dances, please get in touch with Loren Brown at 808-990-3026.

Michael Wright is the new editor of *Scene*. Photographs, articles, and event announcements may be sent to Michael Wright, *Scene* Editor, at michael@theresultsgroup.com, 707-484-4022.

Membership

Three clubs have applied for Associate Membership: Nevenka Women’s Chorus, Claremont Israeli Folk Dance, and the Culver City Daytime Folk Dancers. The membership required council approval.

Neff moved to approve their membership. Mary Marshall seconded. Associate Membership of the three clubs was approved.

Discussion: Associate Membership doesn’t qualify the club to receive Federation insurance or scholarships. Webmaster Dick Oakes wants the Associate Membership Application form for organizations to include more details so more information can be included on the webpage for the associate organizations, such as type of dancing, skill level, fee, participation by children, seniors, etc., who is the teacher or leader, whether the organization is open dancing or performing group. Even though Associate clubs aren’t Federation



Member Clubs, the added information would be instructive to website visitors looking for clubs in their areas.

Vice President Greg Solloway

Vice President Solloway reported as follows:

We have five upcoming federation-sponsored events. These are:

1. Ojai Day of Dance, September 27, 2025 (previously approved)
2. Fall Camp Oct. 31 – Nov. 2, 2025 (previously approved)
3. Multicultural Society of Irvine, Nov. 5, 2025, folkdance presentation with band. This event is part of the outreach activities. Typically, 80 to 100 people attend, and it is a monthly event.
4. Lunar New Year Festival, February 21, 2026
5. Cerritos Anniversary Festival, May 16, 2026

Solloway asked for a motion to approve Nos. 3, 4, and 5 above. Gucwa moved to approve all three. Neff seconded. None were opposed. The motion carried.

Treasurer Mindy Belli

See appended narrative report. Treasurer Belli reported as follows:

The Federation incurred a total of \$15,000 in expenses. For the Statewide Festival, \$10,000 seed money plus an additional \$4,000 was transferred, but we received back all but \$1,400. For Fall Camp, \$6,000 was sent to the Fall Camp account to keep them afloat. Smaller expenses included \$1,100 for festival support to the Cerritos Anniversary festival and the Ojai Day of Dance. We will be charging a \$10 admission fee for Ojai this year. The outreach committee received \$1,900. The *Scene* subsidy was \$2,500. Scholarship cost was \$2,000. The Visiting Master Teachers fund was inactive.

Income was \$2,700, which was generated from club renewals, a grant earned by Toti O'Brien, associate member dues, and donations.

Our savings account received a big boost via a donation of \$40,000 from the estate of the late Henry Rasof, who established the gift to show his appreciation to the San Pedro dancers who were supportive of his disabled mother by bringing her to dances.

The bank balance is \$102,000. As soon as the Statewide account is closed, that balance of \$12,500 will be added to the bank balance.

Discussion: Mary Marshall of the San Diego Folk Dance Center Club confirmed that they will hold the Statewide Dance Festival in 2027.

APPOINTED OFFICERS' REPORTS

Insurance Chairperson, Julith Neff

Insurance Chairperson Neff said that there was nothing new to report.

Sergeant-at-Arms, Terry Gucwa

A quorum was met.

STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORTS

Fall Camp, Terry Gucwa

Fall Camp will take place from October 31 – November 2, 2025 at the Brandeis University Campus near Simi Valley.

Fall Camp Chair Gucwa reported as follows:

Some of the money contributed by Henry Rasof will be used to offset the cost of camp in lieu of increasing the cost of registration. The registration form has been produced and has been placed on the Fall Camp



website. The federation waiver is also included. Brandeis requires its own waiver, which is not yet available. A note will be added to the registration form to let people know that they will need to sign that waiver as soon as it is available. An initial email has been drafted and will be sent out after today's meeting. It will be sent to approximately 800 people.

Fall Camp 2025 will feature one master teacher, Catherine Rudin. Catherine will present an eclectic mix of forgotten classics and recently introduced captivating dances. She will give particular attention to styling details that make a dance specific to a time and place. She has danced for more than five decades, enjoying a wide variety of styles and traditions. She has both family and linguistic research ties to the Balkans, especially Bulgaria. Balkan music and dance are her roots, but she loves and participates in other traditions as well. Catherine has extensive teaching experience. Teaching will be supplemented by local teachers who will share dances learned from summer camps, and by several of our own California-based dance teachers.

Fall Camp is expensive to produce: there will be \$6,000 in expenses, \$1,900 in teacher costs, plus stipends for other teachers. Also, last year, everyone paid the same amount, no matter the occupancy type. This year, the room costs will be staggered by occupancy, so campers can save money if they room with someone. For additional savings, work stipends are planned.

The Brandies event coordinator indicated that he is okay with us holding Happy Hour, as long as we clean up after ourselves.

Discussion: President Baker requested that the Federation fund a grant for Fall Camp attendance for a person who doesn't qualify for a scholarship, in light of all the service this person has given to folk dance outreach and activities. Finance Chair Cates noted that the grant should be made through the Special Funds Project by a vote of officers. Baker agreed to issue a request to vote via email.

Finance, Marshall Cates

Finance Chair Cates reported as follows:

The budget has an \$11,000 deficit. There is money for Fall Camp, *Scene*, and the Visiting Master Teachers program. To help offset, we will charge admission for the Ojai Day of Dance and for the Springfest in Somis. Eventually, we will need to face the music. The reason we're not in that danger now is due to the Rasof donation.

Discussion:

President Baker noted that the Finance Committee has a new member. Kelly O'Neil has joined. She also noted that the 2025-2026 budget has not yet been submitted to the Council.

Scholarships, Carol Smith

Carol Smith experienced technical difficulties so President Baker reported as follows:

Recipients for the 2025 scholarships are Chin Yu and Marcella Larson. They will each receive \$655 to attend Stockton Folk Dance Camp.

Scene, Michael Wright

Michael Wright, the new editor of *Scene*, noted that he was involved with the June/July issue as joint editor, and afterwards, they did the handoff. He said they are about to head into producing the August issue. President Baker offered to send emails to the delegates reinforcing the deadline of the 10th of July.

Note: photographs, articles, and events may be sent to Michael Wright, *Scene* Editor, michael@theresultsgroup.com, 707-484-4022.



Visiting Master Teachers, Jay Michtom

Jay Michtom was not in attendance. President Baker noted that Iliana Bozhanova will be coming to teach in 2026. There is no scheduled date yet. Note: *After the meeting, Baker was notified that Iliana's trip will be postponed until 2027.*

AD HOC COMMITTEE REPORTS

Statewide 2025, Co-Chairs Billy Burke and Margaret Lange

President Baker congratulated Margaret Lange and Billy Burke for producing an outstanding Statewide Festival. Lange reported about the festival as follows:

Attendance

Total attendees: 126. Attendees who preregistered: 66. First tier: 48. Second tier: 10. After deadline: 6. Attendees who registered at the door: 2. Attendees whose registration was complimentary due to legacy status, volunteer, teacher and assistant, and entertainment roles, or guests: 60. Bay Osos Hosts: 19. Teachers and assistants: 5. Guests: 4. Performers (Sat. dance, Sun. closing ceremony): 16. Staff (videographer, DJ, technician): 3. Bands: 11. Contra Caller: 1. Volunteer for decorations and crafts: 1. Registrants refunded: 5, due to illness, accident, family emergency, and waiver dispute.

Finances

Total income: \$13,980
Total expense: \$15,493
Balance: \$-1,513

Notes:

Donations of money during pre-registration: \$1,098

Donations in-kind as listed below: \$1,898

Materials: Paper goods; snacks; home-baked items, flowers, restaurant equipment, wine (Costco, Trader Joe's, Kiki's Kitchen, Bay Osos host club, Carbone Wines). Services: Big Rock band, contra caller, closing ceremony musician, art design. Misc.: Shipping costs of sound equipment (\$300 donated by Adony Benaris).

If in-kind donations are included as unrealized expenses, the balance of the costs to produce Statewide 2025 was: \$-3,411.

Details

Greatest number of people on the dance floor: approximately 90 dancers and 6 band members on Saturday night. Dancers formed two circles and were comfortable with the space in the hall, which measured 38 by 50. Other activities: culture talk with DANA Adobe president, dance performance by Solvang dancers, Happy Hour with entertainment by Big Rock Band, puzzle tables, craft table, outdoor cornhole game.

Meals:

Dinner attendance Saturday: 62. Box lunch attendance Sunday: 29.

Comped meals (teacher/assistants, house band Chubritza, happy hour band Big Rock B partial, tech partial, closing ceremony bagpiper, contra caller/guest: \$722. Note: Contra caller, Big Rock band, and bagpiper performed gratis.

Refreshments:

Ample refreshments were provided throughout the festival. Responses from attendees indicated that this was much appreciated. Almost all refreshments were donated (see in-kind donations).



Responses from Attendees

“Really fun, Thanks! Beautiful event and town.” “It was a perfect event, with everything exactly as it should have been.” “Thank you for an amazing festival.” “You all did a great job! The best Statewide I've attended recently!” “Thank you so much for putting together such a fantastic event! It was a blast.” “Charmed.” “Free wine!”

Unexpected Occurrences

Due to contamination of water at the source reservoir, an emergency alert was received on Thursday before the festival with an order to boil water. The situation was resolved by Saturday afternoon. On Saturday night, a dancer fell and was transported via ambulance to a local hospital for tests. She was released around midnight.

Outreach Results

Sunday afternoon's community dance was well-attended by the general public and festival dancers, with approximately 30 people in attendance. Activities included two Maypoles plus beginning dances. Local TV came to cover the event. Some attendees asked when the next one will be scheduled. In response, the Bay Osos Dancers are considering holding more community dances throughout the area.

Discussion: President Baker noted that Margaret wrote a summary of the festival that includes lessons learned and logistics and passed it along to the Northern Cal. Federation and Federation South. Mary Marshall of the San Diego club, who will host Statewide 2027, asked Margaret to please consult with her on the 2027 Statewide and send the summary to her. Margaret agreed.

Lange noted that she updated the list of waivers to reflect new waivers signed at Statewide, and those waivers were sent to Treasurer Belli.

Outreach Committee, Diane Baker:

Baker reported as follows:

The Outreach Committee met on June 17, 2025, to review events sponsored during the spring of 2025 and to select initiatives to pursue for the 2025-26 period. Baker defined the purpose of the outreach committee:

- Increase participation in recreational folk dancing
- Increase participation in Federation clubs
- Increase awareness of the benefits of recreational folk dancing in school and community settings
- Foster practice of recreational folk dancing in school settings
- Establish new recreational folk dance clubs within SoCal

Summary of Sponsored Events

Pasadena Art Night, Folk Dancing Presentation, October 2024 and March 2025

The presentation was led by Toti O'Brien, who did a fabulous job. She can no longer be the lead for the initiative. The committee is seeking a leader in Pasadena Co-op to continue the successful initiative. Toti has prepared a “toolkit” including documents, timelines, guidelines, videos/photos to apply, set up the welcome table, talk, demo, and audience participation. The toolkit has been turned over to the Co-Op's publicity chair, Kate Cook.

Nevenka Concert & Dance Party, May 10, 2025

The event was a huge success. Younger folks who had no folk dance background discovered they enjoyed the activity and didn't really mind dancing with us old people. The committee wants to support the next



concert and dance party. They will support with \$750 and publicize throughout the folk dance community. Foshay Lodge in Culver City was a central location. Guest Marc Rayman noted that two young people who attended the event later came to his dance group and are now committed members.

Fifth Friday Dance Parties at Wellness Center in the La Cañada area, June 8, 2025

Ling O'Connor arranged for a free community folk dance event (concert, gentle instruction & dancing). The participants expressed a desire to repeat the activity once or twice in the coming year. Some may attend Pasadena Co-op as a result of the dance party. The outreach committee will assist with the facility rental and mileage for the Fifth Friday band. Fifth Friday is also in negotiation with the Los Angeles Arboretum to provide a similar event to the public in the Arboretum.

Conejo Arts Jubilee, June 28, 2025

On June 28, 2025, the Conejo Valley folk dancers will offer family folk dancing as part of the Conejo Arts Jubilee sponsored by the Arts Council of Conejo Valley. The event is free and is from 1-1:45 p.m. at the Hillcrest Center for the Arts, 403 West Hillcrest Drive in Thousand Oaks.

Irvine Healthy Living Expo, October 4, 2025

The Outreach committee applied for a booth and a 30-minute demonstration slot, with audience participation. Laguna International has done similar presentations. The committee wants to participate in additional health fairs that are located near folk dance clubs. Baker requested that council members scout your community calendars and report any possible health fair opportunities to the committee.

Irvine Multicultural Assembly, November 5, 2025

The goal is to generate more attendance for Laguna International and the International Folk Dance Club at Laguna Woods, and possibly to establish a folk dance club in Irvine. The entire evening's program will be of folk dancing. There will be live music, an introductory talk, dance performance/demo, audience participation including brief instruction, refreshments, and ethnic decorations, e.g., dolls, costumes, instruments, posters, books. Eighty to 100 people are expected. The outreach committee will pay for refreshments and an honorarium to the band. All folk dancers who live nearby are invited to attend and support this outreach effort initiated by Greg Solloway.

Eagle Rock Public Library Events, summer of 2025

The Fifth Friday band has arranged to play a concert of Bulgarian & Macedonian tunes, followed by instruction and audience interaction at the library this summer. Negotiations are underway to feature music of other cultures at subsequent folk dance events in the library.

Conejo Valley Adult Education in September

Paula Davis will teach a four-week "mini session" folk dance class through Conejo Valley Adult Education in September.

Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes, at Cal State University, Long Beach

Baker continues to teach folk dance classes to "newbies" and "returnees" through OLLI at Cal State University, Long Beach.



Initiatives in Support of Outreach Mission

- The committee is investigating starting a club at the Art Center in Great Park or the Irvine Senior Center.
- Establish new dance clubs for younger participants in SoCal. Younger folks want their own clubs and to socialize with people of their own generation, not with senior citizens. The committee is researching the possibility of a club that meets in the evenings in Los Angeles and another club at Chapman University.
- Establish new dance clubs at senior centers, and other venues such as parks and recreation departments, and adult education centers in SoCal.
- Continue to introduce the value of folk dance to classroom teachers. The previous teacher training event in March with Billy Burke was successful, but one of the keys to its success was having a personal contact with the LA Unified and Claremont School Districts. The committee will support another teacher training in a different geographical area of SoCal only if a connection with school administrators is established first. Critical factors for successful teacher participation are making the training free for attendees, offering continuing education or salary credits, and having administrative support.
- Participate in community festivals whenever opportunity arises, such as the Conejo Arts Jubilee.
- If there is a community event in your neighborhood or community that would be appropriate for including folk dancing, please sign up! The Outreach Committee will assist with the application fee, organizing the program, etc.
- The committee will assist dancers who want to start a folk dance club in their neighborhood center.
- Baker asked for any volunteers to join the outreach committee and asked that we recruit members from among our clubs' dancers.

Historian, Wen-Li Chiang

Wen-Li Chiang with Sue Chen reported as follows:

The Cerritos 16th Anniversary Festival was on May 15th and the Lunar New Year Festival was on February 18th. Over 90 people attended the anniversary festival. Wen-Li thanked the Federation and participants for supporting their festivals. He noted that for the upcoming Lunar New Year festival, the teacher has not been decided yet.

Sue said that she holds a beginning dancers' class and an additional class for dancers to catch up. These take place during the day at their house.

It was noted that for planning into 2027, the Anniversary Festival date should not conflict with the date of the 2027 Statewide Festival.



OLD BUSINESS

Elections

President - Greg Solloway

Vice President - Chin Yu

Treasurer - Mindy Belli

Secretary - Margaret Lange

Membership - Amy Dale (assisted by Bob Altman for digital distribution)

President Baker asked for nominations from the floor. Seeing none, she asked Secretary Lange to call for a white ballot and that the slate of officers be elected. Secretary Lange cast a white ballot. **The officers listed above were elected and installed.**

NEW BUSINESS

1. Proposal to replace the fee for Associate Individual Memberships with a donation request.

Treasurer Belli stated that processing the existing \$10 fee for individual associate memberships is problematic. She suggested that the membership be on a donation basis. President Baker noted that this would entail a change in the bylaws. Finance Chair Cates suggested raising the fee to \$25. The logistics of handling applications and checks were also discussed.

Conclusion: The Finance Committee will consider increasing the cost of individual associate memberships. The membership chairperson will receive the actual applications and pass the checks to the treasurer. This change will be noted on the new 2026 form, which will go out in September.

2. Proposal to revise the standing rules so individuals are eligible for scholarships every three years (a two-year interval).

The interval between eligibility for scholarships is currently every four years (a three-year interval). President Baker proposed to revise the eligibility interval by a standing rule vote. She noted that with the decrease in both dancers and the number of people applying for scholarships, and the fact that people who are applying for scholarships are often doing more work voluntarily in support of the Federation, that an increase in the frequency of scholarship awards is warranted.

Terry Guwra made the motion to change the standing rules to allow one scholarship every three years. The motion was seconded by Greg Solloway. None were opposed, and the motion passed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Marshal Cates announced that early in the year, after the Eaton fire, his dance group moved to the Westminster Presbyterian Church. They'll be moving to a bigger location starting July 4th to Saint James Episcopal Church in South Pasadena.

Upcoming Events

- Sans Frontières plays Laguna International Summer Dance Party 7-9-25
- Bill Cope & Orkestar Unbound plays summer birthday party at Friday Night L.I.F.E. on 7-18-25, free admission
- Bob & Michelle Anniversary Dance Party & potluck meal 8-3-25, Laguna Woods



MEETING DETAILS

The next meeting was set for Sunday, September 7, 2025, at 9:30 a.m., virtual via Zoom.
The meeting was adjourned at 11:15 a.m.

Appended Treasurer's report follows.

Margaret Lange

August 7, 2025

Secretary
Folkdance Federation of California, South

Date Submitted

September 7, 2025

Date of Approval