A Concise History of the Folklore Society of Greater Washington

by Dean Clamons

This history is based on a not quite complete collection of FSGW Newsletters. The first Newsletter I have is March 1966 (Vol. 2, No. 7) so history before that is pretty much unknown to me. There are several other Newsletters from the early years which are missing as well as most of 1978. Some of what I found by reading the Newsletters (including exactly who some Board members were) is contradictory. Some of what I show here is drawn by inference from various articles. Of course, what is listed here is what struck me as significant. Obviously in the course of 35 years a lot of things happened, and others might choose different highlights. This history needs to be augmented by a reading of the Newsletters which I don’t have as well as the minutes of the Board of Directors.

When I got to October 1989, the 25th anniversary of the founding of FSGW, I discovered an insert in the Newsletter which showed a history of major events up to that time (sigh!). It is especially valuable in the first couple of years where my Newsletters are scarce. Rather than modify my history, I am including a copy of that insert. It agrees substantially with what I have written, though I and the writers of that history have minor disagreements on what was significant.

Sometime 1964 FSGW founded, cost of membership $5
Nov., 1964 First program, Chuck and Nan Perdue
Jan. 8, 1965 First Open Sing
Jan., 1965 First black music program, features John Jackson, E. Green, and Flora Moulton
Sometime 1965 First co-sponsorship with Stanley-Williams Productions, Clancey Brothers concert
Nov. 1965 First Sampler Concert
July 3, 1965 First FSGW picnic
March 1966 Board meeting at Rm. 700, 12001 3rd St. NW. Expenses $1757, income $2240
Sept. 16-18, 1966 First Getaway at Prince William Forest Park (Probably Camp Site 3)
Oct. 21, 1966 First program at Washington Ethical Society. Newsletter limited to one page with a yearly supplement to cover cost $1.50-$3.00 for members, $2.50-$4.00 for non-members.
Oct. 1966 Reciprocal agreement with Philadelphia Folksong Society
Nov. 1966 Board meetings move to members' homes
Jan., 1967 Family memberships created - cost $7.50. At-Large Board members created.
March 10, 1967 First black music program, features John Jackson, John Cook, Amos Barnet, Willie Mae Stanley, Christine Williams.
May 5-8, 1967 First Spring Getaway, Cost $12 for adults, $8 for kids 12-16, $4 for kids under 12, it was over-subscribed
June 1967 Newsletter limited to one page with a yearly supplement to cover book and record reviews, articles and columns
July 1967 Board meeting at Suite 710, 1346 Connecticut Ave. NW, New Partnership with Philadelphia Folksong Society
Nov. 1967 First appearance of the "Screaming Chicken" logo on the Newsletter
Nov. 1967 First program at Washington Ethical Society, "It has the germ of an idea... which could initiate a new kind of folk-singing event all over the country."
May 3-6, 1968 Getaway III, cost is $14, $10, $5
Sept. 1968 First Scared Harp Sing
Sept. 1968 First Fords Theater program of Civil War music and dance
Sept. 19-22, 1969 Getaway moves back to Fall, Newsletter says it is at Camp 4, but directions don’t seem to lead there.
Oct. 1969 Programs move to Smithsonian History and Technology Museum
Feb. 13, 1970 First storytelling program • Marshall Dodge
May, 1970. 14 members vote for Board at the May meeting. There are about 375 memberships (some families).

Oft. 6, 1970 219 individual and 178 family memberships. Reciprocal agreement with the New York Pinewoods Club.


Dec., 1971 First mention of caroling, however the article refers to “our annual trek through the streets of Old Town Alexandria”, so it may have been going on before.

Jan., 1972 Open Sing moves to the Washington Ethical Society

June, 1972 Memberships 605 individuals and 272 families.

Sept., 1973 Getaway is at Camp 4 at Prince William Forest Park, may have been there in 1971 as well.

Sept. 1973 Programs move back to the Ethical Society.

Oct., 1972 A series of workshops begins. The first two for dulcimers (both kinds) and banjo. These were group participation events as opposed to festival workshops.

Nov. 18, 1972 Square dance at the Ethical Society with the Greasy Run Toad Trompers. There were earlier dance events, but this is the first I found which is called a square dance.

Feb. 24, 1973 First Mini-Festival at the Washington Ethical Society. Cost for day workshops, dinner, and evening square dance was $3.

Nov., 1973 First appearance of “fiddle” logo on Newsletter.

Feb., 1974 By-Laws changed to allow voting for officers by mail.

Apr., 1974 Weekly Friday night dances announced. Indications are that it had been in operation for a while.

Nov. 3, 1974 First hymn sing/potluck. This did not become a regular event until Feb. 1978.

Oct., 1975 Membership dues change to $6 for individuals and $9 for families. Getaway cost is $22 for adults, $12 for kids under 14.

Feb., 1976 FSGW gets a grant of $3455 to finance an “extra special concert season”.

Jan., 1977 First Dance Chair appointed.

Feb., 1977 FSGW sponsors regular Tuesday night dances at Caldwell Auditorium at Catholic University. Apparently the dances had been going on for two years, having been started by Special Events Chair Bill Destler, but with no formal organization.

June 12, 1977 First Washington Folk Festival at Glen Echo Park. It was a one-day event. It was so successful that the next year it went to 2 days. This is also the first time I can find that FSGW had a dance in the Spanish Ballroom.

Nov., 1977 Dances move to Sunday night in the New Rehearsal Hall at Catholic University. Cost $1.50 for members. $2.00 for non-members.

Sometime, 1977 Board meetings move from NFPA (now NCTTA) office to member’s homes.


Mar., 1979 Gospel Sings probably started on a regular basis.

May, 1979 Seems to be the first time candidates for the Board made statements in the Newsletter.

Oct. 1979 Getaway XV, cost $30 for adults, $14 for kids under 14

Nov., 1979 Sunday dances are now at Chevy Chase Presbyterian Church.

Nov., 1979 First classified ads in Newsletter although the decision to allow ads had been made many years previously.

Nov., 1979 Family dance at Chevy Chase Elementary school. From the article it looks like this was probably not the first one.

Dec., 1979 First caroling in the subway.

Sometime, 1979 First membership directory published.

Apr., 1980 Typical concert prices are now $2 for non-members at programs (members $6), $3 for members at special events, $4 for non-members.

Sept., 1980 FSGW makes a small grant to Glen Echo Park to enable 4 concerts.
Nov. 1980  Sunday dances move to Trinity Episcopal Church in Takoma Park
Dec. 1980  First mention of a folktales group. There had apparently been two previous meetings.
Dec. 1980  FSGW joins the Washington Humanity and Arts Center. This was to provide FSGW with an office space in the old Lansburgh's department store. This did not last long, however.
Dec. 1980  Membership is around 1,300.
Jan. 1981  Mini-Festival now costs $5.00 for the day
Sept. 1981  Sunday dance moves to Chevy Chase Presbyterian Church
Sept. 1981  A weekend series of English country and American dances (ale mating) starts
Oct. 9-12, 1981  Getaway moves to Camp 2 at Prince William Forest Park
Nov. 1981  Membership dues go to $10 for individuals, $15 for families. Nonmember program cost goes to $4. Membership around 1,450.
Nov. 1981  FSGW asked to organize Saturday night dance series at Glen Echo Park.
Dec. 1981  By-Laws amended to allow amendments to be voted on by mail.
Jan. 1982  FSGW for the first time (it) requires a contract with performers covering method and amount of payment and permission to tape performances.
May 1982  First Saturday night Glen Echo Park dances
June 1982  Sunday dance moves to Shrine of the Blessed Sacrament in Chevy Chase
Aug. 1982  Approval of a major modernization to the By-Laws.
Sept. 1982  Sunday dance moves to Takoma Park Jr. High School. Dances now cost $2.50 for members, $3 for non-members
Nov. 1982  First strategic planning session by the Board, although they didn't call it that.
Dec. 1982  Approval of a cooperative agreement with Glen Echo Park
Mar. 1983  There are 1,877 memberships
Apr., 8-10, 1983  First Chesapeake Dance Weekend at Camp Letts
June 1983  $10,000 in the bank.
July 23, 1983  First All Night Dance at Glen Echo Park
Oct. 7-9, 1983  Getaway cost goes to $45 for adults, $35 for kids 2-14.
Oct., 1983  Membership is now 2,069
Jan., 1984  The Board approved articles of incorporation. I think we may have been incorporated previously, but the records had been lost. We are incorporated in DC.
Mar., 1984  FSGW officially has liability insurance. It's not clear whether we did it before that.
Apr., 1984  Reciprocal agreement with the Baltimore Folk Music Society. The agreement is not quite reciprocal in that BFMS members can get into FSGW programs for $1 less than non-members.
June 1984  213 memberships
Aug., 1984  FSGW officially supports (with money) hospitality for participants at the Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife
Sept., 1984  Dues change to $12 for individuals, $18 for families
Nov., 1984  Contributing member dues are $35 for individuals, $45 for families. Sustaining memberships are $70 for individuals, $90 for families. Life memberships are $200 for individuals, $300 for families
Mar., 1985  Board agreed to co-sponsor a video entitled "Houseparty at John Jackson's". This was produced (eventually) by Eleanor Ellis with a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.
May, 1985  Sunday dances move to Glen Echo Park. Prices are $3 for members, $4 for non-members. Dance is still at Takoma Park Jr. High in the Winter.
Oct., 1985  2,225 memberships
Jan., 1986  Senior citizen discounts instituted
Apr., 1986  Board approved purchase of two tents for the Washington Folk Festival
June, 1986  FSGW receives gift of a van from Lars Hanslin - our first vehicle
Oct., 1986  Getaway cost is now $35 for adults, $30 for kids 3-15
June, 1987  Approval of equipment loans and exchanges with the Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife and the National Council for the Traditional Arts.
Feb., 12-15, 1988  First Ski Dance weekend
Mar., 1988  Reciprocal agreement with Howard County Folk Society
July, 1988  Mailing of Newsletter to be handled by professionally
Oct., 1988  Getaway now costs $65 for adults, $25 for kids 2-15
Dec., 1988  Designated two dances as meetings of the Society for the purpose of taking nominations
from the floor. These dances are free to members.
Dec., 1988  Board voted to send two representatives to a conference on forming a national
organization of folk music societies. This led to the formation of the North American Folk Alliance.
Jan., 20-22, 1989  Co-sponsored a Leadership Workshop with CDSS
Jan., 1989  Co-sponsoring vintage dance series with Capital Vintage Dance Society
Aug., 1989  Open sings move to members homes for the summer
Oct. 13, 1989  2^ Anniversary concert featuring founding members Jonathan Eberhart, Lani
Herrmann, Joe Hickerson, Chuck and Nan Perdue, Mike Rivers, Helen Schneyer, and Andy Wallace.
Nov., 1989  Dues change to $18 for individuals. $27 for families, contributing individuals $50
contribute families $75, sustaining individuals $100. sustaining families $150, life individuals $300, life
families $450
Mar, 30-31, 1990  First Potomac River Sacred Harp Convention at All Souls Episcopal Church in DC
Apr. 27-29, 1990  8^ Chesapeake Dance Weekend, cost $110.
Spring, 1990  FSGW co-sponsored a folk music course with the Smithsonian Resident Associates
Program
Apr., 1990  Reciprocal agreement with Annapolis Traditional Dance Society
June, 1990  FSGW becomes a member of the North American Folk Music and Dance Alliance
Oct., 1990  2668 members
Nov., 1990  Co-sponsorship of Foggy Bottom Folkdancers (international)
Dec., 1990  FSGW decides to purchase its first computer
Apr., 1991  Membership: 686 families, 2548 individuals. 23 contributing, 45 life, 19
honorary, 279 non-voting (2 Newsletter only)
Aug., 1991  Open Sing leaves Washington Ethical Society. It moved to several places before ending
up going to members homes.
Aug., 1992  FSGW buys a van. We still have it.
Sept., 1992  Change of fiscal year to start in October instead of July. This was done to work better
with our election schedule.
Nov., 1992  2539 memberships
Jan., 1993  A fire at Glen Echo Park damaged or destroyed much of FSGW's equipment for the
Washington Folk Festival. Damage was estimated to be $34,000.
Apr., 1993  Dance prices have slowly crept up over the years and are now $5 for members, $7 for
non-members
Sept., 1993  Dues go to $24 for individuals, $33 for families, $75 contributing individuals, $100
contribute families, $133 sustaining individuals, $200 sustaining families, $400 life individuals, $600 life
families. Raise in price is due mostly to larger Newsletters (20-24 pages) and raise in postage.
Sept, 1994  27,690 Newsletters sent out
Jan., 1995  Co-sponsorship of Capital Tangueros dances, lighting purchased for concerts
Mar., 1995  2691 memberships
May, 1995  Sunday afternoon community dances at Glen Echo start (I think)
June, 1995  The Board solicited for the position of administrator in the Newsletter. This would have
been a paid position, but it was eventually dropped.
Oct., 1995  Getaway cost is now $100 for adults for 2 nights, $55 for kids 5-11, $10 more for three
nights
Jan., 1996  2969 memberships (but I think this uses the formula that a family membership counts as
two)
Jan., 1996  Minifestival is canceled due to weather
Feb, 14-18, 1996  North American Folk Alliance conference held in DC with much support from FSGW
Mar., 1996  Cost of Chesapeake Dance Weekend is now $140
Apr., 1996  A member survey is sent out to get an idea of how we should alter our concert schedule
Summer, 1996  FSGW sponsors series of concerts in Mason District Park.
Sept., 1996  In response to the member survey, programs are moved to the 3rd Saturday
Dec, 29, 1996  First Fifth Wheel Coffeehouse held in Arlington. It is intended to be held on 5th
Sundays, but only a few are done due to low attendance.
Late 1996  A sweeping revision to the By-Laws is approved which updates them to better agree with current operating practice. Of note is that programs are no longer all considered to be meetings of the Society.

May, 1997 The Washington Folk Festival is canceled on the recommendation of the coordinating committee. The cancellation is due to construction at Glen Echo Park. The Festival resumed in 1998.
25TH ANNIVERSARY HISTORICAL SUPPLEMENT

Compiled by the 25th Anniversary Committee Subcommittee for Publication: Bob Clayton, Kathy Westra Hickerson & Jennifer Woods

D.C. 1964—You Are There!

In its July 1964 issue, Hootenanny magazine describes a thriving Washington folk music scene. Dupont Circle is DC's own Washington Square, where "people usually sit around and sing on spring and summer evenings." Folk music is everywhere—on the radio (with hosts like Dick Spottswood, Dick Ceni and John Dildine), in nightclubs and coffeehouses (like the Cellar Door, Ontario Place, the Unicorn, and the Shadows), at concerts and hootenannies, and even on a riverboat cruising the Potomac. Performers like the Country Gentlemen, Libba Cotten, Mississippi John Hurt, Ian and Sylvia, and Carolyn Hester play regularly. The Washington Folk Music Guild and the George Washington University Folk Music Club are active organizations. Dick Rodgers publishes Folk Strums, a monthly newsletter on the folk scene, and the Dick Cerni Newsletter provides even more information.

Yet, in the summer and fall of 1964, a group of friends begin thinking about forming still another organization—one that will foster the traditions that haven't "made it" in the commercial folk boom of the early '60s. Planning meetings are held at the homes of Chuck & Nan Perdue and Lani & Cal Herrmann. Lani writes By-Laws based on those of the University of Chicago Folklore Society and the Philadelphia Folksong Society. The name "Washington Folklore Society" is rejected because such a society already exists, with a president who lives in Pullman, WA. And, on October 23, 1964, the Folklore Society of Greater Washington is born, dedicated "to further the understanding, investigation, appreciation, and performance of the traditional folk music and folklore of the American people." The rest, as they say, is history—25 years of it. What follows is the barest of outlines of those 25 busy years—an outline on which we hope to elaborate in a special full issue of this Newsletter next spring. We hope this brief history spurs recollections that you'll share with us over the coming months so we can include them in this special publication.

— the FSGW 25th Anniversary Committee Charlie Pilzer, Chair, Bob Clayton, Mary Cliff, Kathy Westra Hickerson, Jennifer Woods, Robin Youngelman

FSGW Highlights 1964-1989

Summer/Fall 1964: Small group holds meetings to plot organization of a folksong society. Joe Hickerson argues for calling it a "Folksong" society.

Prior to October 23, 1964: First Newsletter published, mailed to about 200 people (one 8 1/2 x 14, one-sided mimeographed page). First organizational meeting of the Folklore Society of Greater Washington, 8 pm, Friday October 23, 1964 at Fairfax Unitarian Church. Attended by about 30 people. First board elected. Initial dues: $5. individual, $7-50 family.

October 27, 1964 2nd Newsletter published. Newsletter Editor Carol Lee (now Carol Bruce) calls for suggestions for a newsletter name and logo.

November 8, 1964 First scheduled FSGW event—a concert by Irish singer and piper Seamus Ennis at the Arlington-Fairfax Jewish Center in Arlington. Due to performer's illness, Chuck and Nan Perdue stand-in.

February 8, 1965 Newsletter reports mailing list of over 1,000 names, (many NOT members).

March 30, 1965 Newsletter editor, frustrated by lack of suggestions for Newsletter name and logo, issues first (and ONLY) edition of "The Penny Dreadful." (4 pages!) The Board is not amused.
May 5, 1965 FSGW begins converting mailing list to "modem" addressograph system.

June 1965: Newsletter announces that IRS has granted FSGW status as a nonprofit organization. Official papers filed where future Boards will NEVER find them.

July 3, 1965: First of our Annual (we've never missed a year) Pic-n-Nic. Held at Fort Ward Park, Alexandria. 11 am to Sunset, with scheduled events.

October 30, 1965 First FSGW Open Sing held at Union Methodist Church, DC. Topic: Whiskey-Tobacco-and-Eyed. Red-headed Women. Led by Chuck Perdue. Later Newsletters report that sings in the first year were attended by 60-70 people.

December 1965: Still no Newsletter logo. Newsletter announces new folk music series produced on WAMU-FM by John Dildine in cooperation with FSGW. 8-10 pm Fridays.

February 11, 1966: FSGW in the first of many concerts in association with Stanley-Williams Presentations, sponsors the Clancy Brothers & Tommy Makem. Others presented during the six or seven years of this association included Buffy St-Marie, Tom Paxton, Judy Collins, Arlo Guthrie and Pete Seeger. The Clancys were the champs, being presented no less than eight times!

April 1966: Newsletter announces plans for a "Folk Get-Away" (first Getaway) to be held at Prince William Forest Park in September.

May 1966 Newsletter up to 8 pages. Treasurer Sol Schneyer reports a balance for the 1964-65 year of $395.52 ($1,583.18 income; $1,187.66 expenditures.) 1965-66 balance was $383.33 ($1,768.87 income; $1,385.54 expenditures.)


January 1967: By-Laws changed to add the Board positions of two "Officers-at-Large." Gus Meade and Mike Seeger were the first elected to these positions in May, 1967.

February 1967 Newsletter (2 pages, still no logo) reports that it costs $.10 an issue -- $1.00 per year -- to mail Newsletters to those on mailing list. Nonmembers urged to contribute to defray costs.

November 10, 1967: First FSGW program held in the NEW Washington Ethical Society auditorium, 7760 16th St, NW DC

November 1967: Vol 4, No. 3 "Turkey" Logo (they said it was an eagle) makes first appearance on FSGW Newsletter masthead.

February 1968: First Newsletter Supplement (later FSGW Journal) published. (Containing book reviews, scholarly notes, record reviews, & news & mailed only to members.) Supplements/Journals were published periodically through 1973.

June 1968: President's Report on FSGW's first four years by Sol Schneyer. From membership of 15-20 to over 200. Mailing list of almost 2,000. Cites money and volunteers as the two chief concerns of the young Society.
March 1988: Open Sing no longer cosponsored by WES with FSGW.


July 1988: Board approves having the Newsletter mailing done by the printer of the Newsletter, instead of a dedicated overworked crew of FSGW volunteers. Mailing now over 3,000 pieces, between memberships and exchange mail.

October 1988: Board accepts resignation of Publications Chair Lennie Zickefoose, due to job commitments.

November 1988: Board designates the dances on the Sundays following the March and April programs as regular meetings of the Society, at which the Nominating Committee reports to the members and accepts nominations from the floor. Members of the Society will be admitted to these dances free of charge.

December 1988: Board appoints Helen Gordon to fill vacancy as Publications Chair, beginning with the February 1989 issue of the Newsletter.


July 1989: Phil Hayden appointed as Publicity Chair, position unfilled after elections.


25th FSGW Getaway October 27–29 1989

25th Anniversary Special Dance, November 12 1989: at Glen Echo (last dance for a season) with: Bob Dalsemex calling, with members of the Boss-Town Buzz Steps, (Steve Hickman, Linda Hickman, Dennis Botzer, and Ritchie Schuman.) Free to members.

State of the Society Message from current President Joel Bluestein

The Folklore Society of Greater Washington began in the heat of what some of us remember as "Hootenanny" folk revival of the 1960's. That blip on the cultural horizon is long gone but the FSGW is still here. Traditional music rises and falls in the popular commercial consciousness. The wonderful thing is that there are always people who want to pursue these arts for their own fulfillment. The founders of the FSGW had an interest in the notes of traditional musics. They wanted to get together and make that music for their own satisfaction. Later, we started to produce concerts, primarily, as now, out of an interest in traditional music which doesn't find a stage anywhere else. While concerts may seem to get the largest play, I think that continuing to provide the opportunity for people to pursue the traditions themselves is one of our most important functions. Participatory events have prospered and grown to make up the largest number of our activities. These include monthly sings of various kinds, storytelling, dances and annual events like the Getaway. Last month's Newsletter had an article about the monthly open sings. Future Newsletters will have more information on other regular events where members get together for their own satisfaction. I think many people become members of the FSGW simply to receive the Newsletter. While the listings are certainly worth the price of membership, the events themselves are even better. Remember that the Society was founded on participation. Personal involvement is what the traditional arts are all about and what will allow FSGW to continue for another 25 years.
September 15, 1968: Sunday. 4 pm. First FSGW Sacred Harp, Shape Note Sing and Potluck Supper in Glen Echo, MD area. The Sings were started independently prior to this, by several FSGW members and friends. Sacred Harp Sings have continued regularly almost every month in the 21 years since they started.

June 1970 Newsletter announces 375 memberships as of May 8, but only 14 members appear at May 8 meeting to vote.

September 30 1970 FSGW has $967.30 in the bank.

October 6, 1970: Membership: 397 (219 individual, 178 family) Reciprocal privileges with NY Pinewoods Folk Music Club announced.

February 14, 1971: Folksongs of Abe Lincoln & the Civil War produced for the first time at Fords Theater. Featured performers were Gene Anderson, Bob Clayton, Hazel Dickens, Joe Hickerson, John Jackson. Reed Martin, Helen Schneyer, Joel Shimberg, and Andy Wallace. Concerts continued annually in February through 1975.

June 1971: A historical note in the Newsletter mentions that "every Secretary of the Society had (so far), gotten pregnant after being Secretary, excluding Renzi Bowie."


FSGW Membership: "We Have Members!"

November 1964: 75
October 1970: 387
June 1972: 677
January 1977: 685
July 1978: over 1000
October 1979 (15 yrs): 1079
July 1983: Over 2000
October 1984 (20 yrs): 2239
September 1, 1989: 2848

February 1972: Open Sings "reborn after floundering for the past couple of year?" at WES. First Friday of every month.

June 1972: Membership: 677 (405 individual, 272 family)

November 18, 1972: First FSGW Dance -- a square dance at WES, with Greasy Run Toad Trompers (Bob Clayton, Mike Rivers, Sam Rizzarelli, Dave McKelway and Judy Hough).

February 24, 1973: First Mini-Festival held at WES. They have been held in various locations every year since then.

November 1973: New Newsletter logo appears, unheralded and unexplained. Designed by Dale Appleman Cooney, this logo remains the official identity of FSGW.

February 1974: Because of increasing membership. Board recommends changing By-Laws to allow voting by mail.
March 1974: The FSGW now has phone number of its own. Anytime you want to know what's happening, want to leave a message for a board member, or want some specific bit of information, call the number. Messages will be checked regularly and forwarded to the appropriate people. Answering machine was at Mike Rivers home from March 1974 until October 1976, when it moved to Don & Dolores Nichols' home.


May 1974: Don Nichols and his able assistant Blinky (the computer) first elected Membership Chair. Since that time the FSGW Membership Chair has been D. or D. Nichols.

November 22, 1974: 10th Anniversary Celebration at WES. All night extravaganza featuring Founding members concert, Midnight square and contra dance with Bob Dalsemer and 3 a.m. breakfast.

February 18, 1975: First regular dance series starts. Tuesdays, 10-week session of lessons, limited to 40 people, 20 men and 20 women.

April 1975: Article in Newsletter states: SURPRISE! we’ll be starting our programs on time...

Spring Getaway, held April 4-6 was the coldest on record and the last Spring Getaway. (We had three Getaways held in the Spring.)

June 1975: Dues increase announced, effective October 1975. The first since the Society's founding. New dues are $6. individual, $9. family.


October 30, 1976: 2nd dance of newly begun monthly series.


January 1977: Dance Chair added to Board, to be filled by appointment.

February 1977: Board appoints Martin Holmer as first Dance Chair.

Sunday, June 12, 1977: First Washington Folk Festival at Glen Echo Park, Glen Echo, MD. In cooperation with the National Park Service. Brainchild of Board members Jonathan Eberhart, Mia Gardner, and Debbie Hutton.

October 1977: Dances delayed, looking for a hall.

November 1977: Dances move to Sunday nights, weekly, held at Catholic University. All dances music by Boss-Town Buzz-Steps, Steve & Linda Hickman, David Shorey, Dennis Botzer and Laurie Andres. Jim Morrison one of main callers used. In December, attendance at November dances reported as good. As many as 60 people at one!

February 1978: First Gospel Sing. Started by Kathy Condom who came to Board with idea, and asked for FSGW sponsorship. Has continued fairly regularly ever since.


November 1978: Dances move to Masonic Temple Hall, near CU.
January 1979: Article from President Jonathan Eberhart about membership rates going up — due to the "growing bills for the 3 P's paper, printing, & postage" so as of February 1979 individual $8, family $12 (only second membership dues increase in FSGW history).

February 1979: By-Laws change to make At-Large position only for one year and to be held by someone who has not served on the Board in the past three years.

June 1979: PO Box changed due to non-payment of rent on previous box, an oversight not noticed until too late to keep box.

September 1, 1979: 1,108 memberships

Saturday, October 13, 1979: 15th Anniversary Extravaganza! 7 hours of picking, singing, dancing and good times. 8:30 pm -- Founders Concert followed by exhibition dancing, followed by a dance, followed by an Open Sing and finally at 2:30 am Breakfast! At WES.

November 1979: Dances now at Chevy Chase Presbyterian Church

December 16, 1979: First Caroling through the Metro. Continued annually until 1984, when Metro requested that it end due to liability concerns.

February 3, 1980 First series of family dances held, Saturdays, from 4:30 to 7:30 pm, semi-monthly

September 1980: New dance location: Trinity Episcopal Church, DC.

December 1980 FSGW joins the Washington Humanities and Arts Center in the former Lansburgh's Department Store building in downtown DC. The Center was to be a place for arts, theater, music and crafts organizations, and would provide FSGW a place for an established office. The Center did not succeed.

September 1981: Dances move back to Chevy Chase Presbyterian.

October 9-12, 1981: 17th Getaway is last one at Prince William. November 1, 1981: Dues raised to: $10. individual, $15. family.

November 1981: first Board Meeting Highlights appear in Newsletter. Vice-President Nancy Schenck (now Nancy King) chairing a committee to review By-Laws. KC King resigns as Special Events Chair (took job in Saudi Arabia). Board appoints Jody Fitterer to replace him. Membership Committee asks for your nine digit zip code if you've been issued it. English Country Dances started by Dance Chair Pat McCracken as part of a Wednesday night Dance Series.

FSGW Board Then & Now

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>President</th>
<th>Vice President</th>
<th>Secretary</th>
<th>Treasurer</th>
<th>Program Chair</th>
<th>Special Events Chair</th>
<th>Dance Chair</th>
<th>Publications Chair</th>
<th>Publicity Chair</th>
<th>Membership Chair</th>
<th>Members-At-Large</th>
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<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>John Dildine</td>
<td>Chuck Perdue</td>
<td>Lani Herrman</td>
<td>Sol Schneyer</td>
<td>Joe Hickerson</td>
<td>George Simpson</td>
<td>first in 1977 Martin Holmer</td>
<td>Carol Lee</td>
<td>Carol Lee</td>
<td>Jim Lee</td>
<td>first in 1967 Gus Meade</td>
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<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Joel Bluestein</td>
<td>Mary Cliff</td>
<td>Kyle Terrell</td>
<td>Dave Renne</td>
<td>David Eisner</td>
<td>Kathy Westra Hickerson</td>
<td>Robin Youngelman</td>
<td>Helen Gordon</td>
<td>Phil Hayden</td>
<td>Dolores Nichols</td>
<td>Charlie Fitterer</td>
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Archivist: first in 1982 Bill Day

December 1981: Dean Clamons appointed to finish out Jody Fitterer’s term as Member-At-Large. FSGW is asked by Glen Echo to organize dances on Saturday nights in the Spanish Ballroom in the summer.

Saturday, January 23, 1982: Mini-Festival, St. Alban’s School. Snow and ice keep lots of folks away, including performers. FSGW members save books when major leak in roof floods library.

February 1982: Board agrees to let President Dwain Winters work on cooperative agreement with Glen Echo Park. (It is still in effect.) Society agrees to cosponsor Glen Echo Saturday Dance series.

March 1982: FSGW is looking for a new hall for winter dances. Saturday Dances at Glen Echo start in May. Board establishes standing appointed positions of Archivist and Volunteer Chair. Bill Day appointed as Archivist, a post he still holds. Volunteer Chair to be filled at later date. (This never materialized as a standing position.)

June 1982: Dances move to Shrine of Blessed Sacrament in Northwest D.C.

August 1982: Board decides in July to have "Futures Committee" a committee of the whole dedicated to discussing FSGW’s current programs and future direction. Decision made not to hold events (especially Getaway) that conflict with major Jewish and Christian holidays.

September 1982: Dances move to Takoma Park Junior High! Plea for helping find another hall! Saturday dances at Glen Echo still going strong.

September 24-26, 1982: 18th Getaway, first at Camp Letts.

October 1982: Board agrees to pay $75-$50 honorarium per concert for sign language interpreters at FSGW programs and Special Events for next six months. Futures Committee holds marathon weekend meeting.

November 1982: Board agrees to cosponsor dances at Glen Echo again, in summer of 1983. Board abolishes position (never filled) of Volunteer Coordinator, moves to develop questionnaire for recruiting more volunteers.


April 8-10, 1983: First Annual Chesapeake Dance Weekend (Spring Dance Weekend) Camp Letts, Edgeworth, MD. Still held each year in April. Brainchild of Dance Chair Pat McCracken. Membership: 1,877.

May 1983: First mention of Storytelling Group

July 1983: Board establishes new committee for FSGW outreach to special communities. Chair by Linda Lieberman.

September 1983: Dances move again, back to Trinity Episcopal Church. Membership: 2,069. 20th anniversary Lee planning committee formed.

November 1983: Board reports that "Copies of FSGW’s original incorporation papers cannot be located in our archives, so the Board authorized action and funds for locating, copying, and re-filing of data."

December 1983: Explanation in Newsletter as to why we have moved the Getaway to Camp Letts from Prince William, and why we have not gone back to Prince William. Some diehards refuse to accept new site.

February 1984: Playford and Apted English Country Dance Workshops start under the direction of Peter Fricke. 3rd Tuesday of each month. FSGW becomes official Country Dance and Song Society (CDSS) center.

April 1984: FSGW and Baltimore Folk Song Society make formal agreement to recognize each other's members with members discount.

May 1984: Board approves document prepared by FSGW counsel "indemnification of Officers, Directors, Employees, and Agents."

July 1984: FSGW members host hospitality for Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife participants, a service we have continued annually.

September 1984: Dances back at Takoma Park Jr High. New Dance Editorial Policy for Newsletter. Dance articles must state whether music is live or recorded. Dues raised: $12, individual; $18, family.

October 1984: 20th Anniversary Concert Series, weekly at Glen Echo. Performers: John Jackson, Joe Glazer, Gus Made and the Snuffy Smith Bridge Club and Helen Schneyer

February 1985: Board approves motion that FSGW serve as the sponsoring organization for "House Party at John Jackson's" a videotape being produced by FSGW member Eleanor Ellis with a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. Membership: 2,225

December 1985: Board inaugurates $1, senior citizen discount at all concerts and dances, except house concerts. Board votes that FSGW will no longer share its mailing list with anyone to avoid commercial misuse of membership roster.

March 1986: FSGW buys two tents for use at Washington Folk Festival.

May 1986: FSGW accepts gift of Ford van from former President Lars Hanslin. (Still running an a wing and a prayer.)

June 1986 FSGW gives founding member Helen Schneyer an honorary life membership in FSGW as a farewell gift. (She moved to Vermont.)

November 1986 Trina Royar, Dance Chair resigns because of new job in North Carolina

December 1986 Board appoints Mary Kay Friday as Dance Chair.


July 1987: New Board appoints members-at-large Diane Welder and Lennice Zickefoose to co-chair the new volunteer coordinating committee, a position a member-at-large holds now.

December 1987: Board approves cosponsoring Ski Dance Weekend in February 1988 with the Sierra Club and Potomac Appalachian Trail Club. Mailing address of FSGW changed from P.O. Box at the 20th Street Station downtown to Friendship Heights Station, which has 24-hour access at P.O. Boxes.

January 1988: Membership reciprocity with the Howard Folk Society announced.