

OFB Sound Committee Meeting
April 23, 2003

Present were Bill Hufnagle, Laurie Fisher, Mark Langner and Jesse Edgerton.

One bottle of red wine was donated and consumed. Consensus was reached on several sound issues, and we agreed to disagree on one. Here is our report to the Old Farmer's Ball Board.

1. We do not think that there is any significant problem with sound at the Old Farmer's Ball dance. Compared to many other dances, our sound rates highly. Occasional problems are noted with the caller not being heard well at the back of the hall. This could result from several possible causes, such as caller use of microphone, caller voice quality, size and actions of the crowd, and the settings of individual sound people on a given night. We do not consider this enough of a problem to warrant the expenditure of thousands of dollars.
2. The expense of the proposed permanent installation is completely unjustified in our opinion. It addresses minimal problems, and in effect would be a large donation of equipment to WWC. If we lose the hall, we lose the setup. One of our sound people (who does sound _ of the time) would not use it if it were installed.
3. We note that we have evolved the way sound is done at the OFB to the point where we are very dependant on professional sound people. We recommend that we work with one or more sound technicians to establish a simplified, workable, standard setup using our existing equipment. This would be mounted in racks which could be rolled out into place for the dance. The setup should be documented, and additional people (volunteers, some board members, possibly interns who may be available through UNCA) trained through a workshop(s) on how to use it. This way, in an emergency (none of our normal sound people are available) we could still be sure and have sound. This setup would require a minimal expenditure on equipment. It would also be easily modified in case a professional sound person wanted to add / change the order of equipment.
4. As part of the last recommendation, we intend to work with Brian to evaluate the state of our current equipment (what works, what does not, etc.) and come up with a regular maintenance plan. We are thinking that we may pay one of our sound people every three months to do routine maintenance.
5. Part of the original equipment request was for a CD player and we think this should be done. We have a possible donated CD player which is being evaluated to see if it is adequate for our needs.
6. We are divided on the issue of a raise for our sound people.

On one side: 1) There is the opinion that our sound people already make more than they would in a typical evening gig using existing equipment;

2) The sound people make their job more complex by choice, not by our direction;

3) We could use some of our money to have the sound people do maintenance tasks, etc.

On the other side:

1) We are banking about 20% more per dance since we raised our admission fee; the bands and callers are taking home 15 – 20% more; some of us think the sound people should share in this. There was some fear expressed that we could end up looking like American Airlines executives.