



# The Petronella Paper

August 2011

Newsletter of

[The Royal Scottish Country Dance Society - Atlanta Branch, Inc.](http://www.RSCDS-Atlanta.org)

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## **The Japan Earthquake/Tsunami Relief Fund** by Becky Sager

Our Branch member Yoshi Yukishige contacted his dancing friends in the Sendai area after the terrible events in March. He was able to give us details of a relief fund established to aid a number of dancers who had suffered great losses. The Atlanta and Carolinas Branches combined to collect donations to the fund.

Professor Yoshito Ohta, leader of the Kansai White Heather Dancers (RSCDS affiliated) sent the following letter to Yoshi:

March 11, 2011 will be the day we will remember for a long time. The earthquake that struck the north-eastern part of Japan caused the huge tsunami, killing tens of thousands. Later we realized that this is a kind of incident we have once in a millennium. Old documents and sand layers show that this part was hit by an enormous earthquake in 869, more than 100 years before the tale of Genji was written.

I was sitting in my office in Kyoto when I realized that the building was shaking. The tremble lasted more than a few minutes, indicating that something awful was going on. An inter-net news site said that there was an earthquake off the coast of Sendai. This was enough to convince that it was a mega-quake. Living some five hundred miles away from the epicenter, I had no choice but to stay in the office pondering the consequences. Nevertheless, what I saw on TV in the evening was certainly beyond my imagination.

Mr. Yutaka Shimizu is a member of Sendai SCD club who often comes and dances with us at parties of the Kansai White Heather Dancers (KWHD). We had a contact with him, and he told us that everyone of the group was alive though the houses of four members had been destroyed by the quake or the tsunami. He called a donation for these members, and dancers including members of KWHD responded the request. This is our small hands across in the SCD family.

More than 200 billion yen was donated to Japan Red Cross so far. This amount is larger than the donation for the Kobe earthquake in 1995 that recorded 170 billion yen. The destruction this time is far greater than the 1995 quake, and this compensates only a tiny fraction of the loss people are suffering in the afflicted area. It would be important to have a long-range support for those who underwent hardships. Also I would like to mention that Japan received assistance from many countries worldwide including USA.

A few days ago, I read an article about a fisher in a northern village. He said something in effect that he would not hate what the nature did and would worship and feel grateful to the gifts by the nature. Furthermore, I heard a story of people who sacrificed themselves to help others. Though the earthquake was a tragedy, I am impressed by the stories of people who are not easily discouraged. Maybe such stories go unnoticed in busy daily life.

Yoshito Ohta  
Kansai White Heather Dancers

At the beginning of June we sent a total of \$1970 to Sendai. Each Branch contributed \$300 from general funds and the remainder came from individual dancers. The Atlanta Branch paid the expense of the wire transfer so all the money could go where it was needed. Yoshi forwarded thanks from Mr. Shimizu who set up the fund –his letter is below with an introduction provided by Yoshi. Thank you to everybody who donated!

Yoshi advises that Mr. Yutaka Shimizu (leader of Sendai Happy Meeting) who is leading this activity to support the dancers is deeply touched by the SCD family's support from all over the world. This is, of course, including Atlanta and Carolina. He has confirmed the receipt of the fund from Atlanta.

As of 6/16, total relief fund from SCD family all over the world (including domestic Japan and us) is more than US \$66,000!

The best of this fund is that this has been directly given to the friends by Shimizu-san by cash (bank system in that area is not fully recovered yet) while my friend in Japan heard funds such as from Red Cross were not delivered yet.

Here is the translation of our friends' recent situations. (I have heard one of them insisted to decline receiving monetary donations because her house was not damaged as badly as the others (others are total loss) and asked Shimizu-san to re-direct the fund to other 3 friends.) Mr. Shimizu reports that:

Ms. Hiroko Kawabata in Higashi Matsuyama City:

She has fortunately won a temporary housing draw and moved from a shelter to a house. She works for a contracting company. The company has received tons of orders to rebuild houses and she as well as other members of the company are very busy (beyond expressions). She will resume dancing in June.

Ms. Shizuko Komatsu in Ishinomaki City:

She continues staying at her sister's house in Sendai City. Her son has his own business (photograph). He is trying to resume his business while rebuilding their totally-destroyed house. However, their city needs to decide if the area is suitable for rebuilding houses, (some areas were sunk... or others damaged and could not use until major land/foundation repair) for this reason, they are kind of at a 'stand still'. They applied to have a temporary house as an interim solution to resume their life back in their town. They also lost their car(s) due to Tsunami. The dancers have recently decided to take turns to give her a ride to dance. (She still wants to dance even in these circumstances!!!!)

Ms. Masako Suzuki:

Her house was officially recognized as 'total loss' from 'major loss' (I think fund from government and insurance company is probably different) and she needs to re-build her house from scratch. Fortunately her mother-in-law lives 15 minutes walk from her location and her house was survived. Thus, Suzuki-san has been staying with her mother-in-law and has been walking back to her house to clean and salvage any items. She is waiting for her turn to rebuild her house. (IMPORTANT: ) She has resumed dancing!!!

Yoshi reports that Shimizu-san has been personally visiting these dancers often, helping cleaning-up and talking for relieving their stresses (and checking any sign of (mental, health and other) problems to support solving)

He has sent us a message to us, which reads:

Heart-breaking thing is the Tsunami destroyed not only houses but also all belongings and precious memories inside of these houses. They wear clothes from relief organizations or donations from friends. It goes without saying that all of their SCD stuff is lost as well. Fortunately, RSCDS Headquarters sent funds for these dancers to buy SCD related items. He communicated with them for their orders such as Ghillies, CD, dance books and has placed an order to Scotland. Still CD players and their dresses.....many more to recover with their normal life there before the quake.

(additional note)

Larger towns such as Ishinomaki-City where Ms. Shizuko Komatsu (above) lives have resumed fish markets. This city is one of the largest cities in Japanese fish industry.

I have read it was only 10% of the capacity they used to operate, but people want to send a message that they are surviving and let's recover together.

**News of Dancers** by Becky Sager

Congratulations to **Cynthia Atkins West** who passed Unit 3 of the Teachers' Certificate in June. Cynthia passed Units 1 and 2 last year, and traveled to Boston to take the Unit 3 exam on the "Examiners' Tour". Units 1, 2, and 3 are equivalent to the old Preliminary Test.

The dancers who attended the Technique Class taught by **Jesse Behmke** had a good time and learned a lot in the eight 3-hour sessions. After the last class in April, we adjourned to a nearby Chili's and Jesse was presented with a dancing fairy print so she can remember the dancers of Atlanta when she and Derek are in far-away Peoria IL.



The June Social, hosted by Jesse's Athens Class turned out to be very enjoyable. The dances were chosen for their food-related names, so most of them were new to us. However our apron-clad hosts gave very clear briefings, some aided by interesting props. Many of the snack items suggested by dance names were very clever too. Yoshi and Kathy Yukishige welcomed us to break our homeward journey at their Lawrenceville home for a really nice supper and socializing.

What is it about the Mid-West that is luring away our teachers and dancers? In addition to Jesse in Peoria we have **Andrew Smith** in Emporia, KS, of all places. Back in March, Andrew was the guest teacher at Spring Fling in Cocoa Beach FL. Three Atlanta dancers traveled down for the event to enjoy Andrew's teaching once more. **Sally Palmer** flew from Portland OR, where she now lives, to Atlanta (where she still maintains a home) to drive nine hours each way with Deborah Clague and Becky Sager. It was well worth the trip!



**Nancy Kidd** underwent meniscus repair surgery on her right knee in July. The surgery went well and the prognosis is that she can return to dancing soon. We were happy she was able to join us to socialize at the Ligon's home after the Marietta Class on July 27.

Although **gene Ligon** no longer dances, since her surgery and the following complications, she is still very much part of the group and often invites us over after class. We offer her our condolences on the recent death of her sister.

The **Stone Mountain Highland Games Welcome Dance and Tartan Ball** will be held at the host Hotel, the Hilton Atlanta Northeast Hotel in Norcross, GA. The music will be provided by the high energy duo Dave Wiesler and David Knight!!!

**Friday dances:** Good Hearted Glasgow, Sleepwalking, The Robertson Rant, The Black Black Oil, Postie's Jig, Sea Tangle of Skye, Rockside, The Drunken Sailor, Montreal Rendezvous, The Nurseryman, Johnnie Walker, Lothian Lads, The De'il Among the Tailors, Mr. Gallamore's Strathspey, The Cranberry Tart, The Montgomerie's Rant

**Saturday dances:** Blue Bonnets, The Australian Ladies, Culla Bay, Hooper's Jig, Tribute to John Middleton, The Flower of Glasgow, Follow Me Home, Montreal Rendezvous, Tribute to the Black Watch, A Flock of Geese, Gypsy Weaver, The Magic of Merrill, The Flight of the Falcon, City of Belfast, The Bees of MaggieKnockater, The Clumsy Lover

## **Upcoming events 2011 & 2012**

### **September**

- 9-11 [Sebring Workshop](#) - Sebring, FL  
16-18 [Scottish Weekend](#) – Highview, WV  
17 [Charleston Highland Games](#) including [Friday Social & Saturday Dance](#) – Charleston, SC  
23-25 [Fandango Contra/English Dance Workshop](#) **Note:** There is no Scottish Country dancing at this event.  
24 Branch Social at [St Bede's Episcopal Church](#) – Tucker, GA, 2:00 pm

### **October**

- 14-16 [Stone Mountain Highland Games](#) including [Friday Evening Gala and Saturday Evening Ball](#)  
23 [The Meadow Highland Games & Celtic Festival](#) – Doswell, VA  
29 [Charlotte, NC Annual Dance](#) – Charlotte, NC, 7:30 pm

### **November**

- 11-13 North Florida Workshop and Dances – Gainesville, FL  
19 [St Andrew's Day Dance](#) – Greensboro, NC, 8:00 pm

### **December**

- 3 Branch Social at [Norcross Community Center and Cultural Arts](#) – Norcross, GA, 2:00 pm

### **March 2012**

- 9-11 Spring Workshop – Unicoi State Park in Helen, GA

### **April 2012**

- 20-22 [Loch Norman Highland Games](#) including [Friday Welcome Dance and Saturday Gala](#) – Charlotte, NC



If undelivered, return to:  
**The Royal Scottish Country Dance Society**  
**Atlanta Branch**  
**Post Office Box 33905**  
**Decatur, GA 30033**  
**U.S.A.**