

**Central Indiana Folk Music and Mountain Dulcimer Society**  
**Minutes of the November 8, 2009 Board Meeting**

The meeting was called to order at 1:07pm by President Steve Kessinger. Board members present were Steve Kessinger, Phil Slates, Ruth Slates, Dave Wensits, and Amy Raab. This yearly business meeting was also attended by society members.

Dave Wensits presented the yearly Treasurer's Report. He shared the status of the savings account and explained this year's new procedures for funding the newsletter. He also shared that our membership last January was 108, and is currently 108. In 2009, we dropped 20 members and added 20 members. The Treasurer's Report was accepted on a motion by Phil Slates, seconded by Ruth Slates.

We had no Music Coordinator's Report as our Music Coordinator, Dave Slates, was absent.

Phil Slates began the discussion about the name change. He said that he was glad that people were interested and involved in this issue. Legally, we cannot easily change our not-for-profit name. It will remain "The Central Indiana Folk Music and Mountain Dulcimer Society." The debate has been over whether to change the moniker under which we do business. Phil stated that our membership is static. If we are following our mission to spread the music, then we really must grow. Including the word "dulcimer" in the name may be a limiting factor. A year ago, the board approved a committee to investigate changing the name. Phil then opened the floor to comments and discussion.

(\*Secretary's Note: I will attempt to record the exact thoughts expressed by each society member. A.R.)

Lew Mastin: I'm not for or against. I am muddled on why we need a change. I call it what I call it, and shorten the name as needed. I think about our sister organizations that we associate with at festivals. They have "dulcimer" in their names with no apparent limits to instruments. I would not like to see us isolate ourselves from our sister groups that we associate with by removing "dulcimer." I don't think we need a vote to change what we call it. A vote should be reserved for a real (legal) change.

Connie Morley: I agree with Lew. Years ago, we had twice the size, maybe 200-300 members, under the full CIFM&MDS name. I don't see "dulcimer" as a limiting word.

Sharon Day: The name doesn't limit anything. It expands horizons by opening up to new dulcimer players. Our name as is tells who we really are.

Mike Raab: The term "folk music" can include 60's protest music, roots music, and music from even further back. If we change the name to just "Folk Music Society," people may limit their perception in their own minds to however they define folk music. Including "mountain dulcimer" in the name gives a clue that the origins of our music are from the early years of American music. Our name as it is gives the most description and explanation.

Ruth Slates: I look at how to bring people in. Our website address is [www.indianafolkmusic.org](http://www.indianafolkmusic.org). What are we trying to say? As a non-dulcimer player, I did initially feel put off by the word “dulcimer.” I think that “Indiana Folk Music Society” is more inclusive and casts a wider net.

Mary Jane Weathers: It was originally called “dulcimer society” because that’s all we had! We only had dulcimers. The other acoustic instruments joined later.

George Babbitt: Our society is for “traditional American music.” Our name shouldn’t lead just toward folk when we are liable to hear and play so many types of traditional American music here.

Chuck Mills: George’s remark goes along with (President) Steve Kessinger’s recent newsletter articles about, “What is folk music?”

Dave Silk: Our mission statement was a legal issue and not necessarily an ideological commitment. There’s an emotional attachment to our original name. I don’t want to upset our long-term members. My only objection to CIFM&MDS is that it is a mouthful. In the past we considered dropping the word “mountain” but that’s not on this ballot. I think that emotional fallout is a strong reason not to change.

Cathy Platt: I agree with Ruthie (Slates). When I was in a music store, looking for a group with autoharps, someone told me that CIFM&MDS was for dulcimers only. I learned through word of mouth that the society has many more instruments. The name is exclusive. Who is not being reached simply because of the name?

Lew Mastin: Concerning losing people or failing to gain because of the name: This year we lost 20 and gained 20 all while using the name CIFM&MDS.

Phil Slates: We went through a process to find what the society members want. A vote last year gave the mandate to investigate. The information and choices about the name change have been available in the newsletter since January. This ballot is an opportunity to voice our opinion. As a matter of fact, I do agree with what Lew (Mastin) has been saying.

Sam Ross: We do have other folk music societies around the state. We are right here in the middle. I only ask that those who vote for a change vote to retain the word “Central” as it describes our location.

(\*Secretary’s Note: Thus ended the discussion period. A.R.)

Ballots and pencils were passed around the group, and votes were collected.

Vice President Ruth Slates supervised the counting of the votes.

Phil Slates moved on to Board of Directors positions for 2010. Candidates were named:

Vice President: Gary Rogers

Secretary: Amy Raab

Music Director: Mike Raab

Member at Large: Rose Perry

The positions of treasurer and president remain open. President Steve Kessinger shared with the group that Dave Wensits has done a very good job as treasurer in 2009, so it would be a good job to step into. Steve also said, concerning the job of President, that it is an easy job, particularly if there is a good board to work with. He said that serving as President has been a great opportunity for him to learn more about our society and contribute in furthering the mission. Dan Reneau said that being President in the past was the easiest Board position for him, and he didn't think that people would find the job difficult.

Phil Slates proposed a vote for the slated nominations. The Aye's had it for each. The 2010 board will include the nominated members, and Steve Kessinger will serve as Past President. Members were asked to consider volunteering for the positions of President and Treasurer.

Steve Kessinger asked if there was any other business.

Ruth Slates said that the votes concerning the name change had all been counted, and it was a tie. There were 20 for and 20 against. She said that we can continue the topic next year if desired. It will be up to the new board to decide whether or not to take up the issue. Ruth added that it was good that everyone is interested and opinioned on this.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:47pm by Steve Kessinger.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Raab

Secretary