

Transcript of discussion with Beth Hennessy and Tom Barnes with Lydia McAnerney on Saturday, July 17, 2021

Lydia McAnerney: Good morning, Beth and Tom. Today is Saturday, July 17, 2021 and I'm here with Beth Hennessy and Tom Barnes to do a little more chat about Tapestry Folkdance Center history. So, thanks for being here today. I guess my first very first question covered some of these things when we talked earlier but I've always been curious why did you both jump in with both feet? Did you, did what you were getting into and things, started in 1983, Did you do know all the things that were going to be required or did you just know that something needed to be done.

Beth Hennessy: Well, speaking from my own perspective. When we first got started, it was basically by invitation. Ed Stern in Saltari's old days was picking up on people within the community who seemed to be up and coming and active. And I think we were two of those who were identified. So when I think of the long term history of Tapestry because I've been involved over so many years or had been in the early, well, early and mid... I mean Tapestry has been around for what 40 years or something. I mean, it's been it's been a long time now and. And I was involved in a lot, both of the very beginning, but more in terms of what happened later. Because I got, I got hired after Cathy Collins left. And that was a very interesting process.

I remember my first day, walking into the office and we weren't at Marshall U anymore, that space had been lost. We shared that space with Nancy Hauser [Dance Company] and done some work on fixing it up, but it. The University of Minnesota came in and I think they were going to store their film department things there or something I don't know. But they were another nonprofit so that the mixed use worked. And they came in and took over that space because they could pay more and rent than small dance organizations could.

And so then we, I think John [Orrison] your husband was involved with a lot of the finding space and we ended up in a lot of different places and Tom and I weren't really very, very involved during that period of the change in Tapestry. But then we came back in later when, I was hired and we dealt with the People's Center and moved on eventually to Sabathani.

But getting back to your question of whether you could foresee all of that that was going to happen. No, I mean, you came in and you thought oh this is a neat thing we want to make this happen. It was really later, when I started working as the executive director and we did a lot of work on board development. Then you began to think, okay, this is not just trivial and when we moved to finding our own space. When we got kicked out of Sabathain and had to locate a space and we found the building. I

mean, a lot of it is happenstance. Things that happened to us in the process that probably happened to any organization, as it's developing and what it's what it's going through.

But, I think a lot of what we were involved in, and really what my role with a lot of that was, had to do with things that are kind of behind the scenes that people don't see so much. So a lot of it was organizational development, and how we were able to, , do board development, and have regular rotations off the board, and new people involved in what the board roles were, and what the staff roles were. A lot of behind the scenes work that mostly doesn't get seen so much, but builds the structure. It's like building the foundation of a house. You have tons of good structure for the house with all the to go through renovations and be strong and so a lot of that work was work that I was involved with.

But that enabled us to have the strength and, , it's when we got that new site. And, , Tom was involved with renovations. But you and John did so much and your kids, with renovating, I mean, we all have pictures of our kids chasing balls and structural pieces and doing things. But, a lot of that structure, I think, was created by a lot of the growth and development that went on behind the scenes that happened during my tenure.

LM: Yeah.

Tom Barnes: Yeah, so well for me to answer your question about why

BH: Yeah why

TB: Why it was probably self motivated. I was having too much fun. I started folk dancing in 1980 I think it was, on Tuesday night at the U, and you learn about all the other folk dance things going on through that, and that led me to Saltari. And my future wife, of course. But I was just having a lot of fun and I wanted to continue. And I figured that Okay, got to step up and do something. And so, I answered the call of Ed and Rolla. Yeah, and it's in my mind it was. It was, I was young, just out of college, didn't have a lot of friends outside of work. And so this folk dancing became a community.

And that's really the driving force at least for me, for a lot of the stuff that I do. Like down here [Lanesboro, MN], , I've never been in a play before, and got bitten by the bug in community theater. And I've been intimately involved with a lot of productions ever since and built up a whole community, In that sense, there's all the micro communities within the folk dance world - the Morris dancers, the English country

dancers, the contra dancers. And so for me, it is the dance, but it's also the community that is generated by the dance.

LM: Well I remember back when we were working together that word community came up a lot. That was the basis for everything that we did in terms of keeping things going. Whether it's from the administrative piece, , getting all those people involved in building, rebuilding the new building, not new anymore, but 3748 Minnehaha. Those things all pulled those communities together.

BH: Yeah. Yeah. And I think what made it possible was the strength that had been built up within. We had a lot of different communities. In so many places and the folk dance world, you have the Scottish group that meets in such and such a location. You have the English that meets them somewhere else, and Swing Dance does something else. Everybody is disparate and not really connected in any way. A lot of what we were able to do through Tapestry in the formation initially of the nonprofit, was to pull those communities all together. And, then build those communities when we have this opportunity to create a space. When I look back at the history of Tapestry - I've got a folder of history and I scanned it. It's like, we went through. I mean, I remember doing a long term planning session at one point and it's like, what is the thing that everybody dreams of - the long term view for the organization. It always revolved around space.

We went through so many different spaces and so many permutations of what the organization could be as a result of it. , after we had gotten kicked out of the Marshall University site and had had to move, we split off from Nancy Hauser. At that time, they found their own space. we moved around for a while and had things and a lot of different spaces,

Tom and I weren't very involved then. John O [rrison] was very active during that time. And I remember then that I got called up by John O. , "So, Beth do you want a job?" I didn't even know that Cathy had resigned and left. Eventually, I got hired. I was working at another nonprofit. Eventually got hired and I still remember my first day of work I had been given keys. And I walked into the People Center where there was this little office, that was on the side of a meeting room, very patched together, kind of stuff. And, it's your first day of a new job. You have no idea exactly what you're supposed to be doing. And, you walk in and, and you're in this little office space with files, and nobody's there to tell you what you're supposed to do. You have no clue what's going on. And I remember sitting there my first day just kind of looking around trying to figure it out and there's this mirror, sitting next to the desk. Who knows why the mirror is there. Which I later found out John O. had brought in, so that it would reflect the outside window from the hallway so Cathy could have a view of the outdoor world coming in.

And I just started digging through. It's like what do you do, you start digging through file so you can try to kind of figure out what's going on, and how are the system setup Like I say I hadn't been part of the organization for a while so that was very interesting. Eventually, Peter Stix, who was Treasurer, I think, at the time came and met with me. Peter was a nice guiding force and a lot of the early years.

But I think a lot of what I remember ...I don't remember where I was going with that.

But,we eventually ended up at Sabathani Community Center and during that time, we were able to do a lot of growth with the organization. Because,we shared the gymnasium space. But there was a storage room that was off the gymnasium where you could put all your stuff. We had a display case of all the flyers that could be locked up so that other people could use the space but then you could open it up when we were there. Our office was downstairs. Initially, we used the dance studio down in the basement for Advanced International. I remember, all those awkwardnesses about the space. We had like one of those lock things, lock boxes, yes, so that people who are opening for events, could know where to find the lockbox. For a long time was in one of the lockers because it was an old school building. You knew to go to this particular number locker and inside you can find the lockbox.

We had such odd systems but that's what you had to deal with. And then eventually there was a second space in that gymnasium. It was like a double size gymnasium and they built a wall between the two spaces and a theater group had been in that smaller space. And they moved out, and we inquired about it and then found out about that space and had a few theatrical performances. We did something called Summon the Sun for a few years when Lynne Noll was involved - she's been moved away.

So we did a lot of work with that. But then eventually we were able to take over that as an additional space that we used. So we had two spaces. As a result of having two spaces we were able to do more programming and have all kinds of other events take place. So you can build up the organization that way. And that helped begin to build the breadth and the depth that we had so that when we actually got kicked out of the Sabathani site, we had a lot of the people and a lot of support.

And I don't know if you remember this, Lydia, I think I always remember this and I remember it was so amusing. I initially worked alone. And then, I got some funding to hire Terry Blackmore, who worked as, I think we called it, the external relations coordinator. So she kind of did the publicity and the outreach and all that kind of stuff. And then when Terry left, you were who was hired to replace Terry.

So you and I were working and we had recently hired Mary Kay Schladweiler, who was working on programming. So she was kind of focused on programming, and you were focused on outreach and fundraising, and I did more of the overall organizational board work and financial side of things.

There was this workshop that was going to be offered, called by the McKnight Foundation.. Well, no they didn't. I don't remember who offered it, but the McKnight Foundation was one of the participants in the panel. But it was called *Say you want to buy your own building*. And we signed up for that. You and I got signed up for that. And then it got cancelled.

And then, we got hit with the new lease and realized that we were going to have to move out of Sabathani. And we're gonna have to find a new space. Lisa Strong was on the board and she lived in the neighborhood close to where the Minnehaha site is, where the building is now. And, she saw that building that was for sale. And we got into the process right away.

We went through all kinds of, all kinds of obstacles and things but that workshop had gotten canceled. And then it got rescheduled. For some I remember as being January, and we had started all of this fundraising and dealing with what was going to happen in like, October or something. So, we looked at each other we said, well, should we go? We're kind of in the process of really doing this now. And we decided to go anyway so we signed up and went to this workshop. It was very interesting. But one of the things that repeatedly kept being brought up was the fact that you couldn't go to foundations first to get money. That they wanted to see community support before you went to them to ask for money. Neil Cuthbert was there from the McKnight Foundation. He was one of the representatives on the panel.

He kept talking about how we aren't just giving people money for a building. I need to show that you've got community support to make it happen. And I remember we went up to him afterwards and well we're thinking about approaching you but we've already raised, I think at that time was like \$38,000 or \$40,000 , and his eyes just popped. I remember that it was like, Oh my gosh, here's somebody who's really doing what they need to do.

But part of that whole process from that workshop was that they're talking about how you should go through this process. And the fact that if you're going to go into it, you should look at it as like a three to five year process of building up the support, getting the funding and doing this than the other. Which was not at all, how we how we did it. We were sort of forced into having to take action and we did the whole process in two years, I think, - more or less. Yeah, but. really wonderful then to see from the outside

and having moved away, because, , we had all that community involvement and, , I remember when we were working on that space it's like we see that space and it's like, oh, it's a free span space this will work great. Who cares that the floor is uneven because they had it with drains for the stuff that went on there for car work.

But, , I have all these odd pieces of things that pop into my head. From that time, with different people taking different roles and a lot of it was built on that strength of the volunteer base, which is a lot of the work that I had done when I was working as executive director. And, you build up that and you build a structure that causes people to come in, and join the board. But nobody stays on for 20 years and, and keeps going it's not - you always have new people coming in. So we always had a third of the board rotate off every year, and a third that would be the more experienced board members and a third who had only just joined the year before, and then you'd have your new people coming in.

So you always have that turnover. But then, what we had in the community was a lot of what we had built through that process. A huge depth of people who had been interested, had participated, understood about the behind the scenes organizational work but now were no longer as deeply involved. But then when building came along, they were ready to step up and take part and so we had this huge community with a lot of crossover. People who had seen other events that have taken place, and that entire community came together to make that building happen.

And so many people I mean, Tom, took on and Demi Miller and Jan Raven were sort of our three contractors, who worked to make the building happen. And then it was a huge volunteer force. So that I still remember the first event that we had in the new space. Wild Asparagus was coming and we didn't know whether, we had advertised it as it might be in the new space but it might be at Sabathani because we didn't know whether we were going to have approval to move into the new space. And, the last thing that we needed was the approval of the fire marshal. That we met all the requirements and had all the proper exits to open up and I think we got the approval from the fire marshal that very afternoon.

LM: Right, you did.

BH: Yeah, yeah, I still remember that. I remember standing at the admission table right inside the door. People would come in and the small studio was not completed yet - there's wood all over the floor and, it's obviously in progress. People would walk in and we'd stand there at the admission table. Do you know about this space? It's like you'd ask everybody who came in - what this is that you're walking into? Somebody would say, "No, I always meant to try to volunteer but I never had an

opportunity.” And immediately somebody behind them in line would speak and say, “Oh, well I helped here - the floor, ” and “I put in this right here,” and “I did this.” It was a real coming together of a lot of people sharing ownership of the development of that space. That was a pretty exciting time for all of us.

LM: I think many of those people are still involved, not 100%, but many of them are still around.

TB: Some of them are still alive. Yes.

BH: Yes. And some aren't. As far as I know, there is still a plaque up in the lounge, not George Long, Len MacEachern who put in who knows how many volunteer hours working that space, and has since passed away. But we have a huge depth of people, and names involved with the organization that really should be honored in many ways on their own. It's kind of hard to touch on all of them because it was such a big community effort.

LM: Right, well I know we did that video a number of years ago with Terry McDaniel about the building. I think that's up on the Tapestry website for people.

BH: Oh good.

LM: Kind of fun to look at.

So kind of change gears a little bit. Can you talk a little bit about the... You talked a little bit about the financial stuff, and kind of Peter coming in, but sort of the early financial organization and how it...I mean, I remember looking at the budget as it grew over time and sort of related to that, any staff kinds of things that I've looked at. I did a spreadsheet with all the staff and saw, maybe when you were leaving as the financial person, how many people came during the next number of years.

So there was no stability in that way. After you left in terms of this financial stuff. Can you talk a little bit about that. And Tom I'm interested in, when when Beth's does her thing, sort of what you saw from, your perspective as the person sort of behind the scenes and watching her work so, think about that. So, sort of financial related things

BH: Things happen, he just accepted they happen.

TB: Yeah. Well my motto was just get a bigger hammer when you run into problems.

BH: Yeah.

TB: Just about finances I mean it always seemed like it was a shoestring operation. We're talking, , thousands of dollars rather than 10s of thousands or quarter millions budget.

BH: Never that.

TB: And so it was always, it seemed like it was always fairly, well could be very very volatile. And it was only when we actually got the building that that suddenly concreted things. That, oh, we're here, we're here to stay.

BH: A certain amount of stability.

TB: And that was a very nice thing to see.

BH: I think that a lot of what I saw in the time I mean we had an expansion of staff, obviously, that I had already previously mentioned when you came on. Terry Blackmore first, and then you came on board and some grant money that helped start those positions.

But part of the way that we could grow, and we were able to build that staffing over that time, was by having them be part time positions. We never had a full time position until the new building and that only lasted a short period of time.

LM: Were you full Time for a bit?

BH: No, I was never full time income.

TB: Yeah, we had kids.

BH: Right. No, well that yeah that happened about the same time.

But, the finances were... The size of the budget, over the years, if you look at it from the time when I very first started at Tapestry, it seems like the budget was under \$40,000 a year I mean, the very small budget organization. And by the time I left it was, , well over \$100,000 I think maybe we'll close to \$200,000 at that point, which enabled us to actually apply for funding from the, now I'm blanking on it.

LM & TB: State Arts Board.

BH: Thank you. Thank you. Yes, to apply for and be considered for general operating support you have to have a budget over a certain size. You couldn't apply for general operating support from the State Arts Board unless you were a particular size.

So that was part of what had happened during that time. But, think back to what you're asking about the financial situation. I mean...

LM: It seems like as I looked at the budget that things just grew, not exponentially but steadily. More people involved, more organizations, more renters maybe.

BH: Yeah.

LM: Contra dance with growing, things coming in, just sort of things were growing, and I remember more and more work that I was doing, and Mary Kay was really busy. and reaching out to do the Nine Nights at the historic History Center and...

BH: Right, right.

LM: Yeah, all those things were happening. Right. It seemed like things were fairly stable but then, then it didn't continue that way.

BH: Yeah. Well, I think that, , you don't like to talk about things that you didn't really have much of a role in because I don't know all of what happened.

There was a certain amount of stability that was provided by Cindy and Terry Gardener. Will I mean it was Cindy. Yeah. When she - Cindy Geiger, I think, my memory fails me - started teaching swing dance classes, and as with many things that we did in early years, we almost always pay people based on a percentage of the door. So that, so the organization took a risk in putting on the event that we might not get enough to cover our costs of promoting and paying for the space and doing everything, but the performers and the teachers also took a risk that they needed to bring people in as well. That they were responsible for their event being successful. And so, Cindy started teaching swing dance. We had always split the gate with contra dances and other events.

Usually, it's split the gate, sort of financial arrangement, and especially when you have live music. And Cindy came in and she was going to teach and at first it was just she was teaching classes. But, because of the need for greater volunteers and it's part of what we provide as an organization, we would make sure there's somebody there to open the space, to close the space, to work the admissions table to do all the

promotion of the event. And when Cindy came in, she wanted to do this on a Thursday night for swing dance. And it's like, oh my gosh you've grown and you kind of think okay this is wonderful. Somebody wants to do a new event and new kind of activity. But how are we ever going to find volunteers to come in and help out on a workday night. And Cindy volunteered to do it all.

So she basically took over everything. She took care of opening, closing, the admissions, the teaching, all of it. She self promoted, I mean there was a huge amount of work that went into that, and as a result we worked on a special deal with her where she took 75% of the gate, because she was doing a lot of the work that Tapestry normally would have done. And she built that into a huge community.

She met Terry, her now husband, through that process and they started teaching together. The swing dance community got very large, and was a big part of our ability to grow and to be in a position where we could financially take on that risk of buying a building and doing a new space.

But then after I had left, I don't know exactly what happened with the whole board development process and the roles of staff and board. A lot of structural stuff that I had built up and put into place seems to have faltered a bit. , a lot of that behind the scenes stuff, that unless you're in that, you don't know what's going on.

But I heard a lot of things happening and we got some phone calls from some people wanting to know the history of stuff. But all I know is that the board, looking at the finances, decided that swing dance was taking too much of our revenues. And that Cindy and Terry were getting paid too much. Nobody else got paid that much, why should they be making that much money, was kind of the reason behind that.

And I think that there was a bit of a failure of looking at the fact that. Well, part of the reason that's so huge is because of the work that they do. That they have a lot of value, and then they are worth what we paid them. Because, the amount that we get, even though the percentage when you look at the percentages as a whole, might be less. It's still producing a huge amount of revenue for the organization that you're not going to have otherwise. And, in fact, that's what happened. They ended up going elsewhere and the communications all broke down. I wasn't around during that time, so I don't really know the specifics of that, and I don't know what really happened in terms of board development. There was a lot of staffing change during that time, and I know that for a while there wasn't even an executive director. It seemed like it was all board run again. It was almost like going back to the very, very first year of tapestry before Cathy was even hired.

And then it was after I came in that we really worked on board structure and delineated responsibilities of board and staff. Because I think that a lot of what Cathy dealt with in early years was how you manage being, in a way that what her position was when she first started, as an administrative assistant. That the board were all bosses. And yet the board, isn't there every day she's the one who's there every day and so, , you'd have 12 to 15 board members who each had their own little personal area they were interested in. And then she would get contacted by that person - you should be doing this and somebody else - you should be doing this. I think it just led to a lot of stress. Who knows why all she was doing - career changes so there were other reasons that she left.

But a lot of what I did in my early years was look at that structure and how do you make sure that you've created an organization that both supports the community but then also supports the staff within that community and, provides a structure that the staff can work in without being stressed out by, really, the number of bosses that you have.

And so we developed a system of governance by policy. There's a lot of background stuff that probably nobody's really interested in, but I think it provided the structure that made the kind of growth, and the changes that we were able to do and that steady growth in the financial picture work.

And then, and then I'm not there anymore and I left. So I don't really know all what happened. But in spite of that, the organization still exists, the mortgage was paid off. I mean, there are a lot of positive things that still managed to happen in spite of some of the underneath staffing and structural changes that have been challenging in many ways.

LM: Yeah, I was not involved either. I think after you left, I had kids and I was not involved very much either. Really in the last three years started getting back involved but there was a big change. They went away from the Carver system of governance and now they have sort of more regular policies, I guess. I think what I liked about the Carver system was that it said you what you could not do, not what you can do, and now what it is is more like, here's what you can do. And so it limits what, can happen and how it can happen. And, and maybe that's an easier way for people to see that programs can be regulated and the financial pieces can be looked after in a better way. But there's also the problem of a policy gets made and there's an exception and what do you do about the exceptions. How does that work? That's why I don't know who came up with the Carver system but that seemed like that was

BH: When I very first came on the board, Andre Christiansen, who lived down in Nerstrand. I don't know what happened to Andrea but she had come on the board and she had worked with the John Carver Policy System of Governance. I was looking back through my old materials on governance and how the structure of boards and organizational structure can be set up in many organizations. They talk about that in most organizations, a single governance structure never works. One by itself doesn't work. I have a whole list of like about nine or 10 options of styles of of governance. Generally what you would find is that an organization will work with you'll mostly be in one but you also have bits of another one. And in analyzing that and looking through that at the time, I've listed all these different models of governance and all the ones that we didn't use, that didn't apply to us, and which ones we did use in some way.

There were two main ones that I think are the big ones that really guided what we did as an organization. The first was the John Carver system, which worked really well because like you say. I think a lot of times board members don't understand how a lot of not - You can't do this; You can't do this; You can't do this. That feels very negative. But the fact of the matter is that it is freeing to the staff members. Because then, when an opportunity presents itself, you don't have to ask somebody, is it okay if we try this. You have the responsibility for doing that. You can address and renew an upcoming and different thing and you can try things out. As long as you're not violating the budget and as long as you're not doing this. There are things that keep you in your place that the board can monitor and make sure that you're doing the job and that you're still having a balanced budget. But it allows you the freedom to develop new ideas and new programming. And so the John Carver system is one that we used and, I mean, you probably remember all those board retreats where you talk about those nesting cups and the little kid cups that nest inside of each other. That if you have them all over the place and you're trying to pick up all of them. It's like you drop them. And, that the board can't manage all those different bits and aspects of an organization.

And so instead you create a system of governance where the biggest one, the biggest thing for organization is the mission and goals. That each level you might find some new restrictions, but they all then fit inside of each other. They stack and then you're holding the whole organization in one little stackable sense and you're not trying to balance all of them individually flying all over the place.

And that was just a really good picture of what that system of governments did for us as an organization. It allowed staff to to take risks and try things, but still work within a structure that wouldn't freak out the board. So, that was always very good. We also had a real set system. It's like the board change over always happened at a particular time every year there was a month there. And we always chose a time in the

organization where it was. It allowed you some freedom for the board to do some development work before it got smack in the middle of its regular work. And we would always have a day-long board retreat. I had designed it to be that way. The first part of the retreat was for all the new incoming board members, and any previous ones that would like to review. And we would spend that morning just talking about the John Carver System of Governance and how it worked and how the policies were written. I always brought my little baby cubes that fit together so that people could see that visual of how it provides structure for organization.

And we'd spend that time working on - this is why you want to have these kinds of policies that sound negative because there's so many - "You can't do this;. You can't do that." But in fact, it enables someone to go out and try new things.

And then we'd have a potluck lunch where all the old board members would come in. After that potluck lunch, new and old board members would decide on committees that people wanted to be on. We'd split up into groups to talk about what committees are going to do, and the board would talk about their work in the next year. So that you'd always have this set time where the board got together and talked about the organization, and how we run the organization, and how that structure is going to work and how it's going to work in the next year.

And then every year, you'd have a third of the board be new people coming in and two thirds continuing. One third having been there for two years already, they are in their third year. But, you'd always have new blood coming in and that built new interest and new ideas. I think it worked really well.

LM: Yeah, there's a new, new board now that's coming on. There's people who are from different programs as always, but I think that this board is finally the new board that's taking over now is finally really focusing on what's going to happen in the next few years, where are we going. Right at the very beginning, the notes from the first board were that this is going to be a World Dance organization. I think, and Ann's really focusing on how does that, what does that mean, how are we going to make this a World Dance organization? I want to get back to our roots, without

BH: right

LM: Without sort of going through the problems that we've had before.

BH: Yeah, well it was interesting because they have this document called review of tapestries history that I had put together, many years ago. It goes through all those different things and the first thing it talks about is the mission. And it's interesting to

look at it. Because when we first opened our doors in 1983-84, the mission was “to teach and foster folk dance and related folk activities in an atmosphere that is social and open to the public.” And then, okay but nothing that really makes anybody just jump up and go yeah I want to support this. In October, in 1987, they decided to expand and clarify the mission, and they ended up with this very long in depth mission, which had three parts to it.

One was “to provide a continuing central base for folk dance education and recreation in the metropolitan area.”

The second was “to foster a sense of community among people by promoting an appreciation of their diverse cultural heritage's.”

The third was “to contribute to individual health by teaching lifetime exercise and social activity.”

LM: Wow.

BH: Yeah. Well it was deemed too long, and anything you've read on mission statements says that they need to be like 25 words or less. And so, in April of 1989, they decided they needed to get smaller and simpler, and the mission became “to provide a variety of quality recreational folk dance opportunities to the public,” which again was sort of what we did, but didn't really make anybody very excited.

And so we wanted something to pull the heartstrings more and in 1996, they adopted, what I don't know if this is still the current mission statement or not. I don't know what they've done since then. But the mission statement became “Tapestry Folkdance Center creates opportunities for participating in the joys of dance and music from around the world.”

LM: Right, that's still the mission.

BH: And that was the mission that guided us. That was the thing that, with all those John Carver things, that's the biggest cup. That's the thing that holds everything else together is what the mission is. You can do a lot within that mission and exactly what your activities are and your programming and your procedures, those are all within that.

LM: Well, we could go on for probably another hour but let's wrap up, I guess. Given, , both of your involvement over the years with the beginning and time you're still dancing when you can up here and in touch with people I guess, do you have any

words of wisdom for current staff or board members. You had to say in 25 words or less. 50 words or less. What would be some advice you might give to them?

TB: Well never, never lose sight of why you started the project. Whether they went on the board, whether you're a volunteer, or you're a dancer. I mean, it is the joy of dance and the joy of being in a community. And you just can't lose that. Right, it's like being an actor. That you're more than just a person up on stage, your person at least partially telling the story that your audience has come to see and hear. And so it's, don't lose sight of that story. And that would be the most poignant thing I could probably say. Don't forget to smile and have fun. Keeps you young, like me.

BH: Yeah, I agree with that totally. I mean again, that's that John Carver system that says the biggest thing at the bottom - the joy, what tapestry is all about. That's the thing that has to be there. That has to constantly, you have got to come back to and say, Yes, we are still doing thi. At the same time, what you have to do is build structure. So that you have all those cubes set inside of each other but that they do set inside of each other. That you haven't lost track of them, and let them go all over the place. That you'd have some means of guiding. Staff need to be free to jump at opportunities and to try things, but they also have to be limited by...The board has to keep on top of it and look at the budget and be aware of what's happening.

And if, if you aren't aware of what's happening, you should be asking. Because, that's something that should be provided to the board on a regular basis - the financial information on how the organization is doing and whether or not the staff are following the guidelines and are working within that budget. If something doesn't work, they've tried some of them they thought had great promise. And it was a financial disaster. Well, maybe you only had a certain portion of it that went off into a financial disaster. But the board is also on top of things. And on an annual basis can look at those finances and can catch it and say oh, maybe we need to relook at this. This is problematic because organization, how are we going to get past this.

So, a lot of it is maintaining that big picture - that love of dance and community that you've got to have there. But then also, having the eyes to look at all those restrictions that you said,

What happened, our screen went away. Are you still there?

LM: I can still see you.

BH: Yeah, okay, well we can't see you so we'll just assume that you're doing fine.

TB: I would probably just add a little bit to that financial wise, just in my own life. I'm probably odd, in that I don't really believe in debt. So I've never had a mortgage on the house. Basically, if I can't pay for it now I'm not going to get it. And I've always been very proud of Beth, when she was at the helm, that most of the income that Tapestry has earned income it did not come from grants.

And so I would probably tell future boards. Work on that philosophy. Do not go into debt, do not rely on grants to fund your organization. At its minimum, still have dances and still collect admissions, and use that to pay for things. If you can get grants to add on to that great, but don't rely on grants.

BH: Yeah, grants for the organization always were the means of helping assisting with taking the next step forward. So we got grants that help add staff members. When I first hired Terry Blackmore we had gotten a grant to help add that position. But then her additional work, combined with my work, enabled us to increase our revenues, so that we could then cover the cost of keeping her on staff and keeping her around.

Same thing with the building. We got grants to help out with the building. We got a lot of donations from individuals. But as they said at that workshop we went to, we started with the community. The individuals had to support. They had to come forward first before the outside grantmakers came in. Certainly the outside money and the support from grantmakers is really important and valuable. It enables us to try things and do things and grow that you can't otherwise do. But you always have to be able to look at the next step and see how you can manage it. It's like with the building, taking on that, that debt that -Tom likes to pay everything - But, we couldn't even have enough money to do that. So, we got a mortgage. We shopped around. We were able to get basically what amounted to something that's more like an individual's mortgage rather than a business mortgage. Business mortgages tend to be short term, for not very many years. We were able to get a 30 year mortgage, because we found the right bank to work with us to make that possible. And we had to make sure that we expected to be able to always cover that mortgage. The mortgage payment was kind of like what we had always had to pay for rent. But it was not quite what we had to pay for rent. So if we could pay down additional on the mortgage, the idea was to retire it sooner. Then that became an ongoing kind of fundraising thing for the organization. So yeah, there's always been. It's not that you look away from grant money because that can help a lot, do a lot for the organization. But you certainly don't rely on it. That in the bare basics was just what the community contributes and what earned income gives you, you can keep your organization going and survive in that basic form.

LM: All right, anything else to add.

