



# New Archangel Dancers®

Folk Dance from Russia & Surrounding Regions  
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February 22, 2012

Dear Assembly Members:

It is our understanding that the Assembly will be reviewing the Harrigan Centennial Hall (HCH) rate recommendations dated February 6, 2012. The New Archangel Dancers (NAD) have been performing in Sitka at the Harrigan Centennial Hall (HCH) since 1969. We are writing to respectfully request that the Assembly oppose the recommended increases.

The proposed general use fee increase for non-profit organizations would have a direct impact not only to the NAD but the Baranof Arts and Crafts Association (BACA) and the Sitka Historical Museum (Museum). NAD performances have drawn in literally thousands of tourists and other visitors to the HCH for well over 40 years. Prior to and after our performance these visitors pour into the BACA area and the Museum.

As the City is well aware, we have had a massive decline in cruise ship port calls since 2008. The NAD, along with all local businesses in Sitka, have been dealing with these budget shortfalls hoping for an improvement in cruise ship numbers. In 2011, the NAD decided that in order to sustain the viability of their organization during these lean years we would start fundraising to supplement our budget. The hope was to balance our necessary expenses ie; mortgage, utilities, insurance, etc. Although we were able to generate some additional funds, we were not able to break even. The NAD have implemented drastic cutbacks in the past few years on all of our expenses including no longer contracting with a dance director, refinancing our building and reducing our general overhead to essential items that keep our doors open.

The following table illustrates the decline in attendees to our performances and rental fees paid to the HCH.

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
May	2860	3260	2660	1860	1860
June	3060	5260	4060	2260	2860
July	4260	5250	3860	2460	2460
August	4660	5260	3460	1860	2860
September	2860	4060	3060	2260	2260
Misc.	850.5	388.5			212
HCH Rent	\$ 18,550.50	\$ 23,478.50	\$ 17,100.00	\$ 10,700.00	\$ 12,512.00
Attendees	34,147	35,849	20,968	15,723	12,401

As you can see, there is a direct correlation with the reduction of visitors and the reduced rental fees paid.

The original and current purpose of the HCH is to serve as a centralized visitor and conference center. The convention centers around the State are traditionally city owned and generally subsidized by city government. Sitka is no exception. The city of Sitka conducts business at the HCH free of charge.

As our Board continues to discuss the sustainability of our group, we would like to suggest the following alternative solutions to increase revenue for the HCH.

Solution 1 - Instead of increasing HCH rates, focus on increasing cruise ship stops in Sitka. Our community can't take many more lean years. Fairweather Prints has recently closed their doors and turned their focus to the Juneau cruise ship market. Additionally, several businesses have opened up stores in Hoonah to supplement what use to be their summer income.

Solution 2 – Marine Passenger Fee Fund – Use this funding source to supplement the HCH budget. The HCH serves our summer visitors from May through September.

Solution 3 – Continue working to attract conferences, conventions and special events to Sitka. The tax revenue dollars generated from these activities would increase Sitka's general fund.

The NAD have always had a terrific working relationship with the HCH. Our motto has always been that the HCH is "The Home of the New Archangel Dancers". Our support has not only been through rental fees but by donating significantly throughout the years. (Please see list below).

Increasing non-profit rates at the HCH would have a severe detrimental impact on an already slim budget. Our hope is that the Assembly will evaluate other alternatives, as described, prior to increasing rates at the HCH.

Sincerely,

New Archangel Dancer Board of Directors  
Linda Speerstra, Chairman  
Kathleen Foster, Secretary  
Angie Hill, Treasurer  
Cindy Baldwin-Kitka, Archives and Records  
Kate Calvin, Costume Director  
Angela McGraw, Public Relations Director

## New Archangel Dancer contributions

### Late 70's Early 80's

- Donated the funds for the storage room conversion to a dressing room
- Paid for original green chairs & cushions
- Paid for black curtain – 2 sets, new hardware and installation
- All clocks in the building

### 1990's

- Paid \$27,000 for new red curtains, hardware and installation
- Clocks in the auditorium

### 2006

- The NAD assisted the HCH staff in organizing the Harrigan Centennial Hall 40<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration and Fundraiser. With massive community involvement, we were successful in raising over \$50,000 to purchase new chairs for the auditorium. The NAD donated \$3,000 to start the effort.