

Independence Squares Board Meetings

April 13 & 21, 2020

Part 1: April 13 meeting

Present: Tim Harper, Mike Rutkowski, Dick Michelin, Susan Turkel, Mary Kay & Bob Rohde, Steve Demos, George Rizer, Leda Sportolari, Dave Blatt

Meeting was held via teleconference.

Approval of minutes from January 27 meeting -- Susan
Approved with corrections.

Susan still needs to write instructions for board members to post to the IS blog (WordPress).

Approval of minutes from March 15 meeting -- Steve
Approved by the board.

Logistics of IS club Zoom meeting tomorrow (Tuesday) – Leda

We discussed our plans for the Zoom meeting we'd announced to the IS listserv. Due to security concerns, we'd asked folks to email Leda for the link to the meeting rather than posting the link publicly. As of the time of the board meeting, 25-30 people had indicated their interest.

We anticipate spending the first 10-15 minutes admitting people to the meeting, troubleshooting, and familiarizing everyone with the technology. Features we might consider using included screen sharing, thumbs up, hand raising, and text-based chat. With the understanding that things might look different on different platforms and devices, Dave has agreed to help with troubleshooting.

After the preliminaries, Tim will present on the state of the club and can take questions. Then we'll have open social time. We look forward to this opportunity to connect with everyone.

Fly-in Committee Report -- Mary Kay

Mary Kay presented a summary of the income and expenses connected with the 2020 Fly-in, and the costs the club incurred as a result of the event's cancellation.

Overall, our costs were very limited. Most of the folks who registered for the event (77 out of 93) allowed their registrations to roll over to next year; ten people donated their registrations to the club, and only six asked for a refund. The Clarion Hotel allowed us to carry over our deposits into the following year, so our hotel costs were zero. We paid the callers their full fees and reimbursed any nonrefundable travel expenses; these caller-related expenses, and some publicity fees, were our main losses.

We are grateful for the Clarion's willingness to work with us. Casey is writing a thank you letter to the corporate body, and we would like to send a gift to Sally, our main contact at the Clarion.

We're extending the date for early-bird pricing for the 2021 Fly-in registration through the end of August. Dave has set up the correct date and pricing information on the IAGSDC website, and PayPal is already set up for online registrations.

The board appreciates all of Mary Kay's great work in managing the Fly-in and in dealing with the logistics of cancelling the event. Thank you, Mary Kay!

Treasurer's Report -- Dick

Dick went over the income and expenses for January, February, and March. We made money in January; we lost a little in February; and we lost more than \$3500 in March, due to the Fly-In being cancelled.

We discussed financial implications of suspending all dancing. As it stands, we have no income, but our expenses are also very low. We considered the possibility of making a donation to the Lutheran Church, since we know they aren't able to collect rent from tenants like us during the coronavirus shutdown. We decided to hold this topic for discussion until we get to the agenda item on how to help club members in need.

Caller Liaison Report -- Mike

The Caller Liaison report, which lists all upcoming dances for which we've hired callers, is appended to this document.

We have many callers lined up for the coming months. The members of the Caller Liaison Committee recommend that we don't cancel any existing caller contracts at this point.

However, we agreed that the CLC should hold off on creating any new contracts. We had previously authorized them to start hiring callers for summer Open Houses, but directed them not to move forward with this.

In terms of Fall classes and workshops, we have verbal agreements with our callers but we will not create formal contracts at this point since we don't know what will be happening in the fall or when we'll be able to begin dancing again.

Proposal to cancel 2021 Fly-in contracts -- Steve

We had a lengthy discussion about the 2021 Fly-in. Given the uncertainty connected with the coronavirus pandemic and the odds that there might not be a vaccine by next March, it seems possible that we won't be able to hold the event. We want to support our callers, but we don't want to keep them on the hook until the last minute and then cancel them. We considered various options, including cancelling contracts with callers immediately (with the intention of rehiring them or finding other callers if we are able to hold the event), or renegotiating contracts with the current callers so that we have more flexibility in terms of fees if we decide to cancel the event with a good deal of notice.

An initial motion was proposed: *Independence Squares will inform the three 2021 Fly-in callers that we are opting out of our contract immediately.* There were two yes votes, five no votes. The motion did not pass.

A second motion was discussed, involving renegotiating caller contracts with terms that varied if the Fly-in was cancelled with more or less than six months' notice. The motion was withdrawn before a vote was held. We agreed that we would discuss this again at our follow-up meeting next week.

As of now, the Fly-in is still on our schedule and we will continue to accept registrations. We'll go ahead with the rest of the planning activities, but will continue to discuss caller contracts and the possibility of renegotiating with them.

Action item: *Mike will have informal conversations with callers other than our Fly-in callers to ask how they'd respond to this kind of contingent contract. This will help us have a better idea of how best to approach the Fly-in callers.*

Discussion of 2020-2021 dance schedule – all

We discussed our timeline for cancelling currently scheduled Saturday dances, given the coronavirus situation. So far, we have cancelled only the April dance. We agreed that we wanted to give our dancers a sense of optimism, so we'll decide on cancellations on a rolling basis. As we decide to cancel dances, the Caller Liaison Committee will contact the callers and we'll mark the dances as cancelled on our website. We want to keep the website dynamic and updated as things change.

We also discussed our policy on paying callers for dances. Our contracts allow us to pay less than the full fee if we cancel with several months' notice. However, Tim suggested that we offer to pay each of our currently contracted callers 100% of their fee, regardless of whether a dance is held or not. Callers are an important part of our square dance family, and we want and need to support them. Some depend on caller fees for their income; some have other jobs, but we must treat them all equally. (We have already had callers turn down the offer of being paid when a dance was cancelled.)

A motion was proposed: *Independence Squares will pay all of our currently contracted callers 100% of their fee, regardless of whether their dances are held or not.* There was one no vote and six yes votes; the motion passed.

We also discussed the Pride parade and celebration currently scheduled for June. We decided to wait to make a decision on our participation, rather than pre-emptively deciding not to take part. If the event is cancelled, we will discuss at that time whether to donate the fees we've already paid.

Annual Meeting

We discussed various options for our annual meeting and election of the next board. According to the club by-laws, we are supposed to meet every year by the 15th of June. Membership dues are also due by the date of the meeting.

The By-laws state that if we don't meet on that schedule, any member can call a meeting after 6 months after that date.

We considered sticking with the date and voting by mail or meeting via videoconference or teleconference. We realized that some members do not have internet access at home, and public

libraries are currently closed. We also recognized that it didn't seem fair to ask folks to pay membership dues while they can't enjoy the benefits of club membership, especially given that people may have had their jobs and incomes interrupted.

A motion was proposed: *Because the club is suspending activities, we will not hold an Annual Meeting in June; membership dues will not be due on the regular schedule, and the current board will continue in their roles. We will hold the next Annual Meeting one month after we resume dancing.* There was one no vote and six yes votes; the motion passed.

Supporting members in need -- Leda

We are concerned that some of our members might need help during the coronavirus crisis, be it financial, medical, shopping, or something else. The board wants to be supportive of our members.

We agreed that we can mention our concern at the "state of the club" gathering tomorrow. We can suggest that if anyone needs help, they should contact other club members or members of the board.

We also discussed the possibility of accepting monetary donations to be distributed to members in need. We were not sure who could take ownership of managing these monies and deciding how to distribute them. We will continue this conversation at our next meeting.

We agreed to discuss the remainder of our agenda items at our follow-up meeting next Tuesday.

The April 13th meeting was adjourned at 9:54 pm.

Minutes, April 21 Meeting

Present: Leda, Susan, Dick, Tim, Dave, George, Steve (plus Mike Rutkowski, plus six club members: Eileen, Melissa, Deb, Will, George V, and Norma)

Proposal to renegotiate caller contracts for 2021 fly-in – Steve

This topic was carried over from the last board meeting.

Mike has had a chance to check in with several callers about how they'd respond to a proposal to renegotiate contracts for the Fly-in. The proposed new contract would have them receive no payment if the event were cancelled with at least six months' notice, and 50% payment if it were cancelled within six months of the event's date. The callers he spoke with said that they would find these terms acceptable. (Mike noted that the individuals he spoke with were not full-time callers.)

Steve proposed the following motion: *The board of Independence Squares directs the Caller Liaison Committee to attempt to renegotiate our contracts with the three callers for the 2021 Fly-in. The terms of the revised contracts would include language that would result in no penalty for Independence*

Squares if we opt out of the contract before we reach the date six months out from the Fly-in. If we opt out of the contract within six months of the Fly-in, Independence Squares would pay each caller half the contracted fee. There would be no "act of God" clause in the revised contract. The Caller Liaison Committee will report back to the board by the end of May, preferably at our May board meeting.

The group discussed this proposal. We agreed the importance of supporting the callers, as they are part of our dance family. We want to maintain good caller-club relations. Some felt that this offer was generous. The board members voted on the proposal; it passed unanimously.

We then discussed what we would do if any caller did not want to renegotiate. Would we terminate their contract? Mike agreed to check with each of them and to bring any counterproposals back to the board.

A motion was proposed: *We authorize the Caller Liaison Committee to terminate the contract of any caller who doesn't accept the new contract terms.* The board voted, and this motion passed unanimously.

Action item: *The Caller Liaison Committee will approach the three contracted callers for the 2021 Fly-in to discuss a renegotiated contract as outlined above.* (Note: Mike reported on May 11 that he had done this, and that all three callers agreed to the new terms. He was about to send out the new contracts for their signatures.)

Donation to Lutheran Church – Dick (and Mike)

This topic was carried over from the previous meeting. We are considering making a donation, or series of donations, to the Lutheran Church to support them during this time of financial hardship. During the dancing year (fall, winter, and spring) we pay the church approximately \$300-400/month in rental fees, and we know that several other groups rent space from the Church when it's open.

We discussed possibly making a small donation every month, or at least one donation of half of our usually monthly fee. We recognize that we could not find a better price or location than we have, and we want to maintain our good relationship with them.

A motion was proposed: *Independence Squares will donate \$200 to the Lutheran Church.* The motion passed unanimously.

Action item: *The board will arrange to make this \$200 donation to the Lutheran Church.* (Note: Dick has written and sent the check.)

Fall Programming – all

We discussed options for fall programming, with the understanding that we really don't know when we might be able to resume meeting to dance on Tuesday nights. We want to have some sort of plan that we can announce on our website, with the understanding that the plan might change.

We don't anticipate having enough new dancers joining us that we could have a beginner's class this year. The current MS class has only four more calls to learn; they will need to finish those calls, but won't need a full MS class. However, they won't be ready to jump right into Plus since they will be out of practice. We don't want them to get bored with a second full year of MS, so we might consider

morphing a Mainstream workshop into a Plus class after a while, or possibly holding a Plus blitz followed by a Plus workshop.

We agreed that all of our dancers will be rusty after so many months of not dancing. Nobody will be ready to immediately start learning a new program, so it doesn't make sense to start any new classes. Workshops are the obvious solution, and they'll allow us to become reacclimated to dancing. Mike has spoken with our callers and they agreed that it would make more sense to offer workshops (rather than classes) under the circumstances. We affirmed that workshops are not "remedial dancing" – our callers will be able to make them very challenging, even at the MS level.

We discussed asking the callers if they would like to switch back and forth between the workshops at times, rather than each of them leading the same two workshops throughout the term.

A motion was proposed: *For the fall schedule, we will finish the mainstream class, and will hold workshops at the MS, Plus, Advanced, and C1 levels, beginning whenever we agree it's safe to restart dancing, with possibility of offering a Plus class in the spring. The Caller Liaison Committee will work with our callers to come up with proposal for who will teach which workshops.* The motion passed unanimously.

Action item: *Dave will update the website with this information about the potential program.*

Instructional video offer to MS class – all

Betsy has offered to provide copies of the instructional videos she and Roy have produced to members of our MS class. She has generously offered to cover postage as well. The videos are available in VHD or DVD formats.

Action item: *Our MS/Plus Rep, Steve, will contact MS class members to offer these videos. He will find out who wants them and where they should be sent, and Mike can pass the information along to Betsy.*

Supporting members in need – Leda et al

We know that people in and around the Philadelphia community are losing jobs and getting sick due to the coronavirus pandemic. What can we do for the people in our dance community who have been affected? How can we find out who has which needs?

As a nonprofit, we are not permitted to give the club's money to individual members. We noted that it's always a good idea for folks to reach out to their networks if they're having trouble (e.g., if they're in need of a job). We considered setting up some sort of "touch-base chain" to facilitate reaching out.

We discussed forming an ad hoc committee consisting of two board members and two non-board members who could serve as clearinghouse for this kind of effort.

Norma agreed to chair a committee in which volunteers would divide up the club roster and each call several members to check in on them. Eileen said she would be willing to help as well. Dave agreed to be a resource for helping with Zoom.

Staying connected – Steve

Steve had come up with an array of ideas for keeping folks connected with IS while we're unable to meet in person. These ideas include:

- Club newsletter (he's willing to co-produce this with another person) – updates from quarantine, messages of hope, old IS dance photos, snippets of history.
- Surveys on various topics – for example, we could ask which resources people use to learn or review square dance calls, such as booklets, CDs, Taminations, YouTube videos, etc.).
- Zoom meetings, open board meetings, pub nights – we should keep a regular schedule for game night and pub night.
- Chain of connection (i.e., something like a secret Santa or secret friend).
- Online line dancing classes.

Steve volunteered to coordinate monthly game nights on the fourth or fifth Tuesday of the month. We discussed a couple of online platforms that participants in the meeting had used, including boardgamearenas.com and jackbox.tv. Some platforms are designed for groups of eight people or fewer, and we thought we'd probably get more than eight participants on a given night. We discussed who we might ask to help run game nights and break the larger group out into smaller groups if needed.

Leda agreed to continue to coordinate monthly virtual "pub nights" on the second Tuesday of the month. We agreed that these could start with a "State of the Club" announcement, and then go into general conversation or party games (e.g., people could come in with prepared trivia questions, or we could try DC Lambda Squares's activity of playing "two truths and a lie" during their Zoom meetings). It might be good to have a few people rotating the running of these events.

We agreed to have virtual events two times per month, with a week off in between. We will meet on Tuesday nights starting at 7:30 so we don't overlap with Times Squares; they have Zoom meetings every Tuesday starting in the 6:00 hour. (Note: the first game night was held on April 28, and the second social gathering took place on May 12. Both were successful!)

Membership eligibility – Steve

IS has a practice of giving MS graduates free name badges and comping their membership in the club for their first year. We think that this practice started when we held our MS classes in the summers; we didn't want to have folks graduate in August, pay for a year's membership, and then have to pay their annual dues again in June, so we gave them that first partial year for free.

This year we have several folks dancing with us who are not members. Some of them are experienced dancers who are dancing at higher program levels, and others were new dancers who participated in almost the entire MS class, although they had been introduced to the mainstream calls at a different venue.

We discussed options around comping name badges and/or memberships for any or all of the folks who attend our Tuesday night classes and workshops but are not yet members. Should we automatically make these folks name badges, or should we first ask them whether they want to become club members? We discussed the meaning of membership; is it automatically granted, or does a dancer need to express interest in becoming a member?

We agreed that we could ask everyone who dances with us regularly if they'd like to join IS; however, we can't recruit new dues-paying club members until we've resumed dancing and are prepared to collect membership dues. The group was undecided about whether every new member would automatically receive a free badge.

A motion was proposed, and then tabled, regarding the issues discussed above. We will resume this discussion in a future meeting.

Criteria to resume dancing – all

We discussed a variety of criteria we as a board might consider in order to decide when we'll resume our dance activities. Some of these are external criteria, such as the Lutheran Church being open, the Philadelphia schools being back in session, and there being minimal or no new coronavirus infections in the local region. Other factors relate to the wishes of our dancers: we plan to survey folks to learn whether they are comfortable and willing to come back to dance.

A motion was proposed: *The following are the minimum, but not only, criteria for IS to resume dancing: a steady decline in coronavirus cases in Philadelphia & surrounding PA and NJ counties; the Philadelphia school system is back in session without social distancing in place; and the City of Philadelphia permits gatherings of more than 50 people. We'll use these as minimum criteria for club to assess whether to begin dancing; the board reserves right to add additional criteria.* The motion passed unanimously.

We recognized that NO new cases might not be a realistic criterion; perhaps reliable antibody tests will be available, and we will be able to use those to clear some folks to dance.

Due to time constraints, we tabled the following agenda items until a future meeting:

- Club Badges/Shirts – all
- Club Online Accounts – Dave
- New Business – all

The April 21 meeting was adjourned at 9:30 pm.

Caller Liaison Report

Independence Squares Board of Directors Meeting – April 2020

The information below is accurate as of Monday, April 6, 2020, and may not reflect any updates received after this report's preparation. Please note that all dances are at the Lutheran Church unless otherwise noted.

Dances Through December 2021

Callers have been contracted and confirmed for the following dances taking place February 2020 through December 4, 2021.

Saturday, April 18, 2020 – **CANCELLED** Mainstream through Advanced – Ken Ritucci 7:00 pm – 10:00 pm
Cancelled

Saturday, May 16, 2020 – John Marshall Double Header with Potluck

3:00 pm – 5:00 pm Advanced through Challenge 1

5:00 pm – 6:30 pm Potluck

6:30 pm – 9:30 pm Mainstream through Plus with Advanced Star Tip

Saturday, June 6, 2020 – Mainstream through Plus – Zip Warmerdam 4:00 pm to 6:30 pm

Saturday, June 20, 2020 – Advanced through C1 with a C2 Star Tip – John Hawley 7:00 pm – 9:30 pm
John will be using the club equipment and spending the night with a club member.

Saturday, July 18, 2020 – Plus and Advanced – Daryl Murphy 7:00 pm – 9:30 pm

Saturday, August 15, 2020 – Mainstream through C1 – Dayle Hodge 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm The dance will be held at the Unitarian Universalist Society of Mill Creek in Newark, Delaware, the same site as this past August.

Saturday, September 12, 2020 – Barry Clasper Double Header with Potluck

3:30 pm – 5:30 pm Advanced through Challenge 1 with C2 Star Tip

5:30 pm – 7:00 pm Potluck

7:00 pm – 10:00 pm Mainstream through Plus with Advanced Star Tip

Saturday, October 3, 2020 – Mainstream through Advanced – Brian Jarvis 7:00 pm – 9:30 pm

Saturday, October 17, 2020 – Advanced through C1 – Geo Jedlicka 7:00 pm – 9:30 pm

Saturday, December 5, 2020 – Glitter Ball Mainstream through C1 – Dayle Hodge 4:00 pm – 8:00 pm
The Merion Meeting House will once again be the site of the Glitter Ball with paperwork and checks to be finalized. (Thank you, Leda!)

Saturday, June 5, 2021 – Ken Ritucci – Ken had to cancel, so no caller contracted for this dance.

Saturday, December 4, 2021 – Glitter Ball Mainstream through C1 – Betsy Gotta 4:00 pm – 8:00 pm The Merion Meeting House is the first choice as the site of the Glitter Ball 2021

FYI Notes

- 1) The committee has hired callers for dancers through December of 2020. One dance and caller has been scheduled for 2021 already. The tentative schedule for 2021 was forwarded to the board previously, however, other than the Glitter Ball in December 2021, no other dances will be contracted for until the current COVID-19 situation has been resolved.
- 2) 2020 Fly-In Callers: Saundra Bryant, Todd Felleggy, Dayle Hodge March 27-29, 2020. The fly-in was cancelled and the callers were paid in full. They were quite appreciative and expressed their thanks to the club.
- 3) 2021 Fly-In Callers: Bill Harrison, Eric Henerlau, Kris Jensen March 12-14, 2021
- 4) 2022 Fly-In: Callers: Mike Kellogg, Chris Phillips, Anne Uebelacker March 25-27, 2022
- 5) Fall and Spring Classes –The Mainstream Workshop became a Plus class beginning January 7, 2020. The last classes were held on March 10, 2020 due to the COVID-19 crisis. No classes will be held until this crisis has passed pending board approval. The Lutheran Church made the final decision for the club as it closed the church the preceding weekend for all functions.
- 6) An item of note that requires no action on the board's part: While contacting callers for the 2022 Philadelphia Fly-in, one of the first-choice callers for the event, Ted Lizotte, was unavailable due to already being booked for that weekend. Checking his schedule online, he was already booked into 2023 and 2024. This is noted here to remind the board that while it may seem that we are booking too far in advance, if we want to continue to bring in excellent callers to our dances and big events, two to three years out is not out of line. Our contracts do have clauses in them enabling us to cancel a dance well in advance with no penalty. The caller is afforded the same option.

Items of Concern for the Caller Liaison – To Be Discussed by the Board

- 1) Discussions were held with Mark Franks and Betsy Gotta regarding classes beginning in September 2020. No contracts have been signed pending the resolution as to what classes or workshops will be held in the fall.

Upcoming Dances and Callers

Our advice is to not cancel the remaining dances in 2020 until it becomes clear that the club should do so. The ability to obtain callers is not always easy, however, that is not our concern here. Our main concern in not canceling the dances is two-fold: one is to give dancers hope that we will be returning to dances soon, and two, to support the callers who are a part of our community. Paying the callers at 100% of the contract amount shows the callers that we respect them as a part of our community and to support them financially during these difficult times as these dances provide a good portion of their livelihood in many cases. The callers are the small businesses in our community being affected by COVID-19.

No dances have been scheduled for 2021 other than the fly-in in March 2021 and the Glitter Ball in December 2021. If we are not dancing at that point, there are much larger issues to deal with besides who to hire as a caller.

Due to the current health crisis and the potential for canceling additional dances this year, 2020, the table below shows the estimated cost for each dance if we had to cancel the dance. The cost of the venue is not

included here as most are held at the Lutheran Church and that is currently closed. I have reached out to the church in Newark, Delaware, for the August dance and we are able to cancel the space until the day of the event with no charge or penalty. The Merion Meeting House is also an unknown factor for the Glitter Ball in December 2020. The table shows two cost amounts, one at 100% of the contract amount and the second shows the currently obligated amount of the contract if it were canceled as of the board meeting date, April 13, 2020.

Estimated Cost of Callers Booked Through December 2020

| Date | Caller | Amount – 100% | Obligated Amount | Level |
|-----------------------|---------------|---------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| May 16, 2020 | John Marshall | \$XXX | \$XXX | Double Header – M-C1 |
| June 6, 2020 | Zip Warmerdam | \$XXX | \$XXX | Mainstream – Plus |
| June 20, 2020 | John Hawley | \$XXX | \$XXX | Advanced – C2 |
| July 18, 2020 | Daryl Murphy | \$XXX | \$XXX | Plus – Advanced |
| August 15, 2020 | Dayle Hodge | \$XXX | \$XXX | Mainstream – C1 |
| September 12, 2020 | Barry Clasper | \$XXX | \$XXX | Double Header – MS-C2 |
| October 3, 2020 | Brian Jarvis | \$XXX | \$XXX | Mainstream – Advanced |
| October 17, 2020 | Geo Jedlicka | \$XXX | \$XXX | Advanced – C1 |
| December 5, 2020 | Dayle Hodge | \$XXX | \$XXX | Mainstream – C1 |
| Estimated Cost | | \$XXXX | \$XXXX | |