

Independence Squares Board Meeting

September 12, 2019

Present: Dave Blatt, Tim Harper, Dick Michelin, George Rizor, Leda Sportolari, Susan Turkel

Absent: Steve Demos

Meeting was held at 30th Street Station.

Approval of Minutes - Susan

August meeting minutes were approved with minor updates.

- Mike has emailed Casey B. to ask for information on wireless headsets.
- Tim still needs to get the spare key to the club's storage locker into the red box at the church. (Update: this has been done.)
- Dave B. will forward a copy of the IS Fly-In flyer to All Join Hands for their next newsletter. (Update: he sent it out on Friday, 9/13.)

Treasurer's Report – Dick

Dick presented his report for the income and expenses incurred in August. The group discussed it briefly.

We discussed the Fly-In bank account and the main club checking account. Dave will be setting up a PayPal account to facilitate future Fly-In registrants paying for their registration via credit card or PayPal. The PayPal account will be linked to the main club checking account, and Dick will transfer funds from the main account to the Fly-In account as necessary. Dick will give Dave the information he needs to create the link between the club bank account and PayPal.

Action item: *Dick would provide Dave with the bank account, routing number, and online login information so that Dave can set up this linked PayPal account. (Update: this is done.)*

Follow-up to prior board's decision to open a third bank account – Dick and Tim

The prior board agreed to open a separate bank account that would send email notifications to board members regarding account activity. This third bank account was intended to be a holding account for extra cash, while all day-to-day transactions would occur in the checking account. The prior board's motion had a time limit (three months) which we had already extended.

Our group discussed this decision and decided that we needed more information about the options for interest-bearing accounts (savings? money market? CD?), and any costs that might be connected with the notifications. The following motion was proposed:

We are rescinding the directive to our treasurer on May 28, 2019 to open a third bank account by August 28, 2019. We direct the treasurer to investigate opening an interest-bearing account with the intention of depositing into it one year's operating expenses (\$25,000), and to report back on the account options at our next meeting.

The motion passed unanimously.

Caller Liaison Report - Tim

We discussed the Caller Liaison Report that Mike sent out before the meeting (see Appendix). It was suggested that future reports include highlighting to show what had been changed from the previous month's report, as the reports are cumulative and list every dance that has been booked to date.

We looked at the proposed dance calendar Mike had put together for June through December 2020. The calendar lists dates, times, and programs; the proposal takes into account other east coast clubs' fly-ins, holidays, Convention, and so forth. The group approved the proposal; the Caller Liaison Committee may go forward and reach out to potential callers for those dates.

We discussed the pros and cons of the fact that most Saturday dances feature two programs only, rather than all four programs. The two-program dances allow those present to have more floor time, and attendance records for the past three years show that we get essentially the same attendance at Saturday dances regardless of programs called. We decided to move forward with the two-program dances as proposed, but will consider having an all-skate dance as the last Tuesday night session in May.

***Action item:** Tim will ask Mike to provide visual highlighting of new and/or updated items in future Caller Liaison Reports. (Update: this request has been made.)*

Publicity Chair Report – Dave

Dave emailed out a detailed report of his activities and some open questions (see Appendix).

Per Steve's suggestion, Dave agreed that we should advertise our Advanced and Challenge workshops to all local square dance clubs.

Per Susan's suggestion, Dave will also announce next Tuesday's class night to our MeetUp group so that interested parties will know of the opportunity to join our Mainstream class. (Update: Dave sent out the MeetUp invitation on Fri. 9/13.)

Re: Facebook, we discussed the screening questions for individuals requesting membership in our Facebook group. We agreed on the following three questions:

1. What is your connection to square dancing? Are you wanting to learn, or do you already know how?
2. We are a club for LGBT folks and our allies. Both same-sex and opposite sex couples form squares. Are you comfortable dancing in this kind of group?
3. How did you hear about Independence Squares?

Susan will add these questions to the site, and George and Susan will monitor the site for membership requests.

We discussed the sample webpage screenshots Dave sent around. We like what we see and empower Ted to move forward and implement the site. There are some additional steps that need to take place, such as migrating the files and server on a hosting site and connecting the site to our domain name. Ted will take care of these tasks.

Once the site is live, Ted, Dave, and others will be able to make updates to the content. Dave will provide oversight.

***Action items:** Susan will add FB screening questions to the group. Dave will tell Ted to move forward with moving our website to the WordPress platform and going live with the new version. Dave will advertise our Advanced and Challenge workshops to local straight clubs.*

Financial Assistance Program – All

We continued to discuss our financial assistance program. For background, below are the notes from our initial discussion of this at the August 13 meeting:

We discussed our financial assistance policy. There is some concern that that this policy may be abused, and there have been complaints from members about this possible abuse. Tim and Dick have two concerns:

1. Currently, granting of financial assistance is completely at the discretion of a single person: the Treasurer. Dick would like to expand this so the President and Treasurer both consider each case.
2. Currently, there are no objective criteria for qualifying for financial assistance. If an individual asks for help, they are given the discount. Tim suggested we consider asking that those requesting assistance fill out an application form, and shared an example from DC Lambda Squares.

We discussed these concerns. We also discussed alternative scenarios to offering the financial assistance we've offered until now:

- We could lower our fees across the board and do away with the financial assistance program
- We could post suggested fees and let people pay what they want on a sliding scale. (NB: the local contra dance in Mt. Airy offers a sliding scale; their language appears on this web page: <https://thursdaycontra.com/#slidingscale>).

We concluded that we would continue to charge \$10 at the door for classes and dances through the end of 2019. There will still be a pre-payment discount, the specifics of which are yet to be determined. The website will say that the pre-payment option is available and that details will be forthcoming.

In tonight's meeting, we decided that our current policy is appropriate for the needs of the club, and by and large it has worked well.

The board will address the specific situation which has raised concerns about possible abuse. Two board members, Leda and Steve, will take the lead on this process.

We like the language used by the Thursday Contra group regarding their sliding scale, and we discussed the possibility of trying a similar model for our Saturday dances as a test:

Sliding Scale Admission

We offer admission to our Thursday night dance on a \$15-\$5 sliding scale *(\$20-\$8 for touring bands).

Some guidelines to help you decide how much to pay:

<i>Local bands</i>	<i>*Touring bands</i>	
\$15	\$20	Dance supporter - you make it possible for others to come to our dance. Thank you!
\$10	\$12	Dance sustainer - you make our dance sustainable by paying enough to help us meet our costs.

\$5	\$8	Basic admission - on a tight budget? You too are a valued member of our community. We're happy you're coming to dance!
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No one is turned away for lack of funds. Ask us about work grants.

We will need to do further calculations to assess whether this is something we could offer.

Action item: Susan will contact PATMAD to ask how the sliding scale is working for the Thursday Contra group, as it is a fairly recent innovation. (Update: Susan has reached out to Donna Hunt, PATMAD board member, and Chris Deephouse, PATMAD Treasurer. Both Donna and Chris are members of IS.)

Providing feedback to callers/teachers – Leda

A concern was raised that we do not usually provide substantive feedback to our weekly teachers during the course of our classes/workshops. After-the-fact feedback is not helpful. We agreed that it would be useful all around if we could have more open lines of communication.

Leda will take the lead on speaking with our callers about our intention to request feedback and suggestions/requests from our dancers, and then she will announce to our dancers that their program reps are gathering these comments and suggestions.

We also agreed that it is very important to ensure adequate synchronization of the sessions occurring in the two rooms; some years this has worked better than other years.

Action items: Leda will take the lead in facilitating the collection and provision of feedback to callers/teachers. Mike will talk with the callers about making sure that their timing is such that dancers can get from one room to the other in order to fully participate in successive tips.

Meeting adjourned: 8:50 pm

Caller Liaison Report

Independence Squares Board of Directors Meeting – September 12, 2019

The information below is accurate as of Sunday, September 8, 2019, 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 September 2020

Callers have been contracted and confirmed for the following dances taking place September 8, 2019 through September 12, 2020.

Saturday, October 5, 2019 Mainstream/Plus with Advanced Star Tip – Mark Franks 2:00 pm – 5:00 pm

Saturday, October 19, 2019 – Advanced/C1 with C2 Star Tip – Brian Jarvis 7:00 pm – 9:30 pm

Saturday, November 23, 2019 – Mainstream/Plus with Advanced Star Tip – Howard Richman 7:00 pm – 9:30 pm

Saturday, December 7, 2019 – Glitter Ball Mainstream through C2 – 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.

Saturday, January 18, 2020 – Mainstream/Plus with Advanced Star Tip – Mark Franks 4:00 pm – 7:00 pm

Saturday, February 1, 2020 – Advanced/CI – Drew Allen 4:00 pm – 7:00 pm

Saturday, February 29, 2020 – Mainstream through Advanced – Betsy Gotta 3:00 pm – 6:00 pm For The Love of Sadie Hawkins and Chocolate!

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

FYI Notes

- 1) The committee has begun hiring callers for through May of 2020.

- 2) 2020 Fly-In Callers: Sandra Bryant, Todd Felleggy, Dayle Hodge March 27-29, 2020.
- 3) 2021 Fly-In Callers: Bill Harrison, Eric Henerlau, Kris Jensen March 12-14, 2021
- 4) 2022 Fly-In: Dates and callers are being explored by the Fly-In committee.
- 5) Upcoming Fall Classes – Contracts have been offered to both Joe Bradshaw and Betsy Gotta for the classes and workshops beginning in September 2019. Joe will be teaching the Mainstream class and the Advanced Workshop beginning September 10, 2019. Betsy will teach the C1 Workshop and the Mainstream Workshop beginning October 8, 2019. The Mainstream Workshop will become a Plus class beginning January 7, 2020. All sessions will end on May 19, 2020. Substitute callers will be hired when either of them is unavailable.

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

- 1) Approving dances further out on the calendar. While the board is still trying new things and times, this may seem like it shouldn't be done, however, most times and dances can be changed at a later if there appears to be a real problem. Please see the caller's contract where cancellation policies are spelled out. Dates are currently approved through May 2020. The committee recommended dates to the board at the August 2019 board meeting for dances through December 2020. The open houses for the 2020 and 2021 summer sessions are a different topic.

Upcoming Callers

Please let me know of any callers that you would like to have call for our dances and we will do our best to bring a variety of callers to our dance halls. Bigger name callers require more advance time to hire them as they are booked two and three years out.

Communication Chair Report

September 9, 2019

Updated web site with info from Caller Liaison report, and highlighted our beginner class on the main page. Removed past dance. Condensed "class vs workshop" info and moved it off the classes page to a separate page. Also posted Castle Squares schedule for the year (1 page pdf).

Added info for 2021 Fly-in to IAGSDC site.

Asked Allie Miller to create dance flyers for us. I'm asking him to try one and see what he thinks of it, trying to keep the pressure low on this.

Did not create a club PayPal account. I created one for myself, and saw that I'll need access to the club's bank account so I can verify their test deposits. I can either coordinate with Dick, or have the login to the account. Need board guidance on how to proceed.

Created the following four questions for screening the folks who want to join our Facebook Community. Susan liked the first two. I need one more. Brainstorming requested:

1. What is your connection to square dancing? Are you wanting to learn, or do you already know how?
2. We are a club for LGBT folks and our allies. Both same-sex and opposite sex couples form squares. Are you comfortable dancing in this type of group?
3. Who was the better Darren - Dick York or Dick Sargent?
4. What do you think would be a fun song to square dance to?

Ted has created a mock-up of a few web pages, sending to you separately. The color scheme and layout is great, and brings the website look up to date. I am a little concerned about the height of the header eating into the space on the screen, but Ted says that Wordpress does not provide a lot of flexibility in this area. This revision will also allow the site to work more nicely on a mobile device.

Wordpress allows easy editing of the site without needing to know HTML. It also allows for multiple admins. Once this is implemented, different committee chairs can update their areas. After we've implemented the new site, we can revisit this and see how it might work.

Per earlier discussion, I will not be asking Roy to help with PR.