

IS Board Meeting May 18, 2020

Present: Dave Blatt, Steve Demos, Tim Harper, Dick Michelin, George Rizor, Leda Sportolari, Susan Turkel, Mike Rutkowski (guests: Will, Norma, Deb)

Meeting was held via teleconference.

Approval of minutes from April 13 and April 21 -- Susan et al
Approved with corrections.

Treasurer's Report – Dick

We discussed the treasurer's report, which showed no income but some expenses including Fly-in refunds, our donation to the church, and payment of our IAGSDC annual dues. We also have some outstanding checks.

We talked about our bank balance, which is healthy at this time. The board will continue to monitor the club's financial health.

Caller Liaison Report – Mike

We discussed this month's Caller Liaison Report (see appendix). Our May and June dances have been cancelled, and this has been noted on the website. The CLC contacted the 2021 Fly-In callers to renegotiate their contracts as specified in the motion passed at the last board meeting:

[There would be] 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.

All three callers were amenable to the new terms and new contracts have been sent.

The Caller Liaison Committee is reaching out to our other contracted callers for summer and fall to touch base.

Proposal to cancel July 18 dance -- all

Tim suggested that the board review upcoming dances on a rolling basis, looking ahead up to two months. We discussed the July 18 dance, and decided that there was no advantage to making that call now. We agreed to decide about whether we'll hold the July 18 dance at the June board meeting, recognizing that we are very likely to cancel the event. Mike will contact the caller to touch base and check on his comfort level.

Club social night update and plans -- Leda et al

We discussed the last club social night, held via Zoom. There were some technical issues, but otherwise it was a success.

Participants agreed that the event was fun and that it was good to hear from so many individuals during the sharing portion of the get-together. However, it's time-consuming to have sharing time for the larger group, so we will try Zoom's "breakout rooms" feature next time. Ideas for the breakout rooms: show your pet, show and tell.

We discussed options for trying a virtual dance. We agreed to test it out and gauge interest by having a short virtual dance at the beginning of the next social using Darren Gallina's prerecorded video. We'll be able to poll folks afterwards to see whether they'd like to do a whole hour of it. If so, we could hire either Darren or a local caller to run the live dance for our club, possibly coordinated as a joint event with Times Squares.

We discussed the possibility of rotating the responsibility for running our Zoom social hours, which would entail taking charge of the agenda and activities and MCing the event. Dave agreed to come up with activities for the July social hour.

Game night update and plans - Steve et al.

Game night went well. There were 10 or 11 people participating, and everyone was able to either participate or watch. There were no technical issues.

Steve has asked for volunteers to co-host and take charge of a second simultaneous game, but hasn't had any takers. Leda offered to set up virtual mah jongg, which has 4 person limit. (Note: IS mah jongg is now taking place on Monday nights, with Kevin teaching.)

Friends supporting friends update -- Norma and Eileen

Norma and other volunteers are reaching out to the entire current and past member list. They're making phone calls.

During this update we noted that some individuals are not getting IS emails. We discussed the process of getting folks on the email list, and agreed to remind folks of how to sign up during the next social hour.

MS/Plus Rep report - Steve

Steve contacted the 11 folks in the MS class, and found that 9 of them were interested in receiving the instructional videos Betsy had offered. All of these folks have participated in Tuesday socials or are sorry they missed them. They're all happy about being in touch with the club.

Action item: Steve will ask the Plus students whether they are interested in the Plus videos.

Club online accounts – Dave

The club has a large number of online accounts, including Hotmail (email address), Google (Google Voice phone number), GoDaddy (domain name registration), IAGSDC web server, online banking, and PayPal. In some cases, the passwords are known by several people and have not been changed in many years.

We also use several online services in which multiple people are administrators, including Yahoo (listserv), Meetup, and Facebook.

Dave would like to change most passwords and limit who has access. He also wants to automate domain renewal, which can be paid via PayPal as a debit to the club checking account. Ted and Dave would have all of the passwords, except online banking which is limited to Dick, Bob, and Dave.

At the end of each administration, we will review all of these accounts and accesses and make any appropriate changes.

Everyone agreed with Dave's suggestions, which were detailed in an email shared with the board on May 17.

Action item: Dave will make the password and autopayment changes he proposed.

Free membership for graduating Mainstream students -- Steve

At various points in the past, we have given free membership and a free club name badge to graduates of our MS class. Steve would like us to end the practice of giving free membership to MS graduates.

We discussed some of the history and motivation for this practice. Will remembered that the MS class was once the club's big moneymaker, so there was a retention motivation for giving free membership to new graduates. New dancers were more likely to stick with us because of the free membership, and they still paid to attend club nights and dances, which more than paid for the loss of income from the waived membership fees.

We noted that being given a membership and badge increases club loyalty and goodwill among new dancers.

In the years when the MS class graduated in September, it didn't make sense to charge them at that time for a full year's membership as they would have to pay again in June.

It was noted that the free membership should only cover a partial year, not a year and a half. If one graduates in May, they can be a member immediately but then would pay for the following year before being able to vote in the June meeting.

In terms of the prepayment discount for tuition, we have generally allowed the prepayment discount for either new class members or for club members.

Norma suggested that it is good to make membership more affordable for women, trans people, people of color, and economically challenged people. A free first year is an incentive for people to become members. It doesn't cost us anything; we just don't gain money. It could help with retention.

Somebody mentioned the possibility of charging half price for membership if people have financial hardship.

We agreed that each board can decide what to do that year in terms of free membership and free badges. Given that we aren't dancing, it is hard to make any decision now for this class. However, we are now aware that there may be a perception that it's club policy for everyone to get free membership upon graduation. We should think about correcting this.

Ordering of Club Shirts (and badges) -- all

Club shirt ordering is on hold, since people can't meet to try on sample shirts for size, give payment, or receive the shirts. So, we'll pause the process of taking orders until we're dancing again; the earliest time to try to place an order is probably January. The next board will decide if a shirt subsidy will be available.

Badges: our practice is to ask people how they want their names to be printed on the badges, and it's easier to do that when we are meeting in person. Tim proposes that we wait till we're dancing again before placing the next badge order.

IAGSDC Delegates' Meeting: delegate, alternate and call for agenda items -- Tim

The IAGSDC Delegates' Meeting will take place on July 5th via videoconference. Tim was our delegate last year and the year before; Drew is the alternate. Tim will represent us again this year. In this meeting, they will discuss officers and locations for future conventions. We did not have any agenda items to propose.

New Business – all

We had no new business to discuss.

Meeting adjourned at 9:16 pm

Caller Liaison Report

Independence Squares Board of Directors Meeting – May 2020

The information below is accurate as of Saturday, May 16, 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 May 2020 through December 4, 2021.

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

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 - CANCELLED

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. CANCELLED

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, 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) 2021 Fly-In Callers: Bill Harrison, Eric Henerlau, Kris Jensen March 12-14, 2021 New contracts have been issued to the callers per the board's instructions. All of them were agreeable to the requested changes.
- 2) 2022 Fly-In: Callers: Mike Kellogg, Chris Phillips, Anne Uebelacker March 25-27, 2022
- 3) If by some chance we are able to begin dancing this summer, Joe Bradshaw has offered to hold classes to complete the Mainstream class that was near to completion when dancing was halted in March.

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. Both are aware that no classes are planned for this fall. They understand that once dancing begins again, workshops will be held at the various levels with the completion of the Mainstream class being on the agenda. 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.