

IS Board Meeting

October 6, 2020

Present: Dave Blatt, Steve Demos, Tim Harper, Dick Michelin, George Rizor, Leda Sportolari, Susan Turkel; Caller Liaisons Mike and Linda (guests: Bob, Kevin, Jose, Will H.)

Approval of Minutes from 9/1/2020 - Susan

Approved with requested change.

Treasurer's Report - Dick

We discussed the September treasurer's report.

Our expenses for the month were comprised of refund requests for the 2021 Fly-In. Since each check must be signed by two authorized signers, the process takes a couple of weeks. Dick prepares the checks, envelopes, and notes to the refundees. He sends the whole packet to Tim to countersign. Tim puts the second signature on each check, assembles and seals all of the envelopes, and mails them to their recipients.

We compiled a list of the club's fixed expenses; these are expenses that we continue to incur even if we aren't dancing. These include our Zoom account, our storage locker, our Meetup account, our post office box, and our insurance policy. We agreed that we need to keep up our insurance policy as well, even if we aren't dancing, because it's likely that rates would be very different if we dropped the policy and attempted to pick it up again later. These fixed expenses total approximately \$1053 per year.

Expense	Monthly fee	Annual total
Zoom account	\$16	\$192
Storage unit	\$46	\$552
Meetup account	(charged semi-annually)	\$104
Post office box	(charged annually)	\$170
Insurance policy (approximate)	(charged annually)	\$350
Total (approximate)	\$114	\$1,368

Final update on club listserv transition – Dave

Dave has successfully transitioned the listserv from Yahoo Groups to Google Groups. (This is a timely change, as Yahoo has announced that it is removing all Yahoo Groups content in mid-December.) The new email service seems to have faster response times than the previous one. Anyone can request to be added using the instructions below. We thank Dave for his work on this.

These are the instructions listed on the club website for joining our listserv:

Join Our Email List

Join our Google Group email list by clicking the following link:

<https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/independence-squares/join>. Our administrator will add you to our email list so you will get reminders about upcoming Independence Squares events. Note that we never share our email list, and we never spam.

Hand sanitizer – Dave

We ordered two gallon-size bottles of alcohol-based hand sanitizer for the 2020 fly-in, before we knew the event would be cancelled. We donated one bottle to Prevention Point in March. We discussed whether to keep or donate the second bottle, which is labelled as expiring in March 2022.

Tim explained (after standing up so we could see his “Experiment with a Chemist” t-shirt!) that alcohol does not lose effectiveness and that the hand sanitizer will still be good whenever we get back to dancing in person. We agreed to have Dave store it until then.

Caller Liaison Report – Mike and Linda

We discussed the Glitter Ball, scheduled for Saturday, December 5 with Dayle Hodge calling. The Caller Liaison Committee recommended we hold the dance as a virtual event, similar to our August dance with Dayle. We will have time to work out details re: advertising, costumes, etc.; the time-sensitive aspect is letting the in-person locale know that we are cancelling our reservation.

A motion was proposed: IS will cancel the in-person Glitter Ball, and instead will hold it virtually. The motion passed unanimously

Action item: Mike will contact Dayle to confirm the virtual event. It will still start at 4 pm and run until 6:30 pm. There will be no tip jar; Dayle will announce that it’s an IS-sponsored event.

We discussed whether we would consider charging admission or asking for donations via PayPal to help cover costs. The group’s sentiment was generally against charging admission for the Glitter Ball, but we agreed that it would be okay to say that donations to the club are welcome.

We agreed that it makes sense to put a permanent Donation link connected with our PayPal account on the website, so people can make donations during that dance or at any other time. This link could also be used to collect membership dues.

Action item: Dave and Ted will work on adding a PayPal link on the IS website.

Fall programming - all

The group had a lively discussion regarding virtual dances/workshops.

One perspective is that there are opportunities for virtual square dancing every day of the week, and that our club members could participate in those if they wanted to. Thus far, most of our club members have not been attending virtual dances. Our club might be better off saving our money and resources now so that we’ll better be able to support our dancers when we resume in-person dancing. (Given the economic strain brought on by the pandemic, we may be called on to reduce our fees or offer more financial aid to dancers.) There was also concern that two-couple dancing is fundamentally different from four-couple dancing, in that certain calls are not available, so it is not a completely effective way to keep one’s dancing skills and familiarity with the programs sharp.

Another perspective is that a workshop series would serve a different function from a dance series; in addition to the social aspect, a workshop could give dancers an opportunity to become comfortable with virtual dancing, in a safe environment with a known teacher and with friendly faces from the club. Since VSD has been going on for several months now, the expectations for dance complexity are higher and it would be harder to jump right in for someone who hasn't been participating regularly. There is value in giving folks the opportunity to dance and practice the calls. Two-couple dancing with phantoms is a helpful stopgap measure since we can't dance in person for now.

We agreed that if we held any workshops, we would need to advertise beyond the club membership. We don't want to be exclusive, and a more open dance could bring in more money for the caller.

We had considered offering a series of four dances before the end of the calendar year, but scheduling is difficult given other IS activities, the upcoming national election on a Tuesday, and the upcoming holidays. We agreed that it might be better to start with one dance as a test of concept. If we have an attendance of eight dancers, we agreed we would consider the workshop a success.

We also discussed options for paying for a virtual dance:

- The club pays the caller the full fee up front
- The club charges dancers an up-front fee; this could be hard to manage
- A tip jar is made available at each workshop; those donations go directly to the club bank account, and we pay the caller. The club would guarantee the caller a base amount if tips are below the contracted fee; if tips exceed the contracted amount, the caller would be given all of the proceeds.

We agreed that tip jar was best option for this type of event (with caller guaranteed the base fee).

A motion was proposed: IS will schedule one virtual MS/Plus workshop with Betsy calling, with tip jar and guaranteed base fee, for October 20. There were six yes votes and one abstention.

Action items: The Caller Liaison Committee will contact Betsy to arrange for the dance. Leda will write up text for publicity emails; Dave will advertise on the club website and the IAGSDC page, and Susan will advertise on Facebook. (Note: the event was held as planned, and there were more than 30 screens logged in during the first hour, with more than 20 screens of IS dancers = nearly 30 IS-affiliated dancers participating.)

Social nights - all

We agreed to continue offering social nights, and decided to pre-plan the next few sessions. We agreed on the following for the rest of 2020:

October 13 – Dave B. hosts – tell us something nobody in the club knows about you

November 10 – Steve hosts – Bingo night

December –the Glitter Ball happens this month, plus the holidays, so we won't have a December social.

(Note: we later agreed to also hold our Annual Meeting in December.)

Steve has decided to drop the idea of hosting a club picnic due to very low interest expressed by club members. Club Sashay is holding a socially distanced, bring your own food picnic at Ridley Creek State Park on Saturday, October 24. (Note: after this meeting, Club Sashay sent an invitation to everyone on the IS club email list.)

Annual Meeting contingency plan – Tim

Tim explained that December 16 marks the end of our 6 month grace period for holding an annual meeting. He suggested that we discuss how/when to set up the meeting, how to define a “member”, how to deal with dues (i.e., how much, when to collect, how to collect), and how to deal with voting.

We agreed that it would have to be a virtual meeting if it’s held in December. We are assuming (with hope) that members who may not have had internet connectivity at the beginning of the pandemic have now figured out a way to go online.

In the past, the previous membership year has expired at the beginning of the annual meeting, so everyone had to pay their membership dues by the time of the meeting (or at the meeting, when held in person) in order to be allowed to vote. We agreed that this year we would charge a token amount for the dues, given that we are not dancing and that the pandemic has been economically difficult for many. Membership is available to individuals who have completed a mainstream class and who desire to join the club.

In terms of voting, we agreed that Dave T could again serve as the nominating committee and as the election judge. We discussed options for voting, including mail, Zoom, and email. We agreed that it’s important to keep voting anonymous. Even though most candidates run for IS offices unopposed, members should have the opportunity to abstain from specific votes or write in other candidates. It was noted that there are some free online voting sites that could be used for our election.

A motion was proposed: We will schedule our annual meeting for Tuesday, December 8 via Zoom. The votes were six yes, one abstain.

Action items: Tim will contact Dave T. about putting together a slate of nominees. Susan will research online voting options.

During this discussion, the topic of the club’s insurance policy was raised. Our premium will be due at beginning of January, and the fee is based on the number of club members. Even though we are not dancing, we agreed that we should continue to pay for our current insurance because it can be expensive to reinstate insurance after a gap.

A motion was proposed: We will charge a \$5 membership fee per person, due before the annual meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Action item: We will send out email reminders asking folks to pay their membership dues before the meeting. This way there will be a roster for Dave to look at at the time of the

meeting/voting. Among other opportunities to remind folks about dues, instructions will be provided when Susan sends out the notice of the Annual Meeting and its agenda.

Addendum: Tim wrote up this list of action items relating to the Annual Meeting and emailed it to board members on 10/9:

- Payment of dues for individuals wishing to vote must be **received** by Dec 7 in order to verify eligibility
- Notice of meeting with final agenda sent to listserv by Nov 23 (15 days prior to meeting). Anyone can attend, but only members can vote.
- Requests to add items to the agenda must be **received** by the board by Nov 7 (one month prior to meeting).
- Initial notice and request for agenda items -- soon (wait until we are ready to receive dues payments and include instructions on how to pay dues in the notice??)
- I'll announce the annual meeting on Tuesday and follow up in my club update to the listserv. Susan can provide a more formal notice and agenda request once we have details on how to pay dues.

Recruitment committee – George

We had a very brief discussion of the proposed mission statement for the recruitment committee. We tabled the full discussion until the next meeting.

Facebook advice – Steve

Thom in CA has shared some suggestions for encouraging diversity via a club's Facebook presence. Steve agreed to send out these suggestions, which are presented in PowerPoint format, via email.

We scheduled the next meeting for Monday, November 16, 7-9 pm.

Adjourned: 9:03 pm

Caller Liaison Report

Independence Squares Board of Directors Meeting – October 2020

The information below is accurate as of Sunday, October 4, 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.

Opening Discussions for Board

- 1) At the board's request, Betsy Gotta was approached about calling a series of virtual workshops for Independence Squares. She would do a series of four workshops on Tuesday evenings not conflicting with other events being held by the club (social and game nights). The levels would be Mainstream and Plus. Specific details about the workshops were sent to the board in an earlier email. Here are some of the items that the board should consider when determining whether to host virtual workshops:
 - a. Should the workshops be restricted to only our own club members? This was one item raised at the previous board meeting and our recommendation is that it should be open to other individuals as well, not just our own members. This would be a potentially bad public relations move.
 - b. There are three options on how to pay for the workshops:
 - i. The club covers the entire cost of the caller for the workshop without asking for payment from the attendees.
 - ii. The club charges an upfront fee to workshop attendees and only those who pay upfront will receive a link to join the sessions.
 - iii. There is a tip jar for each workshop. The caller receives the greater amount of either the agreed upon base amount for the workshop or what is in the tip jar. This is the method used by Times Squares for the workshops that Betsy did for them. The use of the tip jar will need to be researched by some one on how to set it up to feed into the club's account. This might also mean that a club member (board member?) would need to be at each workshop to set this up.

The necessity of hosting the virtual workshops needs to be looked at as there are virtual opportunities every day of the week for people to attend and to work on their skills. Do we really need to be doing virtual workshops?

If the board decides to host the virtual workshops, the committee recommends the use of the tip jar for the workshops. This would lessen the financial impact on the club and the caller would receive at a minimum the base amount agreed to.

No contracts or promises have been made to any caller regarding the holding of workshops or classes, virtual or live.

- 2) Based on current government guidelines in Pennsylvania, the committee recommends changing the format of the Glitter Ball on December 5, 2020 with Dayle Hodge to a virtual format. We are suggesting a similar format to the August 15, 2020 dance that Dayle called for Independence Squares. This was one hour of Mainstream/Plus dancing followed by one-half hour of social

time and ending with one hour of Advanced/C1. Dayle would not put out a tip jar as the club is sponsoring the dance.

Dances Through December 2021

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

Saturday, October 3, 2020 – Mainstream through Advanced – Brian Jarvis CANCELED

Saturday, October 17, 2020 – Advanced through C1 – Geo Jedlicka CANCELED

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. See Note Below

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 CANCELED The callers were all notified that the 2021 Fly-in has been canceled. They were disappointed but understood. All are willing to call for us in the future.
- 2) 2022 Fly-In: Callers: Mike Kellogg, Chris Phillips, Anne Uebelacker March 25-27, 2022

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

- 1) Discussions were held with Mark Franks and Betsy Gotta are aware that no live 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 or spring.
- 2) The Merion Friends Meeting House was contacted by Leda to see what their cancellation policy is. Their cancellation policy calls for a month's notice. The final decision on the Glitter Ball will need to be made by the end of October to ensure that they receive our notice within the proper time frame.
- 3) Lou Partridge and Norma Beard contacted the Lutheran Church regarding their status. The church is not renting out their space currently, so nothing to worry about unless the club begins dancing before the church is reopened. This may be more of an FYI but is something that the board should be aware of for future planning.

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 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.