

**Minutes from the Independence Squares Board Meeting**  
**March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2025, 7:00 PM**

**Board Members in Attendance: David B., Marika, Peg, Ron, Sarah, Steve, Vinney**

**Board Members Absent: None**

**Guests in Attendance: Deb, Justin, Linda, Mike, Will**

*HASP Report – Linda*

Linda presented a draft of the new HASP protocols over email, and there was a discussion. After making some revisions, Linda presented a new draft during the Board meeting. She stated that as there are no current CDC guidelines, she followed the more up-to-date guidelines from the Pennsylvania Department of Health. The Board discussed further amendments. The finalized protocols are attached to these minutes.

**Steve made a motion to accept the updated HASP guidelines. Peg seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

Linda will send a mass email to the members. Marika will update the website, and David B. will make an announcement on Tuesday nights. Linda clarified that we will not be using the STOP sign at Fly-In and events.

*Suggestion for Combo Dances – Peg*

Peg made a suggestion at the February Board meeting that the Board should consider changing some of the combo dances to have Advanced/Challenge first and Mainstream/Plus second. The Board agreed to change the October 2026 combo dance to have Advanced/Challenge first.

**At this point, Peg and Linda left.**

*Secretary's Report – Sarah*

**Sarah made a motion to accept the minutes from the February 20<sup>th</sup> meeting. Steve seconded. The motion passed.**

*Memorial for Tom M. – David B.*

David B. asked if the club could do something in recognition of Tom M., a caller who recently passed. Mike offered to find out if there was any cause that the family was asking people to donate to in memory of Tom.

**David B. made a motion to allocate \$100 to be donated to a cause to be decided. Vinney seconded. The motion passed with five votes in favor and one abstention.**

### Treasurer's Report – Ron

The written reports are attached to these minutes. For clarity, Ron broke Misc. Expenses down into more granular line items on the P&L sheet. There is a certificate of deposit (CD) coming due in April, and the Finance Committee will discuss what to do with it at their next meeting. There was a net loss of \$220 at the March 15<sup>th</sup> dance. This led to a discussion of selling 50/50 tickets at dances. The Board should try to remember to ask for 50/50 volunteers on Tuesday nights prior to a dance.

### Fly-in Report – Ron

The written report is attached to these minutes. The number of registered dancers rose to 140, which exceeds the number of registrations and walk-ins combined last year. It is anticipated that the current registration funds will allow us to break even. Tee shirts for the 2026 Fly-In have been delivered. They will be on sale at the Fly-In, and Marika added a QR code to the flyer that people can use to order tee shirts as well. We need to sell only 23 shirts to break even. IAGSDC representatives will be at the Fly-In for their meeting, and Independence Squares will present a donation to IAGSDC during the Banner Dance. Multiple people expressed appreciation for Ron's hard work. When asked, Ron and Mike cited the high quality of the callers as a likely explanation for why registration numbers are so high this year.

In an email sent on February 25<sup>th</sup>, Ron updated the Board on his negotiations with the Sheraton pertaining to keeping the bar open late. The Sheraton agreed to make the requirement of \$500 in sales per night into a requirement of \$1000 in sales over both nights. They also agreed to have the bartenders ask each patron if they are with our group or not to determine if their order counts toward the required \$1000 instead of requiring patrons to identify themselves as part of our group. The bar will close at 2:00 AM.

**Ron made a motion over email to have the Sheraton keep the bar open late for our group on both Friday and Saturday nights. David B. seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

### Caller Liaison Report – Mike

The written report is attached to these minutes. The April 19<sup>th</sup> dance should read "SSD" where it says "Mainstream". Two of the dances for next year have been booked, and Mike is working on the others.

### Annual Meeting – Dave

David B. proposed June 3<sup>rd</sup> for the date of the annual meeting this year.

**Steve made a motion that the annual meeting take place on June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2025 over Zoom. Ron seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

Steve suggested that proposed agenda items and amendments to the by-laws should be ready by May 3<sup>rd</sup>. The club by-laws state that members can request items be added to the agenda no later than 30 days before the meeting. Steve will draft an email letting members know they can submit an agenda item until that deadline. Ron will present the proposed amendment that was discussed last month at the next Board meeting. In the next few months, the Board will have to approve the new graduates' memberships, order new nametags, and set dues. Steve will draft an email about game night on Tuesday, April 15<sup>th</sup>.

#### Fall Classes/Workshops – Steve

There was a discussion about what programs should be taught as classes and workshops next year. Steve argued that there should be a Mainstream workshop and a Plus workshop, which would leave only one time slot for Advanced and/or Challenge. Various alternatives were considered, including having Advanced and Challenge on alternate weeks or having them share one time slot. Mike will ask Mark and Betsy what they think. Marika raised the idea of eventually adding a third hall if the club continues to grow. Ron and Mike spoke against the idea of having two nights of dancing per week. No decisions were reached.

**At this point, Mike left.**

#### Social Media – Steve

Steve reported about someone who does not dance with the club who has been posting incessantly to the club Facebook page. He asked if the Board was okay with him deleting all of this person's posts, as he does not want to block this person. The Board supported his decision. Steve requested \$30 to spend on an ad for Summer Splash 2025 in the North New Jersey Square Dancers Association's publication, *Grand Square*.

**Ron made a motion to allocate \$30 for Steve to spend on advertising as requested. Marika seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

#### Recruiting Report – Steve

The written report is attached to these minutes. Independence Squares will have tables at this year's PhillyPride365, Delco Pride Festival, and South New Jersey Pride. There is also interest in attending the 2025 Philly Trans Wellness Conference, but a date has not been set for the event. Some members will go and pass out palm cards at the Collingswood Pride events and the Delco Pride Parade in Media. Vinney reached out to the Mainstream and Plus classes, and several of those dancers volunteered to help run tables.

#### Communications Report – Marika

Marika said they had no new updates. They have been updating the website and social media with information about events.

Mainstream/Plus Report – Vinney

Vinney said class members were enthusiastic. He reached out to the vendor that the club used last year for plastic name badges and would probably make an announcement on Tuesday night about name badges soon. Gabe M. is interested in the GCA Caller School and asked for more information about the scholarship. Vinney spoke to Betsy, and she said she was willing to be a mentor.

A/C Report – Peg

There was no Advanced/Challenge report.

The next Board meeting will be on April 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sarah Paulos  
Secretary, Independence Squares

## Health and Safety Protocols HASP March 26, 2025

Independence Squares is an inclusive square dance community and is committed to the health and safety of all attendees at our events.

### Feeling well despite having a recent infection

If you have recently been diagnosed with an infectious illness, but are feeling well and no longer have symptoms, and decide that feel well enough to attend one of our events, we ask you to be cautious and wear a mask. When sick, stay home and away from others until at least **24 hours** after both symptoms are getting better overall, and you have not had a fever (and are not using fever-reducing medication). Independence Squares asks that you NOT attend our events if you're not feeling well, to protect your own health and well-being, as well those of your fellow dancers.

### Physical Health

To help control the spread of infectious diseases that might affect our community, the Independence Squares Board of directors has updated our safety protocols as follows:

**Vaccinations:** We encourage all in our square dance community to consult with their health care providers and get the vaccines and boosters that are appropriate for their circumstances.

**Hygiene:** We encourage frequent hand washing and/or using hand sanitizer immediately after each tip.

**HEPA Air Filters:** We use HEPA air filters each week in our dance halls.

**Masks:** Independence Squares does not require dancers to wear face masks while dancing. Mask-wearing is optional for all classes and workshops. We recommend that people wear masks to help protect ourselves and each other and IS will continue to make masks available at our events. The club supports the decision of any attendee who wishes to wear, or not wear, a face mask.

#### **Safe hand holds, physical safety while dancing**

Safe hand holds while dancing are meant to prevent injury to hands, fingers, wrists, and shoulders. Safe hand hold means that we should not squeeze each other's hands or pull or push dancers in the square. Check with the callers for correct handholds.

Independence Squares no longer requires dancers and callers to provide proof of COVID vaccinations and boosters vaccinations/boosters to attend our dances and classes. If you would like to research more information about COVID-19 trends, here is a site which might be helpful from the PA Dept. of Health:

<https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Cases.aspx>

### Mental and Emotional Health and Safety

#### **Mental and emotional health being as important as physical health**

We are in a time of rapid change, requiring adaptations and new ways of learning how to enhance our emotional well-being. Mental and emotional health contribute to physical health.

Ways to help with emotional and mental health involve talking to a trusted confidant about what is on your mind, building strong community ties, having a focus on finding beauty and joy whenever possible, and dancing.

Some hotlines that might be useful:

**The Trevor Project:** (866) 488-7386

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** (800) 273-8255 (online chat available)

**Crisis Text Line:** Text START to 741-741

**The LGBT National Hotline:** (888) 843-4564

**Trans Lifeline:** (877) 565-8860

#### **Communication**

Independence Squares keeps in touch with the IS community through Google Group email list, including notification if there is a COVID or other health-related concern arising from one of our events. You can join here: <https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/independence-squares/join> or ask a board member for assistance to join.

## **Independence Squares Treasurer's Report**

### **March 26, 2025**

Attached is the February 2024 month-end financial summary.

Items of note, previously reported to the board via email on March 4, 2025:

- As I promised at the recent board meeting, I created several new G/L accounts within QuickBooks, which required that they be added to my monthly summary report. The reason for this is to create more transparency around the "Misc expense" category. Up to this point, that G/L account contained a lot of expenses which I have to explain month after month. This updated reporting will more clearly show our expenses, as follows:
  - The T-Shirt income and expense were given their own G/L accounts. These figures are no longer buried in the "other income" and "other expenses" G/L's. This will also be useful for the Fly-In T-shirt project for next year's Fly-In.
  - I added a Zoom G/L to show our cost for that service.
  - I added an IAGSDA Dues G/L for the same reason.
  - I added an Election Expenses G/L for the same reason.
- I also did several other things on this report, as follows:
  - Removed most of the Fly-In specific income line items, since they aren't needed. Those figures will all eventually post in the "2025 Fly-In" column under the existing G/L categories. The way I had the sheet setup previously contained redundancies. I did keep the "Fly In Other Income" but renamed it "Basket Sales". There is no corresponding club-related line item for this so keeping this line item makes sense. I could have put this income under "Other Income", but I thought it made sense to be more specific so that I don't have to keep telling the board where this figure comes from.
  - I also retitled the column that was "2024 Fly-In" to "2025 Fly-In". This column will be populated in April as we move the figures from the Balance Sheet to the Income Statement.

We have a one-year CD coming due on April 18, 2025. The Finance Committee will discuss this during our next meeting, yet to be scheduled.

March 15 A2/C1 dance finances are as follows:

- Door admission fees: \$170.00
- Caller fee: \$300.00
- Hall rent: \$90.00
- PayPal fees: \$0
- Net Loss: \$220.00

T-shirt accounting (through 3/20/25):

- Income: \$680.00
- Cost of t-shirts: \$739.54
- PayPal fees: \$9.52
- Net loss: \$69.06
- T-shirts yet to be paid for: \$60.00, plus three that are still for sale

Respectfully submitted, Ron R

# **Fly-In Committee Report**

## **March 26, 2025**

The most recent Fly-In Committee meeting was held on March 23, 2025. A copy of the minutes from that meeting is attached.

### **Numbers update (as of 3/23/25)**

- 140 registered dancers. Increase of 18 from our last report (we had 133 dancers in 2024, including walk-in's)
- \$13,065.00 registration dollars
- Hotel room count: 173. This will give us 8 free rooms, thereby allowing the caller's rooms to be covered, with the two remaining rooms being credited to Ron & Vinney, who will reimburse the club.
- It is anticipated that the current registration funds will allow us to break even. The club's fund-raising efforts will include the ticket sales for the two 50/50's and the basket raffle.

### **T-shirts for 2026 Fly-In**

The t-shirts have been delivered, and a free t-shirt will be given to each committee member. The plan is for them to wear them on Sunday morning at the Fly-In to help advertise the 2026 event. T-shirts will also be available for sale on Tuesday nights and at the 2025 Fly-In registration desk. The flyer has been amended to include a QR code to allow dancers to purchase t-shirts online, with delivery at the 2026 event. Ron negotiated a \$100 price refund from the production company, thereby reducing our cost to \$333.43. At \$15.00 per t-shirt, we need only sell 23 to break even. As of the date of this writing, we have already sold two.

### **IAGSDC Banner Dance**

Since representatives from the IAGSDC will be attending our Fly-In, they will be invited to announce the plans for their 2025 convention. As is usual, we will make a donation to the IAGSDC. We agreed on a donation of \$250 and we will present the donation to the IAGSDC representatives during our Saturday night Banner Dance.

### **Next meeting**

A Wrap-Up meeting will be held immediately following Sunday's dancing at the Fly-In. Scheduled time is 1:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ron, Fly-In Committee Co-Chair



## Caller Liaison Report

### Independence Squares Board of Directors Meeting – March 26, 2025

The information below is accurate as of March 19, 2025, 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/Notes for Board

No additional contracts or promises have been made to any caller regarding the holding of workshops or classes, virtual or live, other than those listed below.

#### Dances Through April 2027

Callers have been contracted and confirmed for the following dances taking place February 2025 through March 2026.

April 2025 Fly-in: Callers: Jeremy Butler, Vic Ceder, Don Moger April 4-6, 2025 Sheraton Bucks County

Saturday, April 19, 2025 – 3:00 pm – 5:30 pm Mainstream and Plus; 5:30 pm – 7:00 pm Dinner (Social?); 7:00 pm – 9:30 pm Advanced and C1 Dayle Hodge

Saturday, May 31, 2025 – Mainstream and Plus with Advanced Star Tip Wheel Around NJ II Dan Koft  
6:00 pm – 9:00 pm People Care Center, Bridgewater, NJ Joint dance with Times Squares

Saturday, June 7, 2025 – Mainstream and Plus Pride Dance Betsy Gotta 7:00 pm – 9:30 pm

Tuesday, July 22, 2025 – Open House Betsy Gotta 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Tuesday, August 12, 2025 – Open House Betsy Gotta 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Saturday, August 23, 2025 – Summer Splash All-level dance Mainstream through C1 – Dayle Hodge 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm Cameron Harnish will be calling as well from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm Unitarian Universalist Society of Mill Creek – Joint Dance with DC Lambda Squares and Chesapeake Squares

Tuesday, September 16, 2025 Open House Clay Goss 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Saturday, October 11, 2025 - 3:00 pm – 5:30 pm Mainstream and Plus; 5:30 pm – 7:00 pm Dinner (Social?); 7:00 pm – 9:30 pm Advanced and C1 John Hawley

Saturday, December 6, 2025 – Glitter Ball Mainstream through C1 – Mark Franks – Merion Friends Meeting House 3:00 pm – 6:30 pm

March 2026 Fly-in: Callers: Sandie Bryant, Ted Lizotte, Chris Phillips March 13-15, 2026 Sheraton Bucks County

Saturday, April 18, 2026 - 3:00 pm – 5:30 pm SSD and Plus; 5:30 pm – 7:00 pm Dinner (Social?); 7:00 pm – 9:30 pm Advanced and C1 Mark Franks

Saturday, August 15, 2026 Summer Splash All-level Dance Mainstream – C1 Dayle Hodge 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm Unitarian Universalist Society of Mill Creek – Joint Dance with DC Lambda Squares and Chesapeake Squares

Saturday, December 5, 2026 – Glitter Ball Mainstream through C1 – Betsy Gotta – Merion Friends Meeting House 3:00 pm – 6:30 pm

April 2027 Fly-in: Callers: Barry Clasper, Mark Franks, Eric Henerlau April 2-4, 2027 Sheraton Bucks County (?)

### **FYI Notes**

- 1) Similar to last year, after some feedback, we are recommending not hiring another caller on nights when only one of the callers is out that evening. With the beginning of the Plus class in January 2025, the Mainstream and Plus classes should be called on those nights when only one caller is available.
- 2) Please note that both Mark and Betsy will be out on April 15, 2025 as they will be attending CallerLab. The board should consider going dark that night unless a reasonable substitute can be found.
- 3) I was given a list by the board as to potential dates for 2026. The only ones confirmed thus far are shown above. The remainder of the list is a work in progress.

## **Report from IS Recruitment Committee for the March 26, 2025 Board Meeting**

**Our committee: Arin, Chris, Coco, George, Marika, Steve, Vinney, Will**

**Our most recent meeting was on March 24, 2025.**

### **Open Houses 2025**

Our committee will advertise and run the open houses on July 22, August 12 and September 16, 2025.

### **Pride Events 2025 and other outreach.**

PhillyPride365 – Sunday, June 1, 2025 from noon to 6pm

Delco Pride Festival – Saturday, June 14, 2025 from 1pm to 6pm

South New Jersey Pride – Sunday, September 7, 2025 from noon to 6pm

**PhillyPride365** posted information about this year's march and festival which will be on June 1. Steve will be the point person for staffing a table on June 1. He applied for a vendor spot but has not yet been awarded one. The fee is \$200. Vinney reached out to our current students and recent Mainstream graduates. He got an overwhelmingly positive response.

Steve will also take the lead on organizing a table at **Delco Pride Festival** on June 14. The fee is \$100.

Vinney approached Dave Tavani about having a presence at the **Delco Pride Parade in Media** on June 7. Dave will hand out palm cards advertising our open houses.

Coco will take the lead in organizing our participation in **South New Jersey Pride** on September 7. The fee will be at most \$55 but Coco might negotiate a free spot like she did last year. George and Coco will reach out to festival organizers before the date of the event to determine the technical criteria for using their audio equipment.

There is no information about a Trans Wellness Conference for 2025.

We will encourage our membership to participate in smaller events such as the Collingswood Pride Event on June 7 and the Collingswood Second Saturday Pride Edition on June 14. Members who are already going to these events will be supplied palm cards.

### **Retention and Non Dancing Social Events**

There will be an Independence Squares Games Night on April 15. Marika and Arin will organize a free or low cost outing to a museum, which will possibly be to the Weitzman National Museum of American Jewish History. Steve will encourage Dave Blatt to organize another field trip or activity for our members.

### **Outreach to medical professionals**

Marika and Arin made a flyer specifically for medical professionals last year. The flyer is still relevant to this year.

George will work on distributing information about Independence Squares to medical professionals such as those at the Cooper Center for LGBTQ+ Health in Collingwood, NJ.

### **Inclusivity**

The importance of participating in events in the city where diversity is greater than in the suburbs was stressed. We should be looking at **Philadelphia Black Pride**, April 24-27, 2025 for example.

### **Advertising on Facebook and Instagram**

Marika will start advertising our Open Houses on Facebook and Instagram starting in June. They will not spend more than \$150 without coming to the committee to request more funds.