

Swing 'n' Country Board Meeting

November 13, 2017

Meeting was called to order at 6:45 pm.

Present: Don Moeller, Susie Kaplan, Leah Noparstak, Reike Moskal, Gary LaForte, Marcia Emmett, Ingrid Dubman, and Dan Brabec

Absent: Karen Saunders, Lou Chatroop

Mission Statement was read by Leah

Member Presentations – None

President's Report

- None

Treasurer's Report

- Swing 'n' Country's dance and lessons operated at a small loss for October 2017. Lessons operated and at surplus while dances operated at loss. The Chicago Cubs playoff games were in competition with a dance and several of the lessons. The pre-dance lessons did not provide their typical contribution to total dance revenue during the month of October. New and renewal memberships totaled 17 members. October also saw the annual payment of Constant Contact, sponsorship of Swing City Chicago and a thank you gift expense to April Prince for her support of the Dance Camp Chicago web page. These expenses were budgeted and/or Board approved expenses.
- Don motioned/Ingrid seconded that we accept the October 2017 Treasurer's report. Motion passed.

Secretary's Report

- Leah/Don motioned to accept the Secretary's report as amended. Susie to resend re-amended August Minutes for final approval before archival.

Committee Reports

Hospitality

- Marla was very helpful at the last dance.

Dance Camp Chicago

Tobi and I had lunch at the hotel the Thursday of SCC and while there I called our Contract person Marcia Zeller to see if she was available to answer a few quick questions (she was) and we were also able to meet our Banquet Manager Melissa McNally.

I had a number of questions/comments for them:

1. Spoke about Jeff Fraunhoffer and that he gets 2 rooms max (no matter what). Though the hotel doesn't have a Concierge Level so that's a good thing.
2. I re-verified that if the Spring Ballroom (which we are not contracted for) is available that we can use the room at no charge.
3. Also if we end up using the Spring Ballroom can we have dance floor added at no cost? Yes - as long as they have it available.
4. I asked if they had risers available for the main ballroom (to maximize seating) - Yes (at no extra charge).
5. I sent in our Master Rooming list and asked for the hotel reservation link
 - a. we have our master rooms set (I didn't book for any Board members as there is NO staff rate here)
 - b. the hotel reservation link was received and the website was updated
6. I let them know that Marcia and Ingrid were going to be calling to set an appointment to see the suite.

On that note...

Marcia and Ingrid went over and saw the suite that we are being given - there were not impressed. They expressed to Hotel Marcia that the suite would probably not work and was there any other option? Hotel Marcia showed them the Directors Suite (better but not by much) and then the Presidential Suite (best bet). Hotel Marcia told the ladies that she would see if it is available and work up a quote and send it to me. I received it last night and I am very happy to report that it is available and that they are willing to do an exact swap. The 2 free suites for the 2 nights for the 1 Presidential Suite for 2 nights. I accepted it.

As for Ingrid's helpers, the bedroom in the Presidential Suite has the 1 bed so Ingrid will be making the call regarding who is in her room. I believe I have an option for Jerry (room him with John Bianchi) - Jerry does a LOT of work.

Operations

- November and December staffing sheets were distributed.
- Computer and tracking systems report prepared by Lou Chatroop:

A minor problem was found and reported at the November 3 dance by the desk personnel. It concerned the Dance Print Forms Sheet on the tracking File. While not affecting the form for printing, it did affect the night's after results that are often used for error checking and auditing. That sheet shows the results of the night of money taken in per attendee. When an inconsistency is detected later that evening during balancing, that sheet is referred to and compared against the completed dance print form to locate the errors. The sheet was not reflecting results correctly due to a link error. That problem has now been fixed. It has been fixed in both the current (November) file and the template which is used for future monthly files.

I will be out of town from November 13 through the 20th. I will miss both the 3rd lesson and second dance. I have prepared the system already for the 3rd Lesson and it takes just one or two (if a sort is required) button hits to prepare the file for the dance, so I expect no problems. I also already printed and provide to Ingrid the Dance Print Form for Dance #2. So, in short all is ready for the dance. To make things simple, there is a single folder and files pair for both the lesson and dance. We expect the lesson to be fairly routine. I also gave Ingrid a list of the 3 remaining "Must-Renew" persons so we don't let them slip through any cracks. They are not on the printed form, and if you don't use or check the computer in real-time to look at a person's status who is not on the form, you might miss these people.

If you get any new waivers or memberships (new or renewals), I suggest simply leaving them for me and I will enter them into the system upon my return. I admit, it is still confusing which function to run for a particular circumstance, still an open issue for me to make it totally automatic and easy for anyone to handle member updates. Feel free to give the forms to Gary, and I can get them from him along with a copy of the files from the dance. Remember for brand new arrivals, use the simple Add New Arrival function and enter money received.

As for the Holiday Dance, I have already semi-prepared the tracking file in advance for that night and all its specialties such as no lessons and special pricing. This was done because only two days are between November and December events, giving little time to customize it for that night. That file is already on the computer. All that is needed to complete it for the Holiday Dance is the customer database from the November 29 lesson and to link it into the Lessontrack file. I will be at that lesson to handle that. From that, I will also print the Dance Entry Form for the Holiday Dance.

Finally, as I did last December, I would like to take the SNC computer with me after the Holiday Dance for the month long quiescent period for routine maintenance, updates, and to do another total system backup.

Happenings

- Our Account with Constant Contact was renewed with a pre-payment at our current rate for another year. This provided SNC a 30% discount over the normal monthly rate. We continue to get good open rates on all our Happenings, even on reminders. What is occasionally disproportionate are the read rates to event attendance. We seemed to have had a slow October in terms of attendance (further discussion and statistics on this can come from other committees), yet our Happenings Open rates are consistently high. As one example, the reminder for the Dorky Dance saw one of the highest read rates of reminders (even higher than the November Monthly Happenings). A minimum of 143 persons read that reminder, yet the

dance was disproportionately attended, especially the lessons, and even more especially the Novice lesson.

- I mention these statistics strictly in connection with Marketing. Clearly the word is getting out, and I don't see marketing as a problem. If Happenings was any indicator of reality, I would have expected a massive crowd for the October 20 dance. So, we need to ask, was there something else going on that produced lower than expected attendance in October, or as in the case of the October 20 dance and lessons was it having unfamiliar (at least to the typical SNC attendee) instructors? Food for thought.

Marketing

- All Marketing for November and December 2017 has been consolidated into a single marketing plan. This is due to the only event in December being on December 1 and the last event in November being just 2 days earlier on November 29. On October 30, all marketing with the details for both months went out. This included the Web update and the normal monthly Happenings this time covering both, November and December.
- In light of the above, there will be no separate update covering December. This will include the web site, monthly Happenings, and three month calendar. To make up for this gap in advance, both Web Site and Happenings were released covering all the way out through February. Full details of events for January and February were not yet known **by** the Education Committee to due lack of or delayed responses or changes in selected instructors, but all dates of lessons and dances as well as DCC were publicized.
- For Holiday Dance Party Marketing, the weekend of October 21, Leah submitted drafts for the flier and solicited board approval. By Monday, October 23, we had a final approved flier. As for convention marketing, the club banner was up at Swing City Chicago (SCC) from Thursday, October **26** to Sunday, the 29th. Leah's 3-month Calendar covering November through January and her final Holiday Dance Party Flier were printed back-to-back and put out at SCC. From the final count of fliers remaining on Sunday, about 25-30 were picked up at the convention.
- As for the Holiday Dance, and as per club policy of recent years, all Marketing for the Holiday Dance states no exception to stated pricing (no passes, points, grace, free-1st-timers, etc.) We always seem to get a few arrivals with the "I didn't know" excuse. This has been on all materials since it went out, so if someone knows about the dance, they know the prices. I would suggest in the announcements at the next dance, when the Holiday Party is mentioned, the prices are also verbally clarified. It was not necessary for the fliers put out at the SCC convention, but for remaining fliers brought back to the club, I overprinted on the Holiday flier, our previously used "No Pricing Exceptions" standard boiler plate statement.
- The next major/monthly (not reminders) Happenings, Web Update, and 3-month calendar will be published shortly after the Holiday Dance covering January through March. There will of course be some reminder Happenings over December both for Holiday Wishes and to remind of upcoming events.

Education

- I am happy to report that our November lessons both beginners and intermediate classes have been well attended, Brittney is doing a great job.
- Mike Konkel and Shelli Schroeder will teach at our November 17 dance and it is our TOYS for TOTS event. Last year we donated the toys to the Franklin Park fire department to pass on to the marines who collect them. Do we want to take them this year to another municipality?
- The Education Committee has been working on next year's lessons, we had originally wanted the DORKY DUO (Sammy Powers and Heather Fronczak) but they are unable to teach.
- JANUARY- Hustle-Liz Gutzwiler-Daigle | Second dance-Cha-Cha- Rachel Mercedes - sent them contracts, not yet received response
- FEBRUARY - Waltz-Don Macdonald | Second dance to be announced
- MARCH - Two-Step-Julie Hein and Don Leynes. Julie will let us know if she will teach the first or second dance due to prior commitment, then I will book the second dance.

Archive Report

- No report.

Website Report

- Nothing of significance.

Music

- Nothing to report.

Volunteers

- Nothing to report

Special Event Committee

Holiday Dance 2017

- We will have 2 servers for the evening so all of us can enjoy the party.
- Don Moeller is going to get the decorations from the locker and I will bring the rest from home and we will put them up on the 29th, our last lesson.
- It was discussed and decided by the board that the actual menu would NOT be published in advance (expanded hospitality table should be used in marketing).

Menu Assignments:

- Marcia: meatballs, 2 trays sandwiches from Jewel (ax the weenies this year)
- Karen-Christmas cookies, mini eclairs and mini crème puffs, Hummus, artichoke dip
- Gary: pick up (Marcia orders) Shrimp platter plus 1 bag of shrimp, cocktail sauce and chocolate cake
- Ingrid: order and pick up chicken tender strips from Sporty's, potato salad
- Don: veggie tray, cheese tray, crackers (1/2 gluten free), plates, napkins, clear 6-8 oz glasses for punch,
- Reike: fruit, punch and punch bowl (Susan Higgins recipe?)
- Susie: 2 types pickles, black and green olives
- Dan: 3 boxes of Joe from Dunkin Donuts (2 decaf, 1 regular) {Dunkin Donuts also provides cream, sugar, cups and stir sticks}
- Lou: water

Staffing Assignments:

1. 7:30 to 8:00-Lou/Gary
2. 8:00 to 8:30-Susie/Marcia
3. 8:30 to 9:00-Reike/Don
4. 9:00-9:30-Ingrid/Karen
5. 9:30-10:00-Marcia/Susie
6. 10:00-10:30-Reike/Don
7. 10:30-11:00-Lou/Ingrid

Next meeting is 12/11/17.

Adjournment:

Leah motioned / Don seconded that the meeting be adjourned at 8:19 p.m. Motioned carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Susie Kaplan