

Swing 'n' Country Board Meeting Minutes

Monday, March 22, 2010

Approved April 12, 2010

Present: Rich Cooper, Bill Dortch, Marcia Emmett, Jerry Kieras, Leah Noparstak, Susie Kaplan, Don Moeller, Tobi Oberman, Roger Peterson, Judi Troemel
Absent: Ann Clark
Guests: None

Meeting was called to order at 7:02 pm by President Roger Peterson. Mission Statement was read by Roger Peterson. Roger commented that our Mission statement is very cool and that the attorney that he spoke with last Thursday also thought it was quite good.

President's Report:

- The SNC transition board meeting is scheduled for April 12. Place to be determined by new Board. The new and smaller board will be introduced at our April 2 dance (the same evening as the Gently Used Clothing Sale). The current (i.e. old) board will be needed at this meeting to approve these minutes and to approve the treasurer's report.
- Life Members: Roger passed out plaque catalogs so folks know what can be purchased as gifts for our new Life Members. An e-mail poll previously determined that a laminated ID plus a plaque were the best choices. A not-to-exceed price was voted on. The Board **unanimously agreed** to spend approximately \$25 with a not-to-exceed amount of \$40. Roger, Ann, and Tobi (??) agreed to be the committee for planning the combined Life Member and Sweet Sixteen SNC birthday for the May 7, 2010 dance. The hospitality budget has been increased from \$65 to \$100 including water.
- IRS 501c7: After discussion with state employees, as well as an attorney, the SNC application for Illinois tax exempt status (i.e. an E-Number) has been abandoned. Illinois looks to charitable organizations that are diverse in demographics. As SNC services a particular group, our chances of being approved are minimal with expense of application large. (Secretary's note: Legislation is now in the Illinois House with the intent of removing Tax Exempt Status of hospitals that are run by religious organizations. If this gets passed, a dance club would surely be declined.)
- Status of our corporation with the State of Illinois: Roger motioned that "The board of directors of Swing N Country authorizes president Roger Peterson to file form NFP 105.10/105.20 with the State of Illinois changing the registered agent of Swing N Country from Donald Allen Bright to Leah Rachael Noparstak. Following this change the updating of board of directors may be completed online. **Unanimously passed.** Rich stated that he had previously tried to file this form without success. We need to follow up and assure that these changes are recorded by the state.

- How Are We Doing Button is back up and the three responses that came in were passed out. Two were positive (loved everything about us) and one was negative (stated we are quickly outdating ourselves)

SNC Officer and Committee Reports: (Listed alphabetically)

Dance Camp Chicago: (Leah, Chair) Julie, Tobi, Roger, Susie, Don

- Leah admitted that both she and Julie “had a girly moment of tears” the Saturday night of DCC when seeing the dance floor jammed with so many people having such a good time.
- It was unanimously agreed that SNC will hold Dance Camp in 2011. We are proposing the same 3rd week in February. *Happenings* will publish this as “Save the Date” as soon as availability responses are received from Mario, Kristin and Waterford Banquet. The board agreement to move forward with DCC 2011 is conditional on creating a DCC 2011 budget no greater on the expense side than 10% more than the DCC 2010 actuals. **Action Item to Judi** when date is validated.
- Full discussion of Dance Camp financials could not be done as there are three receivables outstanding (Maren, Carlos and Brian). Roger asked Leah to complete the reconciliation of the DCC 2010 finances so that a final and correct budget vs. actuals written report may be given to the SNC board. This final corrected report will be used as a basis for the DCC 2011 budget.
Action Item for Leah.

Education: (Tobi, Chair) Penny and Jerry.

Tobi reported that she will continue with contracting instructors until all slots have been filled though the end of CY 2010. Roger thanks Tobi for this!!

Election: The new board (which consists of four members, Leah, Jerry, Rich and Don) will be introduced at the April 2 dance. There had been two new persons volunteering on the condition that the monthly board meeting be held on any other day than Monday. The change was not accepted by the existing new board. The current board has not been successful in recruiting other board members. Asking for helping hands through *Happenings*, as well as a *Haps Special Release by the President*, elicited only the above two volunteers. Continual networking will need to be done at all our lessons and dances to come up with the required seven members. These additional three would be by appointment.

Happenings: (Judi, Chair) Bill.

Judi commented that the highest number of “click-throughs” occurred where pictures or videos were notably included. An electronic report was not provided.

Hospitality: No report

Marketing: Jerry Kieras (Chair) Roger

T-Shirt Contest: Jerry commented that there still no takers for the T-Shirt contest. He mentioned lack of product to which the response was that SNC has a storage container full of t-shirts and no one has asked for one. Jerry also cited camera problems with one possible contestant. Roger asked that the photo of he and Ann be removed from the Marketing Display Board.

Who We Are Handout and Pink Card is incomplete. Roger notes that the urgency of competing the “who we are” card is much less now that we have abandoned our quest for Illinois tax exempt status.

Music: A document entitled *Recommendations to the Swing ‘n’ Country Music Committee* was sent to the Board for comments two weeks prior to the meeting. The document was co-authored by Ann, Roger and Susie. A signed copy of this document will be part of these minutes Roger had requested we comment prior to the meeting. Only two comments had been received and more may come after this meeting. The proposal covers tempo, rhythms, length of songs along with a recommendation that music played between 9:00 pm and 10:30 pm be approved by a dance professional. The document and a few additional notes follows the regular minutes.

Operations: Leah (Chair), Roger – member

Roger passed out committee descriptions that were formulated July 21, 2008. These need to be updated. Roger had also asked each member think about their duties and what they will or will not continue through the next period.

- **Front desk:** Tobi and Leah have become the exclusive experts at the front desk. [Roger sighs as he reads this: “I don’t do too badly at the desk”] There is a strong need for training of other folks, especially the computer entries. Jerry stated he will always be there and will need more experience and a different type of keyboard (runs about \$20). Judi and Marcia agreed to be put on the sign-up sheet for working the cash box only. **Action Item:** Recruit a person who is data entry strong and savvy in Excel. For the near term, Leah will be the ONLY person doing the weekly and monthly after-event spreadsheet updates. We are thus in need only of persons familiar with working with an already-developed spreadsheet rather than persons who could develop their own spreadsheet.
- **Set Up:** It is impossible to have a complete lesson or dance set up in 15 minutes by one person. Two are needed, one for the computer/cash and one for sound system set up. **Action item:** In future sign-up rosters, ask for two set up volunteers.
- **Education:** Tobi volunteered to complete instructor contracts through the end of 2010. Booking teachers for 2011 needs to be well underway in July of 2010. **Action Item:** Recruit an Education Chair to train under Tobi by May of 2010.

- **Secretary:**
Action Item: Assign someone in the new board to fulfill this responsibility as minutes of meetings are mandatory.
- **Hospitality:** Susie and Marcia volunteered to provide the snacks at dances. Rich Cooper offered to purchase the water. [Roger is wondering why water couldn't be purchased by a non-board volunteer. The purpose of writing down all of the small jobs that we all have been doing is to identify many small jobs that volunteers can do.]
- **Happenings:** Judi agreed to continue writing *Happenings*, the Club's e-letter and the three month calendar. When there are board meeting directives for communication to the subscriber Happenings subscribers. Judi needs to be informed.
- **Web Site:** Roger has agreed to continue keeping the SNC web site up to date. He requested that the current board keep the line of communication to him so that the web site will remain current
- **Storage of SNC records:** Roger will personally discuss this issue with both Leah and Jerry.

Secretary's Report: (Judi, Chair)

There were two significant corrections to the March 1 minutes.

Under Education: Contracts have been signed for teachers through September 2010.

Under Marketing: Identifying tags to promotional items were explained. Marketing Display Board (current); Who-We-Are-Handout (Incomplete) and Pink Card (Incomplete) are now the official names.

Treasurer's Report: Rich (Chair)

The February report had major holes in it due to incomplete receivables. Rich even tried giving February two additional days – calling it February 30. However, more income and expense data needs to be identified. Approval of the Treasures report will go for motion at the April 12 meeting. Action item: DCC committee needs to provide Rich with additional income/expenses.

For the Good of the Club:

Adjournment: Leah motioned that the meeting be adjourned at 10:00pm. Susie seconded the motion, along with Rich and Bill. Motion unanimously passed.

Having led his last full board meeting, Roger was seen skipping to the door.

Respectfully submitted,
Judi Troemel

The following statements are NOT part of the approved minutes for March 22, 2010. This attachment documents the thoughts of the authors. These thoughts are the end result of over two years of thought and debate regarding the selection of music for Swing 'n' Country. Following the attachment, differing viewpoints are also documented and signed by their authors.

Recommendations to the Swing 'n' Country Music Committee

Music selection for Swing 'n' Country (SNC) dances is key to the enjoyment of our customers and to the success of our customers on the dance floor. The skill level of our customers ranges from brand new beginners all the way to highly skilled competitors. The majority of our customers are in the beginner to advanced beginner category. During the past two years music selections has been debated by the SNC board and by the SNC music committee but no final guidelines have been created. Note that I believe that music selection has been hotly contested by SNC from the beginning of the club.

The undersigned have made the following observations during the past two years:

- The **tempo** of dance music is critical. Our beginner-level dancers will be much more successful when the tempo of the music is appropriate for their skill level. We specifically observe that the tempos of *some* (not all) of the music played at our dances for two step, nightclub, waltz, and double two is difficult for our beginner dancers. We also observe that the majority of the music played at our dances has an appropriate tempo.
- Beginner dancers will be more successful with music that has a very clear and strong **rhythm** which is appropriate for the dance. This is particularly true when the ballroom is noisy.
- The use of very long songs (say, greater than 3 minutes) can be very unpleasant especially when the skill levels of two dancers differ significantly. SNC has established a reputation of being a friendly club where everyone has opportunities to dance. We believe that the more experienced dancers would be more willing to ask our brand new dancers to dance if the duration of songs were limited. In addition, a shorter song enables our Dance Angels to dance with more partners and makes the Dance Angel job a bit easier. This, in turn, will help the club solicit Dance Angels. Finally, the use of very long songs also limits the total number of different dances that can be done during the evening. If the duration of songs were limited there would be a larger number of the "other" dances such as Waltz, Cha, and Hustle played.
- Each of our customers has different likes and dislikes regarding music selection. One person may leave a dance thinking the music was fantastic while the next person thinks it was not. We believe that the "liking" or not of a particular song does not necessarily make that song

danceable. Many songs are wonderful for listening but may not be good for dancing. We suggest that polling our customers regarding whether they like the music at a dance should be only one input to consider for music selection.

- We have observed that the sound level of music in the ballroom is sometimes unnecessarily high.
- We have observed that our dance rotation is welcomed by our customers. The fact that the rotation continues until the end of the dance is key. We have observed also that the “other” category allows for flexibility that can make our dances seem to have a flavor that we do not intend.

The undersigned make the following recommendations to the SNC music committee:

- Dance professionals should be used extensively to select music. In our view, a “dance professional” is a person who regularly teaches persons from beginner to intermediate levels and therefore knows how music affects the ability of those dancers to perform well.
- DJ’s should be instructed to fade the music as soon as possible after 3 minutes. If a particular DJ refuses to follow this instruction, that DJ should be removed from the DJ rotation.
- During the first 90 minutes of every dance (9:00 pm to 10:30 pm) all music played should have been approved by a committee of music professionals. These professionals should consider tempo and rhythm and any other aspect of the music in order to select music that will *make the dance experience for our beginner customers the best that it can be*. We recommend that swing dance professionals be used to select music for WCS, ECS, and Hustle; we recommend that country dance professionals be used to select music for Waltz, Two Step, Double Two, Cha, and Nightclub.
 - One possibility for implementation of this suggestion is to create an “approved music library” for every dance. This library would be provided to our DJ for use during the first 90 minutes of a dance. A DJ disregarding this list would be removed from the DJ rotation.
 - Another possibility for implementation of this suggestion is for each DJ to submit a list of tunes for review and approval by the dance-professional review team.
- We recommend that the sound level of the music in the ballroom be monitored more carefully and be minimized.
- With regard to the dance rotation, we recommend that the “other” category be used differently. Specifically, we recommend that a longer rotation such as a modification of the rotation used for the Tri-Dance be created resulting in a more specific rotation. [Note that we are NOT recommending that the Tri-Dance rotation be used “as is”.]

Authors: Roger Peterson, Susie Kaplan, Ann Clark, Judi Troemel, Jerry Kieras

The board is not in unanimous agreement with the thoughts presented above. A different opinion follows:

Marcia Emmett and Tobi Oberman: My experience with this issue is limited due to my lack of history on the subject. I basically agree with the majority of the recommendations of the committee however I'm not sure that totally controlling what the DJ's play is the answer. They should be given the established guidelines and if they are not in compliance then they should be given a warning and if that isn't sufficient they should be removed from the rotation. A good DJ should be able to gage the enjoyment level as well as ability level of his "audience" and play music accordingly. Due to the diversity of our club I think that the music will always be a difficult area in which to gain universal agreement.