

SSDS Fun Business Meeting Minutes

3:00pm, Sunday, April 26th, 2009
Panera Bread Company, East Circle Drive
5701 East Circle Drive, Cicero, 13039
(315) 458-9436

Attendance: Greg, Isaias, Maria, Rosalie, Deb, Michael, Alice, Mary Ellen
SSDS board members not present: Stacey, Tania (excused).

Meeting started at 3:07pm and concluded 4:50pm.
Thank you all for attending and contributing.

1. Old Business

- Thursday dances at Knights of Columbus 3717, 5679 East Taft Road
 - March 5th, 12th, 19th and 26th.
 - March 5th: Fred Goodsen said we have 'til the end of March.
 - March 9th: Sara Caliva prepared contract for renting St. Clare Theater every Thursday night 6pm – 11pm starting Thursday April 2nd. There was a previous booking for May 7th by another party, which was subsequently cancelled.
 - March 10th: Stacey prepared new venue flyer and brought printed flyers to March 12th dance for display.
 - March 26th: Mary Ellen met Sara to sign contract and pick up the key to the building. SSDS agrees to rent St. Clare every Thursday starting April 2nd for five hours 6pm-11pm. Both parties can cancel the contract with seven days notice.
 - The cabinet and sound system was moved to St. Clare from KofC by Steve and Can on March 26th 11:30pm after the dance. It was raining that night.
- Thursday dances at St. Clare Theater
 - New Venue free admission opening night April 2nd.
 - The St. Clare maintenance staff did not clean the floor as we had requested. The trash cans still contained trash left behind by the previous tenant. The tables were there in the center of the floor with no chairs. Some chairs were stored in the Men's room so we brought out those chairs and pushed the tables out toward the periphery of the floor. The bathrooms had not been cleaned but there was a supply of toilet paper and paper towels for both Ladies and Men's rooms.

- Sara later apologized for the condition of the Theater. Sara is our contact person at Franciscan Collaborative Ministries. She had been out of the office with illness and had not passed on our request to the maintenance staff.
- One of the two large Carrier furnace fans suspended from the ceiling was continuously blowing cold air. There is no switch to turn off the fan. The fan is pointed down and toward the entrance door area, so our door volunteers felt the full blast of cold air. The noise of the fan made it difficult to hear Steve's voice during the lessons.
- Attendance count was about 70 and this includes the dance students taking Steve's classes. Everyone filled out a registry form for contact info.
- The lighting in the theater consists of fluorescent tube lights and people commented that it felt like they were at their high school dance.
- We sold bottled water at 50¢ per bottle and used one of the two cases of water left from our last event. We collected the empty plastic water bottles for recycling.
- The sound system and speakers were positioned on the dance floor against the far wall (east wall) and there was a lot of echo bouncing sound around the room.
- Everyone that came to the April 2nd dance received a "Two for One" admission ticket wrapped around a package of Oreo cookies as they exited the building. The tickets were valid only for the April 9th dance. The outdoor lighting is not very good so we used a Coleman lantern and some candles along the sidewalk.
- April 9th: "Two for One" tickets night.
 - Chuck Weber met Mary Ellen there early at 5pm to help clean the hall before classes started at 6pm. No staff had been in to empty the trash cans, clean the bathrooms or replenish paper supplies. No one had swept the floor so we did this. We used a shop-vac to clean the entrance carpets.
 - Can Isik also came early to bring the remote microphones.
 - Leaving the front door unlocked and openly unsupervised allows the neighborhood boys to run upstairs into the apartment hallways. If we leave the door unlocked and open, someone has to be sitting there.

- Mary Ellen bought eight small lamps and several candles from Rescue mission to use for lighting instead of the fluorescent lights.
- We opened the balcony door and brought down some more folding chairs to the main hall. Pete Keller helped carry the chairs. We found the off switch for the overhead fan.
- The sound system was set up on the stage and the echo seemed less than the previous week.
- April 9th was Maudy Thursday and the parking lot was full during the time that evening mass was being held.
- Six people used Two for One tickets as admission to the dance. Total attendance was about 30 people. Three new people.
- We sold about half a case of bottled water.
- Mary Ellen took the empty plastic bottles home for recycling.
- April 16th
 - Chuck Weber met Mary Ellen there early at 5pm to help clean and set up the hall. No maintenance staff had been in to clean.
 - Total attendance was 46 people. Three new people, one person for the survival lesson. It is extremely difficult to teach the survival lesson at this venue because the people cannot hear your voice over the music + echo.
- April 23rd dance:
 - Chuck Weber met Mary Ellen there early at 5pm to help clean and set up the hall. Chuck emptied the trash and Mary Ellen cleaned the bathrooms. The maintenance staff had not done any of this. Chuck used a razor blade to clean some of the sticky gum spots off the dance floor. We washed the surface of all the tables and used plastic table covers.
 - Music Survey/Raffle April 23rd: “My Favorite Tune.” There were 23 contributors. The winner of the drawing was Kathryn Coloccia from Rush, NY. It was her first time attending our dance and she left before the 11pm drawing. Mary Ellen has sent email notice to Kathryn, still waiting for reply.
 - The music survey results are available on a “Google.doc” spreadsheet which allows our deejays to view and edit. The names of the contributors are not included in the spreadsheet.
 - Lots of people came in and said they did not know the name of the songs that they liked.
 - We sold bottled water at 50¢ each and ran out of supply at 10:30pm. Greg took the empty bottles home for recycling.
- Motivational notices displayed at weekly St. Clare dances

- Ten top reasons to Swing Dance
 - The three “T’s”
 - We love our Volunteers
- Sound system, Deejay rotation: Deejays rotate and cover for each other as necessary. We appreciate our volunteer deejays, Maria, Steve, Can and Isaias. They are all working together and doing a great job.
 - Jessica Reeher has deejayed at Fusion dance club. It might be possible to add Jessica to the deejay rotation. She would need help building a collection of Lindy music.
- Music inventory and “recently played”. SSDS Music inventory is available for viewing on Google.doc. Recently played titles are available for view on SSDS website.
- St. Clare Theater venue is apparently in violation of building code. Sara sent email notice on April 23rd to Mary Ellen about having to move the SSDS dance to the gymnasium while repairs are made. Mary Ellen will contact Sara on Monday to learn the nature of the code violations.
- If we cannot continue to use St. Clare/Gymnasium space, we have unwritten agreement with Ukrainian home, but we would have to move the dance to Wednesday.
- Mohegan Manor in Baldwinsville might also be available as an alternate venue, possibly at no cost, providing that the dancers support the bar.

2. Publicity

- SSDS weekly dance flyers: We have about 50 new venue flyers
- SSDS business cards: We are using the same business cards with new venue stickers on the back to cover the KofC address info.
- SSDS banner: We hang the banner near the St. Clare door on Thursday 5pm, before lessons start at 6pm. The banner has helped many people locate the new venue.
- SSDS tee shirts: One tee shirt as a prize for “My Favorite Tune” raffle.
- Syracuse Newspapers: Stars magazine, Weekend, Neighbors and New Times. Our dance is sometimes listed in the paper but not every week. The paper is thinner with fewer pages. Deb contacted the Stars and Calendar representatives, to keep our listing current. We should make every effort to continue to keep our listing in the paper, taking advantage of the free advertising opportunity
- Press Release submitted by Crystal describing our April 2nd, first night at St. Clare event.
- Not everyone reads the paper anymore and we think that younger people are more likely to learn of our group from using a computer.

- Our demographic group usually consists of singles, couples without children or couples with adult children (empty-nesters), married people where one person dances and the other does not and people that are new to the Syracuse area looking to make social contacts.
- New people coming to our weekly dance often say they found us through our website or internet.
- Internet advertising
 - www.syrswingdance.org
 - SSDS listserv and announcements
 - i. Some people have withdrawn from our SSDS saying they have been receiving too many annoying emails.
 - ii. Brian Bromka sends just one email per week now.
 - iii. Political campaign emails are not appreciated. Mary Ellen will speak with Lydia.
 - iv. The option to solve the problem might be to start using a moderator but we prefer to not adopt that policy. Just a few people are causing the problems and we will try to deal with them individually.
 - Community calendars
 - i. Eventful
 - ii. 9WSYR
 - Classified ads
 - i. Craigslist
 - ii. Backpage
 - iii. Oodle
 - iv. Kijiji
 - v. PennysaverUSA
 - Online Directories
 - i. Google.local
 - ii. Yahoo.local
 - iii. Msn.local
 - iv. Yellowpages.com
 - v. Superpages.com
 - vi. PartyPop
 - vii. Syracuse Business List
 - viii. Ballroom Dancers.com
 - ix. Itsaboutdance.com
 - Social internet websites (i.e. Facebook)
 - i. Yahoo.groups.SyracuseWCS
 - ii. Yahoo.groups.meetup – allow members to send 12 emails/day

- iii. Sending notice to a group every Thursday may be perceived as a nuisance by some members since they already know that we dance every Thursday
- Still considering
 - i. Wikipedia – online encyclopedia, not where people would normally go to look for dance information. Still might consider submission.
 - ii. LinkedIn – mostly business listing
 - iii. Facebook – someone has to keep it up to date
 - iv. MySpace
- We will try also to add our listing to
 - i. StrictlyWestie.com
 - ii. Westiewire.com
 - iii. Netmeeting.com
- Online Survey sample questions
 - i. Types of questions (from Constantcontact.com)
 1. Single-select multiple choice
 2. Multi-select multiple choice
 3. Rate one item on a scale
 4. Rate items on a scale
 5. Rank numerically
 6. Open-ended text
 7. Collect personal information
 - ii. Creating and conducting a survey of our dance patrons would generate a lot of work for our volunteers.
 - iii. Surveys seem to provide more negative information rather than positive information. People are usually quick to tell you what they do not like and less likely to offer positive feedback about their experience.
 - iv. Music preferences are already being surveyed with the “My Favorite Tune” survey.
 - v. Event feedback surveys could be useful if offered for larger events such as annual picnic and Halloween event.
 - vi. As our venue issue becomes settled, we might have more use for surveys. Right now things are still too unsettled.
- Jazzfest might offer some advertising possibilities
- Effective communication for announcements during the dance
 - One-to-one communication is very effective such as door volunteers speaking with people as they arrive.
 - People do actually look at the flyer table as they come in the door

- There are many flyers on the table and not everything is noticed because it feels like information overload
- Printing our own newsletters would not be effective. People would not pick them up or read them. It would just generate more work, printing and using paper that would be wasted.
- The St. Clare venue is not very good for verbal announcements unless we use the microphone. People cannot hear the person's voice. The sound seems to be muffled and difficult to hear. If we do stop the dance for announcements, it should be early in the evening.
- Update to mailing list: We started a new "Guest Registry" on April 2nd and continued to add new people that came to the dance. This can be added to our current mailing list if/when we decided it is preferable to mail flyers. New people that come to the dance still get in free, but must complete the Guest Registry form for our records.
- Follow up for Radio advertising topic:
 - There are 29 radio stations serving the Syracuse area, all owned by one company, ClearChannel Communications.
 - The cost estimate is quoted to be \$48, typically for a 30 second spot. This information was found online, and could vary between stations and time slots. Early morning and rush hour times are more expensive. They recommend running 18 to 24 per week, for several consecutive weeks.
- Follow up for Bumper stickers topic: Online quotes for printing custom bumper stickers from three suppliers.
 - StickerGiant.com will print one color 250 for \$150+shipping (60¢ each).
 - Yardsigns.org will also print one color 250 at 60¢ each with 10% off for first time customers. Additional color, add 31¢.
 - Emanprinting.com will print 250 for \$190 (76¢ each) and offers "free design."
- Publicity photos, video,
 - We would like to have a collection of publicity photos of people having fun at our weekly dance.
 - Video of our weekly dance could be posted on Youtube.com. We might be able to do something similar to Seattle swing dance club.
 - Rochester swing club puts their weekly lesson video on the internet.

3. Financial Report

- Doing good since leaving the Knights of Columbus. Our record hops are paying the rent. Licenses are all paid and up to date. The invoices

usually come due in January. We did not pursue the offer from Fastdance association. Dryden insurance insures our equipment and provides our liability insurance. We paid ASCAP and BMI. We have some money invested in a CD with HSBC bank which will mature in nine months.

4. Upcoming Events

- Thursday, August 6th, 2009, Arrowhead Lodge picnic. Mary Ellen will do the shopping. Alice will also be available to help set up. The picnic will be set up similar to next year. We will use the flyer from last year and just change the date.
- August break: no weekly dances. We will give all our volunteers a well-deserved break. Our weekly dances will resume sometime after Labor Day, possibly September 10th.
- The new venue that Steve is working on might determine when/where our weekly dances resume in September.
- Halloween Dance, Saturday, October 31st, 2009, Ukrainian Home: Hall is reserved for Saturday only with no down payment.
- Follow up Jason Colacino October 31st availability.
 - Comparison and analysis of our last three major events (Mario 2008, Hazel/Tybaldt 2008, and Topel 2009) provided by Maria
 - Local support for the Mario 2008 weekend was relatively high.
 - There were no Toronto/Montreal/Ottawa/Buffalo dancers here for the Hazel/Tybaldt weekend. This may have been because John Lindo was teaching in Ottawa the weekend before.
 - People that teach on “the circuit” are more popular to the out-of-town crowd. Hazel and Tybaldt do not really travel the circuit as much.
 - Local dancers spend less per person compared to dancers from out of town. The out of town folks are more likely to buy an all-in pass and support the whole event weekend whereas local dancers might just come for one or two classes or just show up for the evening dances.
 - Jason Colacino one day October 31st expense breakdown by Maria
 - i. Jason is considered a bigger draw because he does travel the circuit but not too often.
 - ii. Plan for Jason teaching four one-hour workshops all on one day (Saturday), finishing around 5-5:30pm, ending soon enough for people to go home and take their children out for trick-or-treating.

- iii. Instructor fee relatively expensive compared to other instructors.
- iv. Hall rental fee would be less than our usual expense because we are only renting for one day
- v. Rhode Island recently hosted Jason teaching four one-hour workshops and charged \$75pre-reg/\$85door (this included dinner), individual workshops were \$15pre-reg/\$20door, dance was three hours for \$10.
- vi. Hudson Valley is hosting Jason this weekend teaching seven workshops. They are charging \$95 pre-reg and \$75 for Saturday only (four workshops + dance). Individual workshops \$20.
- vii. Syracuse pricing plan \$65All-in Pre-reg and includes dance admission. Individual workshops \$15pre-reg and \$20door. At the door price of all-in pass was not mentioned but will probably be \$80 and will include dance admission. Dance admission \$10 for five-hour dance 8pm-1am.
- viii. Pre-reg Canadian discount would be 10% so Canadian prices would be
 - 1. All-in \$58.50 pre-reg, \$72 at the door
 - 2. Single workshop \$13.50 pre-reg, \$18 at the door
 - 3. They must pay in cash (Canadian or US) or bank/postal money order in US funds. Canadian currency will be accepted at the door. We might have a separate cash envelope for making change in Canadian dollars.
 - 4. Canadian checks written in Canadian dollars will no longer be accepted. We would like to avoid paying international check fees (currency conversion fee + check processing fee) which can be as much as \$6-\$12 per check.
- ix. We still need a signed contract from Jason Colacino.
- x. Jason will dance with the crowd if people ask him.
- xi. We need a flyer for printing and distribution
- xii. We will probably not mail individual flyers but will follow the same marketing plan as was used for Topel marketing and mail packets.
- xiii. No workshop immediately preceding the Halloween dance so the hall is available for Pizza/decorating party and people will have time to go home to change into their costumes.

- Possible workshop by Diane Nardone for Summer 2009: No plans for bringing Diane to Syracuse. This decision is supported by the fact that Diane has refused to give us her SSN for the last two times we've brought her to Syracuse.
- Possible workshop day featuring local instructors: no plans at this time.
- Thanksgiving Day, Thursday, November 26th, 2009. No SSDS dance.
- Holiday 2009 dance: Still need to set a date, venue.
- New Year's Eve, Thursday, December 31st, 2009. No SSDS dance.

5. New Business, Other Business

- Dance instruction at area schools
- Planning events for 2010
 - Jennifer Lyons – not a “big name on the circuit”
 - Mark Levitin – Syracuse alumni, not a “big name on the circuit”

Next Meeting date, time, place:
 3:00pm, Sunday, June 7th, 2009
 Panera Bread Company, East Circle Drive
 5701 East Circle Drive, Cicero, 13039.
 (315) 458-9436