

SSDS Meeting Minutes

Sunday, April 25th, 2010, 3pm at Panera Bread Company, Cicero.

Attending the meeting: Deborah Smith, Mary Ellen Datta, Isaias Banegas, Lydia Perez, Steve Ryan, Jeff Wormald, Maria Paoff, Barbara Roe, Alice Chico, Michael Stafford-Hill, Keith Chow, Maria Cirino

1. Old Business

- Thursday dances at St. Clare Theater:
 - March 18th, 25th, April 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd. Some weeks have unusual attendance records because not everyone has signed the attendance book. Total attendance recorded was as follows: March 18th – 27 people, March 25th – 19, April 1st – 22, April 8th – 27, April 15th – 28, April 22nd – 43. We know there were more people there at the dance on some of those dates, but they did not sign in or pay admission. They probably came for the lessons before the dance and did not realize that there is an admission charge for the dance. We will try to remember to make announcements at 8:30 to remind people that they should sign the attendance book.
 - The attendance sign-in book is a quick and easy way of record-keeping. It gives a rough estimate of how much money should be in the door receipts. It also lets us know how people learned about our weekly dance and where they have taken lessons.
 - Set up, door volunteers, closing up. Lydia has been coming early to help set up. We sincerely appreciate volunteers that do this, without being asked. Thank you, Lydia, and all the folks that come early, stay late, move quickly to help without being asked.
 - Bottled water, snacks. The snacks are complimentary, but we ask 50 cents for each bottle of water. Some people have been taking the water without contributing.
- Sound system/Volunteer deejays
 - Maria told Can that the CD player skipped a couple of times. We'll keep an eye and get a replacement with warranty contract if the problem repeats.
 - Our deejays are all volunteers. On April 15th, our regular deejays had prior commitments so we needed someone to fill in. Kris Caspari volunteered to cover. We appreciate her enthusiasm and willingness to help on short notice. Jeff Wormald also volunteered to help. Kris deejayed the entire dance that night. Thank you, Kris, for bringing new music and new energy to our weekly dance.

- For future planning, it would be preferable for apprentice deejays to work for 30 minute shifts to learn the system. We love our volunteers and don't want to exhaust their energy and resources. This would also allow for some new music to be introduced to the weekly Thursday dance.
- Our deejays often play from their own personal collection. Most will just buy the music themselves instead of going to the trouble of asking SSDS to buy the song or CD. SSDS has an account with i-Tunes to allow for purchase of new music. This account can be accessed by five computers. Greg and Mary Ellen have used the account but no one else has. Before making a music purchase, the buyer must make sure that we do not already own that song. Mary Ellen has purchased two songs: "Rockin' Pneumonia" by Jimmy Barnes and "Let's Walk" by Austin de Lone. These will be added to the SSDS dance music collection.
- All of our SSDS Volunteer deejays are wonderful, intelligent, energetic, musically-talented people. We depend on them to help make the dance more fun and exciting. They don't play music for themselves but play music that they think the crowd will enjoy.
- Volunteer incentives
 - We love our Volunteers. Alice and Michael have been purchasing the water and transporting it to the dance each week. Other people can help with this job and it would be greatly appreciated.
- Alternate venues:
 - Driver's Village: Donna's dance studio is already located in Driver's Village. We would risk making a bad business decision by setting up another dance venue in a facility where there is already a dance venue. We don't want to compete with the dance studio that is there already. It might be possible, however, to rent Donna's studio for a Thursday night dance venue. Maria C. volunteered to talk to Donna.
 - Polish American Citizen's Club on Teall Ave. is not suitable due to the poor condition of the wood flooring.
 - Pastimes Men's Club; Requires Isaias to negotiate for SSDS. It's a men's club and they don't want to do business with women. For the next six months, many of their Thursday's are taken. There are openings for Wednesdays and some Fridays, but SSDS does not want to move away from Thursdays at this time. We don't want to compete with other local area Friday dance opportunities. Pastimes would likely allow storage of our equipment. There is a bar downstairs. The management requires that a bid be submitted for

consideration and approval. The group asked Isaias to investigate Thursday availability at the Pastime facility.

- Bob Cecile center on Seneca Turnpike: The size of the dance floor does not seem large enough to accommodate our needs. They would not allow storage of our sound equipment.
- Ukrainian Home is not available on Thursdays. It is available on Wednesdays and some Fridays. They would probably let us store equipment there.
- City Schools & St. Vincent's gymnasium: no information at this time
- SSDS using Syracuse University Skybarn venue was investigated by Barbara Roe and Can Isik. It could be used for Swing club practice by the SU Swing club and they could invite SSDS members. There would need to be a work-study student present for a minimal hourly fee. There would be no rental fee and no money would be charged at the door. It would need to be a low impact club function. Large events require the presence of a public safety officer and would incur rental fees. The skybarn would not be available in the summer when the students are on break. Paid lessons are not allowed. No money can be exchanged. The students would not be required to pay anything as it is their own event. People that attend first time free don't pay anything so that would remain unchanged. It would be possible to sell admission tickets in advance but not at the door. People could purchase subscriptions or memberships. Our mixer would plug into their sound system, so we wouldn't have to carry the speakers. This is considered a beautiful venue. There would need to be some more planning & negotiation before SSDS could start using this venue on a regular basis.
- The Delavan Art Center may be changing their business arrangements. There is an advertised closing date of May 1st. It has a large open space and wood floor. Delavan Art Gallery is a for-profit art center. Mary Ellen will contact the people that manage that property.
- Weekend review: Mario Robau, Jr. in Syracuse, April 9-11th, 2010
 - SurveyMonkey results: Not many negative comments, mostly positive. 17 people responded. Classes started about 20 minutes late. Saturday night was too hot but there were at least 112 people there dancing. We did not turn on the AC, the outside temperature that night was 36 degrees. We saw the usual complaints about the smell of smoke. The bathroom floor was wet. Positive feedback was presented about seeing the people from Canada and out of town. They liked the guest deejays. They enjoyed nearly all the food

selections. The class level was not too easy, not too hard. E-mail was the most common answer for publicizing the event. Most people that responded were from Syracuse. Some liked that the event was tied to a DanceLover's Friday and some people would prefer an all WCS weekend. DanceLover's submitted a profit share check.

Thank You!

- Financial details still need to be finished.

2. Publicity

- Paper fans need to be ordered. MaryEllen will order more fans.
- There are five tee shirts left in the Sandusky cabinet.
 - i. Tee-shirt committee volunteers: Lydia, Maria C.
- SSDS website: SSDS website offered video to help publicize the Mario Robau event and now offers video to publicize the April 29th dance lesson with Maria Ford/Andre Danis.
- e-mail: Week of April 13th, there were some important messages sent through the SSDS email list. Some folks thought they were on the SSDS email list but they didn't receive any announcements. People can sign up for email using the links on our SSDS webpage. They should add SSDS to their address book/list of contacts so their spam blocker does not block the messages.
- Sunday Stars, Thursday Neighbors, Weekend, Syracuse NewTimes: Barbara Roe has persevered and we are again listed among the local dance events in the printed editions as well as the online editions. Thank you, Barb!
- Business Cards, printed flyers: We have new business cards but the post office box listed in the address section is no longer valid. We no longer keep a post office box. Any mail related to SSDS business should be mailed to Mary Ellen or Greg. When we next order business cards, we will include the website, email and phone number but no physical mailing address.
- Other local dance events & classes: Dance with the Stars program offered an advertisement for SSDS
- Facebook activity: We have 155 fans, 35% male, 63% female. Ages range from 17 to over 55. Facebook offers weekly reports of activity; Some weeks show 7 people are active and some weeks show 70 people are checking the page. Facebook has been very useful for posting photos and videos which greatly help publicize our dance and dance community.

3. Financial Report

4. Upcoming Events

- Maria Ford, Andre Danis (guest instructors from Ottawa) teach WCS lesson during Thursday night swing dance at St. Clare, 8:30pm, April 29th, 2010. Andre Danis & Donnie Neron will also deejay. Andy Watkins has very nicely agreed to bring eight bottles of wine. He is very generous and we appreciate his generosity. Andre and Maria Ford are volunteers teaching a WCS class for 45 minutes starting at 8:30pm. There will also be pizza and enough pizza for everyone else at the dance to enjoy.
- 2010 Picnic Arrowhead Lodge Thursday, July 29th, 2010: planning details next meeting.
- Jennifer Lyons WCS workshop, Saturday, October 30th, 2010. Contract is signed for Jennifer to teach four one-hour workshops in WCS. She is willing to stay in someone's home as long as the house has a place that would be used for teaching private dance lessons. Steve, Deb, Maria C. and Lydia volunteered to help with this event. Jennifer has agreed to perform a demo during the Saturday night dance. She would be flying to/from Boston.
- Halloween Dance, Saturday, October 30th, 2010. We have the option to use the hall for Friday and/or Sunday of that weekend.

5. New Business, Other Business

- Fran from East Side Manor contacted Steve for a dance demo to be provided by SSDS. Mary Ellen spoke with her last week and she has already made arrangements with someone else to perform the demo.
- Marcia Rutledge is a performer that used to be part of the band called the Percolators. She inquired about performing live music for our dancers. We are not pursuing this offer at this time.
- Flowers for Arlene Ryan and donation to Hospice of CNY
- No volunteers or resources available for teaching free lessons to high school seniors before prom season.
- Invite Antoinette to be our next guest instructor for the June 17th Thursday, which is the Thursday before Liberty Swing event. We'll wait until after this coming Thursday, so we can see how it all goes.

Next Meeting date, time, place: Sunday, 3pm, May 23rd, 2010, Panera Bread Company, Cicero.