



El Camino Reelers Board Meeting Minutes (Approved)

Saturday, January 18, 2020, 11:00 AM-2:25 PM

Oliver's home in Palo Alto.

In attendance: Oliver, Ed, Eric, Allan, Kurt, David Morandj, Robin, Dave Decot, Craig Mahaffey

Minutes From Last Meeting

- Minutes from the 12/14/19 board meeting were reviewed, corrected, and approved via email. Ed has posted them to the website.

Financial Report (Ed)

- Update on renewals? We're at 65 members. As of January 18, 2020, these folks have still not renewed (more likely renewals in black, less likely renewals in gray):
 - Mike Aquino
 - Ann Cavalli (no longer dancing due to health issues)
 - Harriett Ferziger
 - Rachael Hawtin
 - Judy Pick
 - Jane Seligson
 - Linda Wieder
 - Aahz
- Ed has sent a check to Nancy Shelton for our annual insurance for everyone who's renewed their membership so far. We can send additional checks for any "stragglers" later.
- Ed sent out a membership directory on 1/13/2020.

APD/DBD Plus Workshop

- This was held on Saturday November 23, 2019, 1:00 PM to 6:00 PM.
- We made \$898.94 from the Rob French workshop, which is the largest profit we've seen from an event for some time.
- We want to hold more quarterly workshops. We'd pay \$200 or half the door. Topics we'd like to cover:
 - Gender Swap/APD workshop, for 4 hours. *Eric will check to see if we can rent St. Andrews on 2/22/20 from 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM. Allan will check with Rob to see how long he thinks a workshop should take, and if he's available for that date. If Rob's not available, Allan will ask the same question of Eric Henerlau.*
 - Convention Brush-Up for Plus (thars, teacup chain, other rarely-used calls) This might also be handled via the 6 weeks of club nights prior to Convention, as long as we announce the topic of each club night in advance.
 - APD/DBD Plus. (Again.)
 - Square recovery techniques. (Keep the square dancing, and also know how to reset from lines or waves. Ideally, swap people around to get them into the right place before the end of the sequence.)

St. Andrew's Church & Alternate Dance Venues

- There have been no updates from Reverend Saia. There is a diocese meeting next week, and a recent St. Andrew's newsletter blurb regarding the meeting did not sound hopeful.
- Potential new venues identified thus far:
 - Oliver has found the Palo Alto Community Child Center, which is \$50/hour. However, this venue is only available until 8:00 PM. This would be great for workshop.
 - Sue Kayton has suggested a couple of Menlo Park venues (e.g., Menlo-Atherton High School) and one in Redwood City/Woodside. *(Allan will talk with Sue Kayton.)*

- Lucie Stern Center in Palo Alto. *(Oliver will contact.)*
- Dave Decot suggested that the City of Santa Clara is opening a new sports park including a multipurpose recreational facility. *Dave will check on the new sports park and also regarding the arts center at Wilcox High School.*
- Foothills Congregational Church in Los Altos (where we held our first Rob French workshop) (Eric will email Annette for contact information.)
- Ladera Community Church off of Alpine Road (where Stanford Quads is currently meeting). (Allan noted that this location would be difficult to get to during weeknight commute hours.)
- First United Methodist Church of Palo Alto (where Palo Alto Contra currently dances). *Allan will contact Mike Buchanan and/or other contra dancers to discuss renting space at the church for club nights.*
- *David Morandi will contact the PAJCC to ask about how much to rent the gym or one of the meeting rooms.*
- *David Morandi will also contact Andy Shore to ask who books the Palo Alto contra space, and if Andy would call a contra/square fun night for us.*
- *Allan will check out the Murphy Park Community Center in Sunnyvale (where Lucky Steppers dances).*
- Craig Mahaffey suggested creating an exploratory committee to work with other square dance clubs to attempt to locate a venue (such as warehouses) that might be purchased and turned into a dedicated square dance center, such as Redwood Rainbows or the Wilde Bunch have.
 - Michael Levy, Joe Dehn, and Sue Kayton would be good people to approach for the committee.
- Craig also suggested two club sharing a space and a caller to reduce club costs. Sue Kayton mentioned this concept to Kurt. Clubs might have offset dance times during the same evening.
- Note: While elsewhere in these minutes, we have dates confirmed with St. Andrews for pot lucks and quarterly dances, we may still have to move these events to other venues if the church closes suddenly.

Club Nights.

- If we move to a single club night per week, we could extend the club night to accommodate multiple levels (Plus/Advanced). For example, 7 PM to 10 PM.
- We need to narrow down the options so that they can be placed on the next board ballot for an official vote. Kurt is going to set up a ballot.
 - *We are facing not a financial challenge of keeping club nights as-is, but a logistical challenge of not having sufficient participation to get a full square dancing at the start of the evening. Please check which options would appeal to you. Fun nights will be held during a club night once a quarter, and Fun nights will be held at the Billy DeFrank Center once a quarter.*
 1. Leave club nights as-is. (Advanced on Tuesdays, Plus on Wednesdays.)
 2. Combine club nights to dance only on Tuesdays from 7 PM to 10 PM (format to be determined)
 3. Combine club nights to dance only on Wednesdays from 7 PM to 10 PM (format to be determined)
 4. For the single club night, dance alternating tips of Plus/Advanced
 5. For the single club night dance a block of Plus, then a block of Advanced.
 6. For the single club night dance a block of Advanced, then a block of Plus
 7. For the single club night dance, a block of Advanced, a block of mixed Advanced/Plus, a block of Plus.
 8. For the single club night dance, a block of Plus, a block of mixed Advanced/Plus, a block of Advanced.

- It was noted that two other Plus clubs in the local area also dance on Wednesdays, and Sunnyvale Belle Swingers dances on Wednesdays. Beaus & Bows have an occasional class on Mondays. Interlocked Squares dances on Thursdays.
- Any club night changes would become effective starting in the second quarter of 2020.

General Meeting

- An informal survey was taken during the General Meeting held on Tuesday 1/14/19. Information gathered by Eric during the meeting:
 - 10 people in favor of moving to 1 night.
 - 9 people against moving to 1 night.
 - 20 people voting to move Fun Nights to a night other than Friday.
 - More workshops to offset reducing advanced dancing.
 - Question was asked: What level do people want to dance?
 - It was brought up that possibly we could raise yearly dues and eliminate the door fees for members at club nights. (There would still be door fees for dances and workshops and potlucks, etc.)
- It was suggested by Puck that if we do vote to move to 1 day/week, we utilize ranked voting for the different options to get more accurate results.
- Mike Buchanan had specific feedback to share. Please see the appendix.
- There was a request made that we have a flip chart at the caller table showing what level will be danced each tip.

Callers

- Kurt will probably be moving to Oakland.
- Kurt has completed scheduling club nights for the first quarter of 2020.

Board Appointments/Elections

- There have been no new interested parties to date.
- Next elections are February 26, 2020. We have three open seats, each for a two-year term.
- Eric is planning to run for re-election in February for a two-year term, but may have to leave before the end of that term if he moves out of the area.
- Oliver's board term ends in 2020. He has agreed to run again for a two-year term.
- Allan will leave the board in 2021 due to expanding commitments for the IAGSDC 2021 and 2022 convention committees.
- Ed's term expires in 2021
- David's term expires in 2021.
- Ed will prepare a draft ballot and send it to the board for review/approval.

Friday Potluck Nights

- Potluck dates for 2020 (David will schedule callers):
 - **January 31st, 2020** [SAUMC confirmed] - Called by "Three of a Kind" (James Thompson, Regina Schulz, Mike Pogue), theme: "Load the Love Boat".
 - **April 17th, 2020** [SAUMC confirmed] - (Caller TBD)
 - **September 25th, 2020** [SAUMC confirmed] - (Caller TBD)
 - **November 27th, 2020** [SAUMC confirmed] - (Caller TBD) ("Black Friday" theme)

Quarterly Dances for 2020:

- **February 22, 2020: Eric Henerlau** [Confirmed 10/17/19]
 - St. Andrews confirmed.

- Contract acknowledged by Eric Henerlau 10/10/19.
- **May 2, 2020: Barry Clasper** [Confirmed 8/11/19] – ECR’s 35th Anniversary Dance
 - St. Andrews confirmed.
 - Booking accepted by Barry, contingent upon our providing transportation and dinner beforehand.
- **August 1, 2020: Mike Kellogg.** [Confirmed 9/10/19]
 - St. Andrews confirmed.
 - Contract sent 8/10/19.
 - Contract accepted in writing by Mike on 9/10/19.
- **October 31, 2020: TBD**
 - St. Andrews confirmed.
 - Allan will reach out to Sandie Bryant, Andy Allemao, Justin Russell, Scot Byars, Steve Minkin.
 - Halloween Dance. (There will not be a competing dance on this date.)

2019 Beginner Classes

- **Violet Class: SSD-50 Level 1 Blast**
 - Eric has 3 people interested in a class.
 - We previously stated we’d like to get at least 4 interested students for a blast class. Is this still a viable number?
 - We will defer further discussion to next month’s meeting.

Fun Nights

- Robin has offered to reach out to some other Meetup groups and Facebook groups with \$5 offers to their membership. Robin has been added to our Meetup account as an Admin.
- Wednesday Fun Nights will run from 7:15 PM to 9:00 PM, with full level dancing from 9:00 PM to 9:30 PM.
- For February, Friday Fun Night will run from 7:15 PM to 9:30 PM. After February, Friday Fun Nights will change format to match Wednesday nights (including full level dancing from 9:00 PM to 9:30 PM).
- Mike Buchanan has made a suggestion (see appendix) that we should offer mostly square dancing. (20-30% non-square dancing). We will start the evening with a light and easy mixer. We want to avoid traditional couples dancing. Callers may optionally offer brief mixers during what normally be breaks between square tips. We want to minimize break length to keep people dancing as much as possible.

2020 Fun Night Schedule (confirmed dates **in bold**)

- Wednesday 01/08/2020: SAUMC / Michael Levy
- Friday 02/14/2020: BDFC / Michael Levy
 - *Note: We have invited the BDFC’s Transwomen group to attend for free, since the ballroom was originally scheduled for them on this date.*
- Wednesday 03/18/2020: SAUMC / Caller not yet confirmed. Ed was to talk with Rich Reel about this.

The remaining St. Andrews dates in the calendar will not be scheduled until we have guidance from the church about whether they’re staying open.

- Wednesday 04/22/2020: SAUMC / Caller TBD
- Wednesday 05/20/2020: SAUMC / Caller TBD
- **Friday 06/19/2020: BDFC / Caller TBD**
- 07/xx/2020: Location TBD / Caller TBD
- **Friday 08/21/2020: BDFC / Caller TBD (Jim Maxwell’s Birthday)**
- 09/xx/2020: Location TBD / Caller TBD
- 10/xx/2020: Location TBD / Caller TBD

- **Friday 11/20/2020: BDFC / Caller TBD**
- 12/xx/2020: Location TBD / Caller TBD

ECR Membership History Project

- Eric's still working through the back catalog of club directories. Kim & Bennett may have some of the missing directories, because they published the roster for several years. Dave Decot may have some of the late 90's directories. Susan and Michael Garcia have provided a couple of the missing directories.
- A bar usually costs around \$3-5 plus shipping. We'd be looking at 53 bars, so an initial cost of \$150-\$200 plus shipping.
- Eric has proposed that we use the IAGSDC club retention program to propose they pay for the initial set of bars.
- The initial set can be handed out at the 35th anniversary dance (May of 2020, Barry Clasper calling), and then future sets will be handed out during ECR general membership meetings.
- Craig expressed interest in shirts or a simple pin representing 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30 years of ECR membership, and said he would look into it, and present some design options to the Board, and perhaps consider a donation towards that project. Eric suggested this might be something that could be folded into our annual merchandise push with the cost being solely the club member's responsibility. Orders would be verified with the board.

Next Board Meeting:

- Tuesday 2/11/20 at 5:30 PM at St. Andrews.

[End]

Appendix: Feedback from Mike Buchanan.

On 1/15/2020 22:19, Mike Buchanan wrote:

Hi board,

Here's a few thoughts about the questions facing the Reelers.

if I had a thesis, it would be "focus on square dancing". A place to start is with fun nights. I don't think we really need another dance style interspersed with square. When I was coming to fun nights, it was for the square dancing. The contra dancers who came last week, came for the square dancing. Doing a Sicilian Circle or a line dance or a ballroom dance -- not especially well -- isn't a good representation of what the club does, nor is it as fun as square dance. Maybe other dance styles used to be needed to lure club members to attend, but I think we should revisit them if we move fun nights to normal club nights.

"Focus on square dancing" also implies "focus on dancing". When I contrast ECR events with other dance events, one striking difference is the fraction of time spent dancing. Most events get to 80% to 90% of the time dancing by stringing dances together with a break only every hour or so. This is compounded if you can't dance every dance that does happen. My biggest concern about consolidating club nights is that it could bring the time I spend dancing down to 40% or so. If we dance at class/mainstream, plus, and advanced, then the beginner dancers would probably only get to dance something like 25% of the time. New members are going to join because they want to dance, not because they want to spend time socializing. If we go to one night, I'd suggest something like first third plus, second third alternating plus and advanced, final third advanced. And maybe see if we can cut down on breaks.

I do think the contra community could be a good source of new members. There's a sizable contingent of young queer contra dancers who think contra dancing is a bit simpler than they'd like. I can try to help navigate the contra community if it helps. A crossover event (alternating contra and square) could lure some people in.

Finally, regarding finances, I'm happy to contribute a bit more so that others who are less fortunate aren't burdened with the costs.

Thanks for your work on the board,

Mike