

Special Dance Board Meeting
7 PM, June 22, 2017

Meeting attendees were: Walker Banning, Haven Cook, Larry Teich, Mary Allgire, Helen Stewart, Tom Greene, and Vicki Morrison (host).

We reviewed feedback received from respondents to our recent email advising of our dire financial situation. We have received donations from several people and one particularly generous promise of a yearly donation from Joe Rush in Gainesville. Although our immediate financial crisis appears to be over, we agreed that we must develop strategies to increase attendance and to keep our organization sustainable. After tomorrow night's dance where we may receive more feedback and/or donations, Larry will prepare a follow-up email advising of our status. During announcements tomorrow night, Vicki will thank donors (but not mention the dollar amount). The board will also send thank you letters with the tax-exempt documentation. We also signed a thank you card we will send to Joe.

Mary, Larry and Vicki recently attended a COCA meeting on marketing strategies. Vicki has been placing events in the Tallahassee Democrat for the past several years, and Richard has been placing events on the COCA calendar. Although not discussed at the meeting due to an oversight, Vicki has asked Richard if he would like her to take over posting in COCA and he agreed. In addition to the Democrat, Vicki has recently placed our dances on the WCTV and WFSU calendars through the end of the year, and is working on doing the same for COCA (Erica at COCA recommends placing event as far in advance as possible). Other calendars recommended at the COCA meeting are Visit Florida and Tallahassee Magazine. Visit Tallahassee calendar events are automatically placed via the COCA calendar/server, but events on all other calendars have to be entered individually because none of the other organizations share the same server. Vicki has emailed Tallahassee Magazine to see if they are interested in doing an article about us. Haven suggested two additional calendars: Craigslist and WTXL.

Vicki also has contacted WFSU to see how much they charge for advertising spots. The frequency recommended by Kee Elwell at WFSU is \$175 per month for six spots per week on WFSU, WFSQ, or any combination of the two. Craig Bloch also advertises on WFSU/WFSQ at this same frequency. GODS also advertises on WUFT in Gainesville, frequency unknown. There was discussion about how effective the ads are and that someone should ask Craig how he likes this advertising strategy. Another questioned whether the demographics of people who listen to these stations would be interested in contra dancing. No decision was made.

We agreed we need to develop a strategic plan. The plan can identify actions we need to take to achieve our goals. We discussed Steve McDowell's generous offer to donate the services of his intern to help us accomplish our goals. The board agreed that at our next regular meeting on August 9 we will work on the plan so we can give specific direction to Steve and the intern. We brainstormed tasks to include in the plan, such as revising the website, developing an on-line survey, and exploring marketing strategies such as Meetup and Eventful. Mary will follow up with Steve to get more details on the intern process.

We talked about how to recruit younger board members and being open to new ideas they may have. We also discussed the pros and cons of term limits. Several of us have been on the board for many

years. Vicki suggested that if some or all of the old timers resign, younger people may be more inclined to join, or maybe not. GODS has three-year limits, but many old timers rotate on and off the board, so having term limits doesn't mean someone can never serve again but it does create an opportunity for new people to join. No decision was made regarding revising our bylaws.

We also discussed inviting the public to our board meetings. We need to clear this with Ann since our meetings are usually at her house. If OK with her, Larry will start including that info in his emails.

Regarding being open to new ideas, we discussed a suggestion from a young dancer about holding a techno contra. Mary is inquiring as to how much it would cost to hire a company to equip a room with black and laser lights, purchase glow sticks, and have a DJ play recorded music. This dance could possibly be held at the Junction, Mickey Faust, or the Warehouse. The size of the anticipated crowd and the capacity of these venues were discussed.

We discussed having regular dances at other locations and on different days and now that we have more funds it could be a possibility, but it appears unlikely we can find a place that charges as little as the Senior Center. The Legion hall charges \$600 for an event but does not charge non-profits with the understanding that the bar makes at least \$250. Since contra dancing and drinking don't go well together, this possibility seems unlikely. Once we can better assess our financial situation, we will have a better understanding of how much we can afford to rent other venues.

It was also mentioned that perhaps we could book more out of town bands with our extra money and whether that would help increase sustained attendance.

We discussed revising our business cards and Vicki showed everyone the card that Tampa Bay Contra has recently developed. Vicki also showed everyone Tampa Bay's flier that includes a lot of info, maybe too much, such as a blurb about who they are, encouraging dancers to spread the word, driving directions, other dances in Florida. Larry will send Vicki the file and she will prepare a draft with additional information. We also discussed developing a tri-fold brochure that we could distribute at places we visit.

We also discussed the pros and cons of Tampa's new policy about giving get-in-free passes only to those who attend the intro lesson, which info is included in their FB announcement. We seemed inclined to stick with our current policy.

We need to recruit new board members or get committees started to implement all of the ideas we're discussing.

After two hours, we adjourned. Ann and Joe were missed!