



El Camino Reelers Board Meeting Minutes

Sunday, March 19, 2023, 11:00 AM PST

Remote meeting via Zoom 465 455 8223

Attendees: Annette, Ed, Michael G, Robin, Jeff, Kurt, Michael L, Oliver.

Minutes from Last Meeting

- Minutes from the 01/29/2023 and 02/19/2023 meeting minutes were approved.

Activities since last meeting

- Orange Class continuing
- New site at PACCC works. Very utilitarian, Big enough for classes, but not for workshops.

Covid Policies

- **Masks optional** as of February
- We will **no longer require vaccinations**, coming in line with most other organizations.
- Current [Community Level for Santa Clara County](#) is "**LOW**", with cases, hospitalizations, and deaths all having trended **down** recently.. [Sewer viral load trend](#) is **moderate (60%-79%)** in North county.
- **Re-evaluate at each board meeting**

Classes / Open House

- We will have the next SSD class Mar 4th, and Mar 18th, and April 1st, 2p-5p. Caller will be Kurt.
- Oliver will not be available April 1st. **Will get keys Monday or Tuesday to pass on at Club Night.**
- Michael sent an appeal on ECRTalk for recent graduates to come angel for the class.
- \$125 per new student, \$100 for repeaters.
- Class fee includes all review club nights.
- If less than 3 months left in membership year (i.e. graduation is after June 30), Students get the following year free, otherwise the rest of the current year.
- Class members will get badges at graduation.

Recruiting

- Things that worked, and those that didn't:
 - Nextdoor and Palo Alto weekly, and word of mouth had people show up at least at intro nights last time
 - One group showed up after seeing the flyers on California Avenue last time
 - This time, several people showed up from Meetup.
 - Los Altos had success with Palo Alto Daily Post. They offered an ad package for \$850
 - Flyers were posted on California Ave and around Stanford
 - Reached out to Stanford Queer Student Resources who promised to spread the word. No results
- What did we not do (enough) of, if any? **Paid ad in paper? Distribute flyer in the area at University Ave, Castro St (Mtn Vw)**
- **Tam Twirlers have put out banners next to Little League and other banners (contact: Ann Shores)**
- **Yard signs to put out in front of home**

Quarterly Dances

- Ken Ritucci will call on March 25th, 2023 7-10. **May need a place to stay and a ride. Kurt will provide sound. Ed will ask him about place and ride.** Will be full SSD, Plus, Advanced. **Sign-up sheet will include a column about the (highest) level attendees are dancing.** Post-Meeting update: Ken is all set with lodging and transportation.
- Mike Kellogg confirmed as caller for May 27th.
- Darren Galina to call Aug 5th.
- Andy Alameo confirmed to call the Halloween Dance Oct 28th.
- We will have a **sign / poster board** about what level will be called with the next tip.

- A public calendar has now been posted by the mailboxes.
- Stan is confused about the dates for the quarterly dances. This has been resolved, as far as Ed knows

Club Nights

- Here are **some observations** by Robin with regards to recruiting, member satisfaction, and floor time of various-level dancers:
 - 1. Low attendance at club nights
On Wed nights B&B has 6 squares, RJ has at least 4, and BS has at least 2. Yet on Tuesday night when no other club dances, we struggle to get 2 squares.
 - 2. Small percentage (20-25%) of ECR members actually attend club nights
We have 60+ members but struggle to get 16 on club nights.
 - 3. Small class sizes compared to nearby clubs
B&B has 25 in their class, RJ as about the same number, Quads has at least 8 (including several from our SSD class). We struggled to have 5.
 - 4. Plus/Adv dancers leaving for other clubs
Multiple plus/adv dancers have stopped coming on Tuesday nights because of our extended (1 year) SSD focus.
 - 5. ECR members stop coming and no one investigates
One odd aspect I have noticed over the 5 years I have been with ECR is that members suddenly stop coming to club nights and no one seems to comment or investigates what happened or why they stopped coming.
 - 6. Skill set of Plus/advanced members not improving
We have neglected helping our plus and advanced dancers improve their skills. One ECR member told me they stopped going to adv squares because their advanced skills were not good enough and there was no way to improve them. In our SSD focus we have neglected our current members.
 - 7. Little sense of community
ECR seems to operate as a “shared activity” group rather than community. We don’t acknowledge significant events in members lives, we don’t check up on them if they don’t show up, we don’t provide opportunities to get to know one another with outside activities. ECR membership likewise has no demands or expectation.
 - The Local Square Dance Environment
There are a number of local square dance clubs so that one can dance multiple times per week:
 - ☑ *Sunday: Star8 (adv), Quads (APD plus, adv, C-level)*
 - ☑ *Monday: Outlaws (adv)*
 - ☑ *Tuesday – ECR (SSD-A2)*
 - ☑ *Wed: Belle Swingers (adv), B&B (Plus), RJ(Plus)*
 - ☑ *Thursday: Interlocked (C-level), Lucky Steppers (Plus)*
 - ☑ *Friday: katydids (plus but dying)**Nearby clubs:*
 - B&B has 6 squares, round dancing, 25 in latest Plus class, more than 30 in round dance class*
 - Quads has 8 in their Plus class (including some of our recent SSD graduates). and has their “APD” niche*
 - BS has 2-3 squares*
 - *We have no competition Tuesday nights yet can only get two squares.*
 - **Are there other clubs who dance at SSD through A2?** Not in the local space. Multi-level dancing is **more common in gay clubs** than straight ones. **Martinez swingers** is one straight club who is juggling multi-level dancing like us; they have gone back to 2 nights. **Redwood Rainbows** have many levels, but also dance on several nights (they own the hall) and have a large membership.

- We can do a better job planning out our classes. If we plan more in advance, we can do more outreach.
- We lost contacts with **LGBT groups** at companies, where we got members in the past. It's hard to advertise into groups that you are not part of.
- We haven't offered an SSD-to-Plus class, but students who were ready found other ways of "upgrading". A possible goal to have might be a Plus class that offers SSD—to-Plus class that draws from the SSD community. Would still have several level to contend with – Class level, Plus, Adv. Nearby clubs have either **different evenings for different levels, or a split night**. Getting people in the door, getting them excited, and up to SSD is already a challenge.
- If we were to have two different nights, we may or may not have enough dancers to not go broke. Right now, it's \$175 per night (hall & caller). Would need at least 35 dancers combined (2+ squares per) to break even. We have enough in the bank to sustain some losses, however, if we get fewer than a couple of squares+, we're going to have problems with interest as well as with finances.
- Of our 63 members, 10 live out of the area, 5 are primarily members of other clubs, some can't drive at night, others still don't want to socialize because of callers, and a few are dancing on challenge levels who don't come to any Plus or below calls. Ed will follow up with a few dancers (like Mary Intersomon or Esmeralda). And/or a survey about why members are not attending Club Night (more often)
- Kurt has scheduled club night callers through end of March
- Adjusted schedule to include more Plus, like SSD-SSD-Plus, SSD-SSD-Plus for the first hour and a half, then alternating Advanced-Plus for the last hour. End on a Plus tip. This will result in 4 SSD, 4 Plus, and 2 A2 tips for the night
- The hope is that with successful recruiting we will have enough attendance to have two club nights again, one (mostly) SSD, one Plus and Advanced.

Venues

- Ventura Community Center has been secured for the class dates \$250 refundable deposit, \$50/hour, high stage with power, possible kitchen access.
- It could also be used for Saturday afternoon second club "nights" for Plus and Advanced dancing going forward
- Billy de Frank has started to have some in-person events again. Annette has made direct contact with Gabrielle; they are interested in having us again, **need to decide if we want to pick up quarterly Fun Nights there (or some other events)**
- Club nights and quarterly dances continue at St Andrew's, though there's some confusion about dates with other square dance events on the Church's side.

Community Events

- No upcoming events

Membership

- Anniversary Bars will be handed out at one of our dances (May?)

Board / General Meeting

- New Board members are Annette Graff, Ed Wilson, Jeff Alder, Michael Golden, Robin Barrett, and Oliver Vogel.

Financials

- 63 people have paid their dues
- Tuesday Club Nights: Still losing money weekly, but not unsustainably.
- Ed is adding new members to insurance as they renew

Other dancing

Saturday afternoons

- Should do more weekend afternoon events.
- **Should they become regular, and if so, how frequent? Will look into that after current class**
- They could morph into Workshops?

Picnic

- **May 13th** will be our **next Picnic** at Hoover Park, 1:30-4:00

Fun Nights

- Not before current class is over
- Open House format seems to be more successful than Fun Nights in terms of getting new interested people to show up
- We previously decided that whenever we resume dancing, the monthly Fun Nights held at St. Andrews (twice a quarter) will move to Tuesday nights from 7:15 PM to 9:00 PM, with full level Plus dancing from 9:00 PM to 9:30 PM. We will advertise the night as starting at 7:00 PM to get people there on time to start dancing by 7:15 PM.

Potluck Nights

- We'll have a **"Pizza Night"** at our club night on **April 18th**, with ECR providing Pizza starting at 6:30
- Once we feel comfortable to have shareable food, we will discuss scheduling potluck nights.
- We'll assess the interest **at the GM** and let the **membership decide**.
- In the meantime, we'll have picnics

Quarterly Workshops

- Will have a **pre-convention workshop** on **Sunday, April 11** afternoon. **Annette to see if we can get Foothill Church, Michael Levy will check with Etz Chayim Synagogue next door to St. Andrews, and Oliver to check with Ventura Community Center.** Post-meeting update: Foothill is not available Sundays afternoon.
- 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.
- Once we have workshops again someone needs to check with Rob to see how long he thinks a workshop should take, and if he's available for a date yet to be determined. If Rob's not available, we should 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? In the last half-hour of Adv-Class-Plus format?
- 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.)

Social Activities

- None planned at this time
- **Robin** has looked at taking up going to the Mountain View theater again. Their free tickets for non-profits was stopped during Covid, and they do not seem to have any intentions of taking that up again. We could still go. Weekday tickets are \$30, so an evening with dinner would be \$50-\$60. In the Board's opinion, \$30 for an event / \$50-\$60 with dinner would be upper limit for events. **We'll put our planned social activities on our ECR club calendar. Robin will try and organize something.**
- **We'll ask at GM, and also put out a survey afterwards about what people are interested in other than theater (which several already expressed interest)**

Online Presence

Meetup

- Meetup currently costs \$24.99/mo. We will keep MeetUp and have changed to the 6-month model. Just paid another \$100. **Is this something we want to keep up? How active are we on Meetup?**
- Robin has tried to generate more interest on Meetup.
- We advertised our Open House, and got several people who showed up
- **If we decide to discontinue, we'll need to cancel it before next renewal in April. Need to let Oaktown 8's know, since they share the account.**

Zoom

- Zoom renewal is coming up in May.
- Board meetings are zoomed.

Facebook

- We still have a presence. Michael posts events

Other

- Eric posts on Instagram, posts are sent to Twitter. **Last update to Twitter was 2020. Michael will ask Eric what's going on. If there's extra work with Twitter, we should drop it. Anyone wants to take up TikTok? Michael will ask Jeff if he has any interest in doing that. Instagram posts can be linked to Facebook, and vice versa if it's a post with picture.**
- **Robin will look into TikTok**

Website

- Up to date

Next Board Meeting:

- **Sunday, April 23rd, 2023, at 3 pm PST.** Location: Zoom