

NASSPDA's Annual Membership Meeting

Date & Time: Sunday, April 28, 2013, 10:30 AM PDT

Location: Vima Dance Studio, San Francisco, CA, USA

In Attendance:

NASSPDA Board Members: Lee Fox (Treasurer), Garret Gerritsen,
Barbara Zoloth (President), Benjamin Soencksen (Secretary)

NASSPDA members & non-members: approx. 10

According to NASSPDA's By-Laws, an annual general membership meeting is to be held the day after NASSPDA's annual North American Championships, which was held this year at April Follies on Saturday, April 27th, 2013, in Oakland CA, USA. An announcement for this meeting was made several times on the day of the competition and was posted in the program.

Agenda set forth by President on the day of this meeting:

1. Some of the things NASSPDA has been doing

- a. Planning competition for Gay Games 2014 in Cleveland
- b. Creation of International Federation of Same-Sex Dance Associations (IFSSDA)
- c. Dance camp committee
- d. Youth outreach

2. Same-Sex Competitions

- a. How do we insure a pipeline of beginning dancers?
- b. How do we support competitions across North America?

3. Social Dancing

- a. What ideas do you have for what NASSPDA can do for social dancers?
- b. How might you be willing to help?

4. Skills the Board is looking for

- a. Skills that are lacking on the Board for which we'd love to find some help:
 - Web development
 - Data base creation and management
 - Social media
 - Graphic design
 - Branding

5. NASSPDA has annual elections for Board members. Please consider serving in the future.

6. Dance camp: has lots of interest but hasn't yet gotten off the ground.

7. Youth program: was interest here but not much has happened.

8. Other ideas or concerns?

The President started this meeting by welcoming everyone and asking all in attendance to introduce themselves.

NOTES -

to 1.a.:

After introduction were made, the President reported about the progress of planning for the DanceSport competition at the 9th Gay Games hosted in August of 2014 by the cities

Cleveland and Akron, Ohio (GG9). After repeated unsuccessful attempts by NASSPDA's Board to contact local dancers and organizers of the greater area of Cleveland asking for help in organizing this event, the President spearheaded the forming of an Organizing Committee consisting of the Board and members of the organizers of April Follies, BASSDA (Bay Area Same-Sex Dance Association). In collaboration with the GG9's Sports Director, Rob Smitherman, the first steps have been identified. The Cleveland Public Hall is considered as the venue, though a contract with the organizers of the GG9 hasn't been signed yet. A timetable and budget will have to be drafted, and lists of officials, volunteers and equipment will have to be created. Daphna Locker, the organizer of the "Nationals" of USA Dance, along with Ava Kaye, organizer of "The Quake" in San Francisco and collaborator of Daphna, both present at this meeting offered help and advice with all these first hurdles.

NASSPDA's Board had decided to bring up at this Meeting the question of whether to hold (due to GG9 being the designated 2014 World Championships) and to which NASSPDA sanctioned competition to award the hosting of the 2014 North American Championship, making it clear though that the final decision will be by the Board. A scenario that the Board also shared at that meeting, pending the outcome of the 2013 Boston Open, is to authorize DITRC to hold the 2014 California State, April Follies the 2014 US and the Boston Open the 2014 North American Championships. Attendees agreed that there is still time to make a final determination, based on the outcome of the first Boston Open, held on September 21st, 2013.

to 1.b.:

IFSSDA (International Federation of Same-Sex Dance Associations) had been formed at the 2010 GG8 in Cologne by ESSDA (European Same-Sex Dance Association) and NASSPDA, and joining shortly after IAGLCWDC (International Association of Gay & Lesbian Country Western Dance Clubs). All 3 organizations have agreed to name the DanceSport Competition at the 2013 Outgames in Antwerp and GG9 in 2014 as the World Championships of Same-Sex Dance and to pursue the legalization of IFSSDA. All 3 parties have reviewed a draft of the Constitution, and after establishing By-Laws, it is planned to file papers in London, UK, for incorporation by this summer. If this plan and time-line come indeed to pass, IFSSDA will be the officially sanctioning body for the Outgames in Antwerp and GG9, although rules of sanctioning and competition rules will also have to be drafted and agreed upon.

to 1.c. & d.:

Two years ago at the Community Meeting following that year's April Follies, two committees were formed to foster growth and to promote same-sex dancing, the Dance Camp Committee (DCC) and the Youth Outreach Committee (YOC). Members of YOC had made some progress in the Bay Area, but is current dormant. Attempts of communication among the members of this committee and with the Board's assigned liaison have repeatedly failed.

to 2. & 3., a. & b.:

Numbers of competitors and competitions within North America are declining. The Board of NASSPDA is asking it's constituency about ideas how to reverse this trend. It has always been believed that increasing the numbers of social dancers will increase interest and numbers for competitions. However, there is also the phenomenon of social dancers rejecting the notion of competitive dancing. The example of the growth of social

and competitive dancing in the mainstream dance world of the amateurs in Germany was cited, which is known to have been quite successful. This model separated social dancing from competitive dancing by promoting competitive dancing as a sport, which resulted into dancers being “born” into the competitive world without any connection to the social dance world. It’s financially supported by the German government and the overall Sports Association. Many levels of achievement, age and type of dancing have been created over the years, including regional and national leagues of formation teams (all consisting of 8 couples with at least 2 more couples as subs). It’s the competitive aspect and not the art of dancing that eventually initiated people to consider this sport, not discounting though the art of it.

to 4.:

NASSPDA’s Board has 7 members, and after the initial tasks of establishing policies and rules for how NASSPDA functions and what standards are applicable for competitions, the challenges increase to maintain transparency to its constituency through its website, eNewsletter and social media, and to continue controlling the application of those rules and standards. Other challenges are improving visibility through branding strategies and data storage/management for membership and archival data. The association doesn’t have the financial resources to tackle all these issues and is therefore looking to its constituency for volunteers that are knowledgeable in these areas or know somebody who might work pro-bono.

to 5.:

Based on lack of candidates in this year’s election for the Board of Directors, the Board also asks its members to consider serving on the Board in the future or help identify other candidates. So far, the Board had to approach known individuals directly when a Board member elected to resign, in order to fill that position -- a process that has become increasingly difficult.

to 6. & 7.:

(see notes to 1.c. & d.)

to 8.:

One concern brought forward addressed the lack of consideration for same-sex dancers within a mainstream organization, such as Fred Astaire Dance Studios, Inc., which offered its member owners/managers couple coaching, but when asked, if this offer is applicable to same-sex competitors, were dumbfounded. This triggered a general discussion about whether the community of same-sex dancers should strive for inclusion in the mainstream dance world or whether it’s more about acceptance, or whether the definitions of a couple’s configuration will eventually fade or altogether disappear.