

CLUB MEMBER SURVEY YIELDS RICH RESULTS PART TWO: THE CHALLENGE CHALLENGE

The DCLS online survey, completed by 45 members, has produced a rich treasure trove of information. The comments express generally positive views but with many suggestions for improvement. The newsletter will feature highlights of the results over the next several weeks.

As the membership of DC Lambda Squares steadily falls (along with square dancing in general) the club's board is having a more difficult time balancing competing factors. Providing adequate dancing opportunities for dancers at four main skill levels is expensive in terms of hall rental and callers' fees, with fewer dancers to share costs. This dilemma is especially acute regarding the club's 15 Challenge-level dancers (not including callers). We currently offer scant opportunities to dance Challenge, and some C dancers are balking at paying club dues. It seems DC Lambda Squares has a choice of formally abandoning support of the Challenge level, or discovering some way of meeting their dance needs at a reasonable cost.

Presented with the direct choice on the survey, only 9 out of 44 respondents (20%) agreed with the statement, "The club should not bother to support Challenge dancing on a regular basis." Of these nine, only one person "strongly" agreed. By far most respondents (29, or 66%) disagreed, 14 of them "strongly." Twelve Challenge dancers completed the survey, so this response clearly included many non-C dancers who want to keep Challenge in the club. A firm plurality (58%) also agreed that "the club needs to figure out how to support Challenge-1 dancing at least twice a month."

Members offered a number of specific suggestions to make this happen:

1. Have longer Community Dances (5 hours long; but first half is obviously open to all, - first two hours MS/Plus, pot-luck, then two hours of A/C1.
2. I think it's absurd to have no regularly scheduled Challenge with so many DCLS club members dancing at that level... True, Etcetteras and the Barkley Squares make up for the lack of C1 in DCLS...but then why continue with DCLS?
My [suggested] schedule:
 - * First Thursday: Plus and Advanced
 - * Second Thursday: C1 and Advanced
 - * Third Thursday: Plus and Advanced
 - * Fourth Thursday: C1 and Advanced
 - * Occasional fifth Thursday: Plus and Mainstream
3. Make more use of star tips [dancing at the highest level dancers can support].
Years ago, we had the following rotation:
 - * 1st Wednesday: MS, Plus
 - * 2nd Wednesday: A3, C1
 - * 3rd Wednesday: MS, Plus
 - * 4th Wednesday: Plus, A2
 - * 5th Wednesday: GCA open micWe abandoned it because we couldn't get a square of C1 on the 2nd Wednesdays. This might give you some ideas.
4. Have A2/C1 nights
5. Twice a month A-, C-1, & C-2 nights; twice a month Mainstream & Plus nights; 5th (Thursdays?) All Level Dance

Keep the discussion going on the club's blog at <http://dclambdasquaredance.blogspot.com>

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6. *I don't think there should be Plus-only nights or Advanced-only nights or Challenge-only nights. I think this is bad for the club. I think that we should have nights that are Plus/ A or A/C, so dancers can dance at two levels and meet dancers at other levels.*
7. *I think C-1 dancers need another night to dance. It should be integrated with Plus and Adv. dancing nights. Not a separate night*
8. *If you made the 2nd Thursday A2/C1, you might address some of your Challenge concerns.*
9. *I prefer Mainstream thru C-2 Club Night dancing*
10. *I don't like the idea of Plus-only or Advanced-only nights. An alternative would be Plus/ Mainstream and Advanced/ Challenge for those nights*
11. *I think the club is fractured. There are those that are MS/Plus and those that dance at higher levels. Why can't we dance all levels every night. Instead of a call dance followed by a singing call at the same level, just have a MS tip, then a Plus, then an A and if enough people a C. This way everyone could dance at least three times (2 tips every 20 minutes = 3 same level tips per hour) (1 tip every 10 minutes = 6 different level tips per hour X 2 hours that is 12 or 3 tips/level.*
12. *Allow Challenge dancers to pay a 50% membership IF the club can provide at a Challenge 1 night least 2 other nights (other than Thursday) a month. Those who attend these additional nights would be asked to pay an "at door" fee (between \$5-10) as well as be allowed to dance on the club night for free. These additional "Challenge" nights can be offered as workshops or just dancing. And let's face it, this is already happening at the Barkley every other Wednesday, and the club is not getting anything out of it, even though 99% of the attendees are DCLS members.*
13. *Consider sponsoring additional C-level events 1-2 per month *outside* of Thursday club nights.*
14. *Create a Challenge affiliate with its own financial structure - they could be Associate Members of DCLS. Their separate organizing committee needs a member on the DCLS Board.*
15. *We may have to raise club dues to make this happen, or charge a door fee for those Challenge nights maybe.*
16. *Rely on other clubs to support C-1. We can support those.*
17. *Perhaps instead of looking at a monthly format look at something broader. Take the number of club nights per years and support the desired levels. Hopefully! people do have other things to do so if Challenge ends up on a first, second or third Thursday, so what?!*