



CDSS Web Chat #7 on 2/12/20

Diversifying Income: Thinking Outside the Money Basket

Web Chat Format

7:00 pm EDT Introduction: Linda Henry

7:05 Web Chat Guests:

- **Rob Setili** from Atlanta's Chattahoochee Contra Dancers in Decatur, Georgia
- **Susan Amesse** from Country Dance * New York in NY, NY
- **Jennie Worden** from Toronto Contra Dance in Toronto, Ontario

7:35 Q & A with responses from all guests

8:05 Resources and Wrap-up: Emily Addison & Linda

8:15 End of web chat



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First Guest:

Rob Setili

**Atlanta's Chattahoochee
Contra Dancers in Decatur, GA**

Contra dances on Fridays at 7:30 with different bands for 13 consecutive weeks each quarter. CCD welcomes a diverse crowd of dancers and a wide range of ages.



Contact info: rsetili@gmail.com www.contradance.org

From Financial Crisis to Sustainability

Strategies used by Chattahoochee Contra Dancers

Our crisis began in Oct 2017 with dropping attendance and significant financial losses. We cancelled 2 weekly dances, which got a lot of attention. Our profitable dance weekend had always helped to cover losses from our weekly dances. Since it could only cover a portion of our operational loss, we embarked on a variety of ways to recover from this time of crisis.

Fundraising efforts

- We started asking for donations. Some callers and musicians donated back their pay, and some dancers made significant donations.
- We made it easy to donate by adding a donation web page: <http://www.contradance.org/html/support.php>. At the door we accepted cash, check, Venmo, QR code.
- Local caller Seth Tepfer submitted an auction item at our dance weekend to write a custom contra dance, which was a big success.

From Financial Crisis to Sustainability

Strategies used by Chattahoochee Contra Dancers

Fundraising - continued

- We experimented with a “sponsor a dance” program (\$75 and \$150).
- We fundraised for new sound equipment by using a \$4,500 progress thermometer and met our goal in 3 months.

Ways we balanced our budget

- We interviewed organizers of other contra organizations in our region to benchmark our attendance trend and our revenue and expenses.
- We learned that our admission price was typical (\$10), but our expenses were out of line in several areas. So we set urgent goals to get these costs in line.
- We moved to a less expensive venue owned by a city government. We negotiated a lower rent by promoting the value of our dance as an amenity for local residents. (This better location is closer to restaurants, and a group of 10-15 dancers usually goes to a late night restaurant after our dances.)

From Financial Crisis to Sustainability

Strategies used by Chattahoochee Contra Dancers

Increased efforts to support and integrate new dancers

Our top priorities for 2020 are attracting and retaining new dancers through various experiments.

- We encourage all of our dancers to help make sure that all new dancers have FUN and feel very welcome at every dance.
- Most members of our steering committee make a real effort to greet and help new dancers feel welcome and get integrated.
- We have a core group of dancers that make a point to talk to and have fun with new dancers and invite them to go out afterwards.

From Financial Crisis to Sustainability Strategies used by Chattahoochee Contra Dancers

Efforts to create and maintain a safe environment

- We dealt with several behavior issues that had been around for years.
- In our announcements we talk about striving to improve our dance environment.
- We aim to improve our skills and culture regarding asking permission and gaining consent before doing any unusual dance moves.

For many more resources on this topic, check out:

CDSS Web Chat #5: Building Safe Dance Communities

on the CDSS website: cdss.org/web-chats

From Financial Crisis to Sustainability

Strategies used by Chattahoochee Contra Dancers

Outcomes

- In our new venue, 2018 and 2019 were much better years financially.
- We've retained some great new dancers.
- We had only a small annual financial shortfall for our weekly dance (about \$1,500), which can easily be overcome with our annual dance weekend profit or donations.
- We feel that our situation is financially sustainable at this time, but it's best to keep improving and experimenting.

-Submitted by Rob Setili



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Second Guest:

Susan Amesse
Country Dance * New York
New York, NY



CD*NY is an all-volunteer nonprofit group that shares with our community the love we have for contra dancing and English country dancing. We sponsor two dances a week most weeks between September and early June, plus an annual Playford Ball.

Contact info: susan.amesse11@gmail.com <https://cdny.org/>

Diverse Income Sources Used by Country Dance * New York

Our current fund-raising efforts:

- 3rd musician fund for English country dances
- 50-50 raffles
- dance sponsorships for birthdays or other occasions
- bequests (Wayne Batchelor Fund for yearly English dance)

Previous fund-raising methods we no longer use, which might appeal to other groups:

- having people pay for dances in advance
- setting up electronics so we could accept credit cards and paypal
- end of the year appeal to all dancers
- membership
- using a sliding scale (some members pay more if possible)
- having a fundraising weekend in the country

- Submitted by Susan Amesse



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Third Guest:

Jennie Worden
Toronto Contra Dance
in Toronto, Ontario, Canada

We are a welcoming contra dance community who loves getting together for evenings of great music, great dancing, and great fun. We meet two or three times a month in the East End of Toronto.



Contact info: jennie@pellucid.ca <https://tcdance.org/>

Shaking the Cushions by Jennie Worden

During this portion of the web chat, Jennie shared her powerpoint presentation entitled *Shaking the Cushions*. It provides many pertinent questions to help groups assess the various ideas they have for generating revenue and decide whether an idea might work for them. Topics include risk, liability, sustainability, etc., along with a list of additional fundraising ideas.

To access Jennie's powerpoint, return to **cdss.org/web-chats** and look under the heading for the **Feb 12, 2020 Web Chat #7**. You can also access the recording of this web chat, as well as the Q&A responses.



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Q & A - How to Send a Question

If you have a question for our guests, open the chat bar by clicking “Chat” in the meeting controls at the bottom of your screen. Type in your name and a brief question.

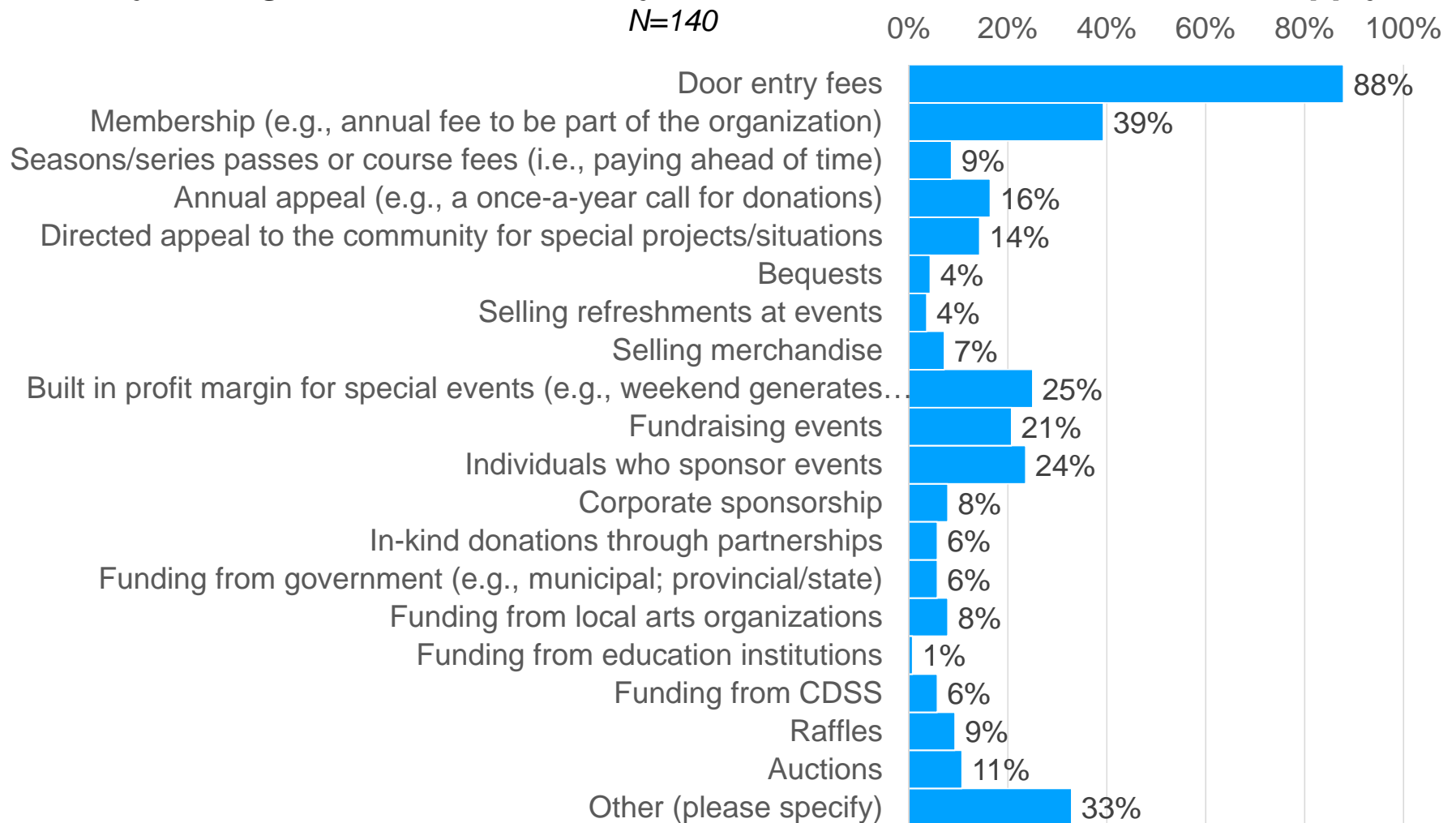
NOTE: During the Q&A everyone except the guests will continue to be muted.

➤ **Please continue to keep your mic and webcam off.**

How CDSS Affiliates Fund Their Activities

2/3 of Affiliates who responded to the survey use at least three sources of revenue.

How does your organization fund all of your activities? Please check all that apply.



Data from CDSS's 2019 survey of CDSS Affiliates (140/292 Affiliates participated)



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More resources available through CDSS:

- CDSS Resource Portal: cdss.org/portal
- Quarterly Shop Talk e-blasts for organizers: Join via cdss.org/shop-talk
- Web Chat Series (materials from 6 previous web chats): cdss.org/web-chats
- Community Outreach Grants (next deadline June 1st): cdss.org/grants
- Quarterly e-blasts for CDSS Affiliates: Join via cdss.org/affiliate
- CDSS Newsletter includes articles for organizers: cdss.org/news
- CDSS Dance, Music, & Song Camps: cdss.org/camp - *scholarships available!*



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Wrap Up

- **Survey:** Your valuable feedback will help us continue to improve this web chat series. Please reply to the survey you'll receive via email tomorrow.
- We'll also send you a link to this web chat recording that will soon be posted on the CDSS website. Feel free to share this with others.
- Have questions that weren't answered during this web chat? Continue these conversations via this online forum for organizers: www.sharedweight.net
- Got ideas for other income streams? Share them here: cdss.org/share-your-resource
- **Next Web Chat: *Supporting Song Organizers: Addressing Current Challenges*** (mid-May – date TBA)
- **Keep in touch!** Send questions and comments to Linda Henry at linda@cdss.org