

From the Germantown Country Dancers' Board

August 19, 2026

Dear GCD friends,

CHANGES AT MERION

Changes are afoot at Merion Meeting's renamed "Friends Hall" that will impact our finances and our dancing experience.

The good news is that major renovations are planned -- air conditioning, accessible bathrooms and redone plumbing, and I presume repaired windows, repainting, etc. The building is "historic" and therefore more difficult and expensive to upgrade, and also less likely to be markedly changed.

They are starting with a building deep clean at the end of August.

The challenging news is that in September, our rent will jump from \$50 a night to about \$175, and it will rise again in January and every year thereafter. Given that GCD also has several activities on weekends there as well, and those rates may be even higher, we are looking at \$8000+ more in expenses than last year. Because Wednesday supports a number of other GCD activities, including Saturdays, there will also be budgetary ripple effects.

PRICE CHANGES

We are instituting these entry prices starting in October:

Wednesday dances: \$7 - \$15+

Saturday afternoons: \$10 - \$15+

Saturday evenings: \$15 - \$25

The board is committed to keeping our pricing accessible. We'll be rolling out free passes for regular GCD members who cannot afford the sliding scale (more on that soon) and fundraising to cover that cost. We also want to keep the lower end of the sliding scale at a price point where new people still feel okay about trying it out.

Your faithful board will also be considering other options to bring in more money, as well as ways to lower our expenses.

MEMBERSHIP QUESTIONS

Several immediate questions for September about **Membership**.

1. What might give membership more "value" for GCD and for you?
2. Given that there's no wait list for our Ball anymore and that anyone can sign up for the email newsletter, should we continue a formal "membership" program at all?
3. What other ways might we develop to raise funds and to increase a sense of belonging to the GCD community?

Your suggestions are welcome (email me, or talk to anyone on the board).

Stay tuned, and thank you for your support of a vibrant (and solvent) GCD.

– Jenny Beer

ps -- the Meeting decided it didn't want the **piano** after all. Any takers ?

Board members: Jenny, James, Grace, Angela, Judi S., Tristan, Iris