

# 2020 Statement of Intent Joe King

I, Joseph King (Joe), do hereby announce my intention to run for the 2020 Dallas Makerspace Board of Directors. As I author this announcement, I assume that the temporary closure of DMS may affect the 'Meet the Candidates' meetings, and/or other opportunities to share 'face to face' time with other members. As a result, this document may be longer than the 'average' Statement of Intent (my apologies). I welcome any questions either sent to me directly ([\[1\]](#)) or through Talk (worldcloud).



Joe King

Before I get into specifics, let's chat about why I wish to be a part of the Board of Directors.

## Why Volunteer for the Board?

Some have argued that as DMS grows in size that we can not have the same sense of community that we shared in the 'early days'; however, I disagree with this assessment. I believe that as DMS grows, that community must be supported increasingly by the committees/ SIGs. I believe that strong committees are the future of DMS. While it is true that it has become difficult/ impossible to recognize every member at DMS, it is possible to feel welcome in the woodshop, or Creative Arts, or whichever group shares your interest; and to know that if you have a new project with different interests, new friends are just around the corner.

I realize that we are not supposed to talk about religion or politics at DMS, but this is the same 'evolution' that many churches deal with. As a small church, everyone knows everyone; however, growth is mixed blessing. As a church loses their sense of 'family'; some churches choose to split; however, others simply become a group of 'smaller' families, while some never figure things out and become 'hollow'. In order to keep a tight-knit community, the church will cease to have 'church-wide' picnics, evolving to have picnics with 'fellowship groups', Sunday school classes, youth groups, choir members, sports teams, etc. All these groups share a common faith/ goal, so they are all part of a larger family. The people you hang out with everyday are like brothers and sisters, and those in other groups are like aunts and uncles- or crazy cousins. At DMS, we may not share the same faith, but we all share a common goal to learn, to build, and create- we are better as a group than as individuals: more knowledge, more tools, more completed projects.

Division over new/ changing rules, storage policies, a record number of bans, secret meetings, and a lack of clear communication have many members at DMS becoming involved with 'gossip'. In 2019, more members quit and/or were banned than in any other year of our history. We have had more committee chairs to resign, quit and/or not be instated than during the service of any other Board in the history of DMS. I feel that the Board can not/ should not be at the center of every issue. **I feel that 'secret' to our success are strong committees which control their own budgets, plans for growth, enforce their rules, and inspire/ teach their members.** The Board's place is to make sure that all the committees are treated fairly, uphold the same standards, encourage classes/ education/ outreach and handle the issues which do not fit within a single committee. I do not feel that it is the Board's position to micro-manage. The Board needs to be focused on the 'big picture' of growing the space, make good fiscal decisions, plan/adhere to a budget, and support expansion.

The biggest single reason I want to run for the 2020 DMS Board is to facilitate trust and community.

## My Approach...



Many/ most of my DMS projects involve the rebuilding of my 1990 Bluewater 6400

Every DMS member has a unique set of issues that they would like to see the Board address. I will not allow my person agenda determine the issues which come before the Board. I have worked a number of large projects for Fortune 500 companies, and my job is to move my projects along. In some cases, I may not agree with every step of the process, but as a good employee; I do my job. I feel that the way we approach issues is as important as our specific policy positions. If elected, the following principles will determine how I approach issues:

1. **Be Present...** many Board members over the past few years have completed very few of their own projects at the space during their tenures. It is difficult to make decisions for the space when you are not engaged at the space. It is very easy to 'gravitate' towards certain committees/ interests., I will commit to a project and/or class in every committee at DMS within the year. In addition to attending Board and Board-related meetings and activities. I believe that those who use DMS on a near-daily basis are in the best place to make decisions for DMS. I want to always be available to talk, no appointments required- no secrets.
2. **Be Specific...** over the past years, the rationale of the Board members has not been specific and/or has lacked explanation/ transparency. Example, Member XYZ has been banned for violations to the Code of Conduct (vague??). If I am elected to the Board, and was in a situation where a member needed to be banned; then the who, what, when and whys should be public and transparent- no secret meetings required, no agendas, no second guessing. If there is video, then it should be accessible for all members.
3. **Be Consistent...** although some would argue that our bylaws require change, others have 'disregarded' policies they do not like and/or taken very 'unique' positions on existing rules. I will commit to following the current bylaws. Although our bylaws are not written with the same care of the US Constitution, I will assume that the last paragraph of our bylaws are like the US Constitution- all powers not vested herein do hereby belong to the States- but in the DMS version, all powers not specifically given to the Board belong to the Committees/ members. DMS belongs to the members, not the Board- the Board is simply a instrument to serve the members.
4. **Be Nice...** we all share a common goal to grow DMS and make as much stuff as possible. As we grow we will never agree on every topic. Over the past years, the number of conflicts have increased and some members have vented much frustration both at the space and online. This 'frustration' is clear in the language used on DMS Talk. If elected, I do not promise to agree with all members; but I will not engage in the 'name-calling' which some of our DMS leaders have engaged and I will give every member respect. I have worked at Apple, Hasbro, Eli Lilly, Neiman Marcus, and others. I've led a number of projects at these companies and there has been conflict with every project I've worked on. I promise to extend to the same restraint and professionalism which expected in these publicly traded companies.
5. **No Grudges...** There are many members at DMS (some in positions of authority) which appear to treat some members differently than others. I feel that the number of 'cliques' at DMS are counter-productive to our success. I realize that many members have history (good and bad), but at this stage I am concerned about what we can do for DMS in 2020/21 and I could care less about rehashing issues from the past.
6. **Be Smart...** Passions run high and number of 'issues' that the Board weighs in on are numerous. I am committed to use 'good common sense' when making decisions. I hesitated in listing this as an element of my approach, but common sense is not so common. Fiscal criteria, short/ long term affects, risks, and other factors must be carefully reviewed. In the past, it would appear that some of our purchases may not have been the best investments. I realize that 'hind-sight' has a way of making issues look simple; however, those which do not study history are doomed to repeat it. Emotions run high at DMS, but we need to make sure that our passion does not led us into bad decisions.

## Background

Like half of the members of DMS, I am an Information Technology professional. Actually, I am a relational database developer which organizes chaos for a living. I am a 'old guy'; so normally, I'm the guy that gets called in to rebuild databases which have gone astray. Although there is no 'official' requirement for Board members to have professional accolades, I believe a solid background in business, management, and/or leadership are qualities that we should expect/ demand from our Board. As opposed to outlining my professional experience, I will include my LinkedIn profile:

[Joe's LinkedIn Profile](#)



Amazing Grace was a 'gift' which created a ton of challenges for the Board of Safe Harbor

I have also worked with several non-profits, both as a volunteer and as paid staff. One of these positions was for the Safe Harbor Boy's Home, an organization with a similar budget and similar challenges as DMS. I actually lived on a 68' Huckins yacht (PT boat manufacture from WW2) while working on the Safe Harbor campus. I captained their vessels, taught Maritime Sciences courses, and passed all the background checks required for youth education facilities. The level of passion of their supporters was impressive/ borderline fanatical; however, when people are passionate (like at DMS) it sometimes leads to difficult situations. The level of compliance and regulation was intense as a residential treatment facility for boys/ teens. This was only exasperated as a vocational program with industrial equipment in the hands of minors. In addition to 'traditional' classrooms, we also had a 20,000 square foot shop, a sail loft, a boat yard, a 50+ boat marina (school owned vessels), and a 35-Ton Travellift (rolling crane designed to move boats). The 'crown jewel' was the *Amazing Grace*, a 117' yacht which had been donated after years to 'questionable' maintenance and/or lack of upgrades which are expected on this class of vessel. The school had to invest hundreds of thousands of dollars of cash and acquire countless donations to restore the vessel; however, without this investment of time, money, and donations; the resale value/ fund-raising capability of vessel was limited- lots of difficult decisions had to be made, explained, and justified. The Board had to communicate with donors, sponsors, parents, volunteers, and staff. The donation which was designed to 'help' the school also had the potential to wreck their financial stability, which was opposite of the intended affect. The *Grace* is/was a budget wrecking machine and every decision was a balancing act: weighing estimates, short term risks, and long-term benefits.

Expansion of DMS was supposed to increase our membership, facilitate new tools, and educate more makers; however, the challenges of expansion are now being passed to a third Board of Directors. During the initial discussions for expansion, few people envisioned that after two years, we would only be utilizing approximately half of the new space for Committee/ member use, our budget has been significantly challenged, and we are still facing difficult decisions. Change can be challenging/ risky for a non-profit. I have witnessed many of these challenges with the refit of the *Amazing Grace*, and I can bring that experience to DMS.

#### Goals:

- **Expedite the Re-opening Dallas Makerspace**
  - Create a 'phased' plan to open for projects (social distancing), open for classes (washy, washy), and then open for meetings/ events/ tours (summer?)
  - Adopt more robust cleaning/ sanitizing procedures- maybe increase hours for cleaning staff + schedule volunteers
  - Explore assistance programs which may help us address some of the fiscal burdens associated with Coronavirus
  - Assure that we are following all CDC recommended safeguards (within reason)
  - Validate that we are in compliance with state/ city recommendations and restrictions
  - Avoid limiting access to allow members to make their own health choices
  - Support utilizing outdoor space and/or large rooms (shop) to limit close contact. Alter max class size per classroom to allow more personal space
  - Organize media events to help promote our 'Grand Re-Opening'/ engage a PR bliss to replace lost members
  - Reach out to past members (email) and offer a 'free month' (or something) if they re-join
  - Consider a new 'Safety Officer' position, so that we have a single point of contact/ communication with members and/or outside agencies
- **Promote Stronger Committees**
  - More Accountability- inactive committees get less money/ resources
  - More Delegation- allow committees to address most behavior issues, if it need to come to the Board, the committee should make a recommendation so that the Board extends the power the committee and a Board review isn't a 'second trial'
  - More 'standards'- set goals for each committee for the Board to gauge 'success'
  - Restrict members from serving as Chair of multiple committees at the same time
  - Address committee voting procedures to limit 'take-over' voting
- **Significantly Increase the number of classes offered to members**
  - Encourage 'low-cost' classes
  - Committee funding being connected to classes/ training/ member involvement/ and other factors
  - Limit the use of 'EventBrite' classes
  - Automatically extended storage space for teachers which teach 3 classes a month or more (conditions apply)
- **Communication**
  - DMS has to be run as a fiscally responsible fashion, regardless of emotions- budgets should be published and committees should adhere to their budgets
  - Some budget items should be a percent of the gross and adjusted quarterly
  - Publish recommendations and advice from our accounting firm to the membership (exceptions for legally protected information)
  - Board needs to do a better job communicating/ being transparent/ being humble
- **Complete expansion**
  - Quickly, even if plans have to be adjusted
  - Move 'storage' items out and encourage Committee to build tables/ shelving/ etc- even before they are authorized to move
  - Get a decisive answer 'Go/ No Go' for Automotive- city planners, insurance, landlord, etc.
- **Increase the total number of members**
  - Improve the financial position for the space
  - Facilitates more teaching

- More projects completed, more success
- **Explore additional sources of income**
  - Coronavirus resources? *rumor- some of the SBA 'forgiven' loans are available to non-profits*
  - Grants/ Donation
  - Expanded membership types
  - Partnerships/ sponsors
- **Get stuff Done**
  - Inspire volunteers and others to *complete* projects
  - Divide projects into 'realistic' tasks which can be completed with our current resources (time, money, volunteers, etc)
  - Set clear goals with clear 'finish lines'
  - Increase the number of members which volunteer on DMS projects- move beyond the select few that do 90% of the work

**Nominations:**

- John Gorman - 3D Fab Vice-chair, Former PR Chair
- Mark Salas - Former Woodshop Chair
- Josh Melnick- Former Science Chair
- Doug Emes - Education Coordinator
- Mark Havens
- Luke Andraski - 3D Fab & Digital Media Vice-chairs
- ... *others to come*