9/16/2021

**VOLUNTEER PARTY: COMPARE FARLINGTON COMMUNITY CENTER TO AMERICAN LEGION BANQUET HALL**

WHO DECIDES THE APPROACH AND BUDGET? The BOD. Key aspect is to decide well in advance, where to hold the party and create at least an outline of how to run the party, how much to spend.

Who knows “WHAT” about these choices? Many SCWDC members have attended the Fairlington Community Center either as a volunteer or as a guest of Gary Rubens at his Christmas parties. The decision to use the Legion in 2021 was based on the Legion’s features, large banquet hall, reasonably priced, catered food service by the Legion kitchen, location that is easy to drive to, huge parking lot, professional video screen which could be used for historical display, no SCWDC responsibility for setup and take down of tables and chairs, or clean up, very large possible dance area. & The SCWDC BOD members would NOT be responsible for the volunteer party tasks that are necessary for the Fairlington facility.

The American Legion Post #176 maintains a web site with pictures of its Banquet Hall & a list of its features: http://post176.org/banquet-hall/

| **FEATURE** | **FAIRLINGTON** | **AMERICAN LEGION** |
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| APPROACH DECISION | Board of Directors decide when and where to hold the Volunteer Party and how much to spend via annual budget item. | Board of Directors decides when and where to hold the Volunteer Party and how much to spend via the annual budget. |
| How to Run | Most BODs in the last 20 years have chosen to perform all tasks required to hold the party. Exception 2010, the BOD hired Brion’s Grill, a Fairfax restaurant, to cater the food for the event which resulted in the “highest ever” cost, about $3,800, more than any party in the last 15 years. SCWDC could easily afford this cost and no criticism is intended. More details below about BOD tasks. | Legion staff perform nearly all the work to hold the party. More details below. |
| Availability | Fairlington accepts reservations up to six months in advance, the SCWDC key decision is to decide “early” to obtain a Saturday night in September, the usual period for the party.; The March BOD, in office, should decide to reserve Fairlington to obtain a Saturday night in September. Past practice in last 15 years, only Saturday nights have been reserved. Much earlier in SCWDC times, sometimes Friday nights were picked but this imposes work on BOD members, & possibly on a work day. | As determined by the BOD, contact the Legion contract manager and check on availability – what month and what night to pick? For the 2021 Volunteer Party, all Saturday nights in September and October 2021 were reserved, so the SCWDC planners picked the first Sunday night in October with the agreement of the president and BOD.  |
| Facility Cost | Past year’s pricing (may have changed): $200 reservation fee; $350 security deposit which is returned after the party. Most parties have been run without damage to the facility. Other aspects are, if the trash is not taken out of the building and from the back porch trash totes, or the furniture has been moved and not put back in the same place, then there is a reduction in the security deposit. | Rental of the banquet hall is not separately charged if the contractor purchases food service, “Finger Food” or “Dinner Service”No security deposit. Any accidental damage up to $100.00 will be covered by the American Legion Post 176. Intentional damage must be paid by customer. |
| CAPACITY | 150 although seating is limited to about 25 inside and about 15 on an outside porch | 200+ |
| WHEN & HOW RESERVED | A Fairlington resident required to reserve, it has been possible to obtain permission from multiple SCWDC members living in Fairlington. In the past, we have been able to find someone in SCWDC. | SCWDC member who is a Legion member, is required (to get best rate.) |
| BOD RESPONSIBILITIES | 1. Pick a BOD member to plan the party and obtain commitments from other BOD members to perform specific tasks = to pick up food trays, buy supplies, bring coolers from the office, set up and arrange tables and chairs and put away at the end of the evening, check-in all members and guests, clean up at the end of the event, take trash out to trash area, file the required financial report.
2. Pick a BOD member to obtain volunteer names from all program and committee chairs. This effort should start no later than July and the volunteer invitation should go in early August.
 | 1. Pick a BOD member to plan the party. FYI, for the 2021 Volunteer Party and 85th Anniversary Celebration, Madeline Metcalfe (past president and experienced in running six prior Volunteer Parties including some while not serving on the BOD), volunteered to plan this party.
2. Pick a BOD member to obtain volunteer names from all program and committee chairs. This effort should start no later than July and the volunteer invitation should go in early August.
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| Parking | 30 in next door parking lot plus street parking | 150 parking spots, large lot, no street parking |
| FACILITY  | LARGE “LIVING ROOM” APPEARANCE AND CHAIRS, plus food tables which are set up and taken down by SCWDC | BANQUET HALL with tables and chairs set up and taken down by Legion staff |
| Food Choices | Menus of the recent past parties have been food platters purchased from Giant, Safeway or Wegman’s | Legion offers a “Finger Food” menu, details are in an attachment |
| Food Cost | Depends on expected attendance and whether the event will be catered. Past volunteers have been asked for an RSVP but the club did not require a RSVP. In past experience, no more than about 60% of identified volunteers attend. In advance, name tags for all volunteers are prepared by the Administrative Manager.  | In 2021, the Legion offered a “Finger Food” package for $25 a person, with final count required one week in advance. Additional customer cost: beer and gratuity to staff. To handle a fixed charge per person, the BOD should require an RSVP from every volunteer. If the BOD decides to allow guests unaffiliated with volunteers to attend, which may be a good idea to “bring members together,” we need to charge for this attendance.  |
| Beverage Cost | Combo of bottled water, soft drinks, juices, beer & wine. | Water, soft drinks, tea included in Finger Food package; we tell the Legion what beer brands and how much to buy; we buy and bring our own wine |
| Rules | Must leave the facility by midnight, all doors closed and locked. Party usually starts about 7-7:30pm. | Hall available from 12 noon to 12 midnight. |
| Food preparation & storage | Small kitchen, oven, microwave, “home” size refrigerator | Restaurant facility with daily food service seven days a week to members and guests, plus catering |
| Trash responsibility | SCWDC is responsible for light cleaning and transport of all trash bags to trash area. | No responsibility |
| Alcoholic beverages and service | ABC license required; bartender can be SCWDC person/volunteer or hired person; SCWDC buys and brings beer and wine. Work to obtain the ABC license should be started 3 weeks in advance; on-line registration is possible…waiting to apply until the “week of” the party may mean the license will not be approved. A word to the wise. | No ABC license required; Legion requires employment of their bartender to serve all alcohol products; Legion buys specific beers and quantities based on the customer’s specifications; customer buys and brings its own wine which is served by Legion bartender |
| Wine and Beer Choices | This event is held to honor hard working, often long-serving volunteers. Madeline Metcalfe (six times senior coordinator for volunteer parties) and Bill Johnston believe that “premium” beer and “upscale” wine should be purchased for our “best” members, but NOTHING EXTRAVAGENT. At this writing in fall 2021, the SCWDC net worth is over $200,000 and money market account is about $70,000. A separate attachment provides more specific advice about wine and beer prices. BOD: Go ahead and cheap out on wine and beer, treat volunteers like peasants.  |  |
| Necessary Equipment | Coolers, ice, wine uncorking equipment | None |
| Necessary Supplies  | Accessories like flatware, silverware, cups, napkins etc. | Legion provides all supplies.  |
| Wi-Fi | Yes, free | Yes, free |
| Refunds | Likely, Fairlington would refund our rental payment and security deposit. | In the American Legion Contract: Deposit is NOT REFUNDABLE if cancelation is made 60 days or less prior to the schedule date of the event. |
| Suitability for dancing | “Smallish” dance floor. A/C sometimes is not cool enough. | Banquet hall makes it possible for large number of dancers.  |
| DJ or Band? – which is most appropriate | Size of the room affects this choice; bands have been hired sometimes, but the music is usually too loud. With a DJ, loudness can be managed.  | Option to use either music source. |
| Dress Code | In the 2000’s, most parties have been run as “Black Tie Optional for men and Cocktail Party attire for Women, both upscale. One president allowed recreational attire.  |  |
| Name Tags | Administrative Manager, Pete Campbell, is an expert at printing name tags.  | Administrative Manager, Pete Campbell, is an expert at printing name tags. |
| Coat Closet | Large one near entry door. | ? |
| Guidelines | Fairlington Community Center provides a multi-page document that explains the rules. The SCWDC coordinator obtain this letter regardless of who makes the reservation, must read it, and follow the guidelines. | The Legion puts some guidelines in the contract and others in a specification document. The SCWDC coordinator must read and follow the guidelines. |

**NOTES AND ATTACHMENTS**

FYI: Past volunteer party financial reports can be examined to decide how much to buy in the way of food, beverages, accessories.

Sometimes, there are left over supplies from other events, like beer and party accessories, that can be taken with permission from the Office.

Attachments

1. Past Volunteer Party costs and budgets (not yet provided)
2. Financial Report for One or More Past Volunteer Parties (not yet selected) with breakouts by category
3. 2021 American Legion Budget Plan (not yet provided)
4. List of 2021 Volunteers – About 160 members although fulfilling about 240 different roles (not yet provided)
5. Invitation Email to Volunteers with RSVP Requirement
6. DJ’s used in the past, Bands used in the past
7. Wine and Beer Suggestions withnames and prices
8. Web site event write up, 2021