

2016 LOS ALTOS HILLS – PICNIC REPORT

I. Preparations from the May (Pre-Event) Minutes

A new game truck will be made available for \$349 for two hours, which have games both inside and outside the truck, allowing children to have approximately ten-minute turns with the games. Since games inside the truck should be age-appropriate, there should either be two trucks, or one - with alternating age groups.

Ron Knapp has arranged a four-person musical group, called "Element," for \$1,200.

"Magic Mike" will serve as magician, and we are still striving to accomplish the return of The Pirate from many earlier successful appearances.

"Mavericksfood will prepare and serve the food again this year, including vegetarian beans and grilled fresh vegetable kabobs. Courtenay Corrigan will provide sangria to be served by others (Barbara & Nena). Preparation of the sangria will be done two days in advance.

Rather than eight separate 20' x 20' canopies, one large 40' x 80' canopy will be supplied. Rectangular rather than circular tables will be used, allowing more people to fit under the canopy and dine in the shade. Our loyal representative, Mary, will be providing tables, chairs, etc., again this year, and did a good job - in spite of illness.

Sarah Gualtieri is handling CERT, fire and safety personnel; arrangements for a helicopter are still pending.

II. Preparations from the June (Post-Event) Minutes

The Committee conducted a thorough review of the June 5th 2016 Town Picnic. A total of 1,647 meal tickets were distributed, down somewhat from last year, perhaps because of the hot afternoon weather and also the Warriors basketball game later in the afternoon. Registration proceeded smoothly, and the large canopy in place of several smaller canopies for dining was a successful addition. The "configuration" of the tables offers us an alternate option. Longitudinal vs. transverse. The Committee will experiment with the former configuration for The 2017 Picnic.

A total of 44 vintage cars were pre-signed, and 41 actually participated in the Classic Car Show. The small band for the Car Show was a nice feature, and perhaps they need a larger platform/stage in the future.

The magic show was excellent, including the strolling portion, where the magician engaged small groups of people.

The video game truck seemed popular.

We should try to get the helicopter for next year that was not able to participate this year.

Nick French was an excellent Game Master, and the Committee should encourage him to be a permanent Master of the Picnic Games.

It was moved, seconded and unanimously approved to create an annual recognition for the person or vendor who has been a contributor to the picnic who would not otherwise be recognized, and give that person or vendor a certificate. Nick French would be the first recipient of this award.

Sarah Gualtieri was not present at the meeting to report on her areas of responsibility. It was noted that because approximately 200 fewer people had attended than had signed up, there was a lot of extra food. The vegetarian food was good and popular, and more will be needed next year.

Here is a summary from Sarah's subsequent follow-up report:

There were 1647 tickets given out this year versus last year's 1933. Photos from the event can be viewed [here](#). One thing that the Committee might want to explore is changing the time from 1:00-4:30pm to 12:30-4:00 pm. The 12:30-4:00 pm timing is when we typically have the most people. One change that turned out to be well-liked was one large canopy rather than many smaller canopies. Next year, we would recommend placing the large canopy a little further from the band. The video game truck seemed to be used continuously. This year we had the most robotics teams attend (3), which gave more energy to that area. The Bookmobile damaged the P2 fence, which had to be repaired after the event. There was also some burnout from the hamster balls on P2 centerfield, which needed to be reseeded afterward.

Category		2014 Actual	2015 Actual	2016 Projected	2016 Actual
Venue					
	Signs and Map	\$256.00	\$156.60	\$300.00	\$40.24
	Tent, table, chair, linen rent	\$6,754.17	\$6,469.23	\$7,000.00	\$7,245.10
	Decorations	\$292.54	\$336.04	\$100.00	
	Set-up supplies	\$87.56	\$30.90	\$200.00	\$94.97
	Portable restrooms	\$265.80	\$218.89	\$200.00	\$218.89
	Shuttle Busses	\$1,138.50	\$1,350.00	\$1,350.00	\$1,350.00
	Balloons				\$510.04
Publicity					
	Flier design, printing, mailing	\$2,416.54	\$2,390.11	\$2,700.00	\$2,410.38
	Street banners	\$111.01	\$98.64	\$150.00	\$147.77
Entertainment					
	Music	\$1,550.00	\$1,200.00	\$1,900.00	\$1,200.00
	Magic Show	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$500.00
	Contest Games	\$202.88	\$41.96	\$300.00	\$95.37
	Model trains	\$100.00	\$100.00	\$100.00	\$100.00
	Train and inflatables	\$1,850.00	\$2,365.91	\$2,400.00	\$2,567.75
	Photo booth	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
	Climbing wall	\$800.00	\$800.00	\$800.00	\$800.00
	Human Hamster Balls		\$500.00	\$500.00	\$650.00
	Video Game Theater				\$150.00
	Pony rides	\$850.00	\$850.00	\$850.00	\$1,325.00
	Petting Zoo	\$475.00	\$475.00	\$475.00	\$475.00
	Face painting and Clown	\$862.50	\$862.50	\$900.00	\$862.50
	Caricatures	\$250.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
	Sand	\$238.96	\$96.97	\$100.00	
Food					
	Lunches	\$14,576.25	\$15,843.75	\$16,500.00	\$16,477.50
	Drinks	\$1,469.82	\$1,803.75	\$1,600.00	\$1,618.01
	Ice cream	1,600	\$1,600.00	\$1,600.00	\$1,600.00
	Ice	\$330.60	\$415.96	\$400.00	\$617.78
Contingency		\$348.92		\$1,345.00	\$470.43
Total		\$37,327.05	\$38,506.21	\$42,270.00	\$41,526.73
Budget		40,000.00	40,000.00	\$40,000.00	\$40,000.00
Actual		\$37,327.05	\$38,506.21	\$42,270.00	\$41,526.73
Difference		\$2,672.95	\$1,493.79	-\$2,270.00	-\$1,526.73

III. Committee Registrar Notes (Karen Emerzian):

The total attendance count for the 2016 Picnic came out to: 1,647. (In 2015, it was 1,933. This does seem strange, and calls for close discussion and thoughtful planning.)

Karen could tell from the registration 'traffic' that it was much lighter this year. Mansour had the same opinion, from the vantage point of the ice cream usage. The Committee as a whole tended to agree.

If nothing else, this may point to the value of rotating in new features each year, and, of course, bringing back ones that were particularly well-received.

IV. Beverage & Music Report (Ron Knapp)

Ron Knapp reported on the beverages, which worked out well. He purchased lots of soft drinks on sale from the Sunnyvale Safeway. He reports that if one tells a Store Manager about a large order like ours, the Managers will pitch in and help with processing and loading the order.

Soda

Collecting one hundred forty-two 12-packs of soda (amounting to over 1,700 cans) is never an easy task. In the past I made multiple trips to Safeway and/or Lucky's, depending on the sale price, and filling one shopping cart at a time, each with about 20 12-packs. Then I unload them after returning home to a convenient part of my house. On the night before the picnic, I load everything into my F-150 pickup truck for transport.

It is hard to buy forty (40) 12-packs of Coke or Sprite because not many supermarkets stock large quantities of soda. Many only keep a couple of dozen of each on the shelf, with very little in the stockroom, making multiple trips to different stores necessary. A few stores, including the Safeway in Sunnyvale, stock hundreds of 12-packs of popular brands in large end-caps located in open areas of the store, ready for the Memorial holiday demand.

At the Safeway in Sunnyvale, I asked for the Store Manager in charge of the beverages to help me get everything I needed in one trip. Knowing the sales prices ("buy 2 – get 2 free"), I gave him a list of exactly how many 12-packs of 5 different kinds of soda I needed*. It took him about a half hour to load up a pallet with everything and bring it out to the shipping dock in the rear of the store, where I backed my truck up to the loading dock. He helped me load my truck with the whole amount in one trip to the store. He also took my list to the front registers where he rung it up and I paid for all of it on one receipt. In the case where they may not have everything, they are able to get it within one or two days, in which case you can make an appointment to pick up the whole load when everything is available.

Also, I scheduled this pickup on the Thursday before the picnic, such that I could leave it in my truck, parked in my garage (out of the sun), eliminating the need to unload and load it back into the truck for the Sunday picnic date. On the morning of the picnic, I buy 5 or 6 20-lb bags of ice from Smart & Final and fill one of the big white coolers (stored in the Parks & Rec storage shed) with Coke and Sprite together with ice. Then I fill a smaller cooler (my own) with Diet Coke and Diet Sprite or 7-Up and ice. This way, all the cans will be cold and ready to serve as soon as the picnic opens. I have a third, smaller cooler ready for ice and white wine and kids drinks, which I fill after I arrive at the picnic.

Every year I buy about forty (40) 12-packs each of Coke and Sprite, the most popular flavors. I don't buy more than 16 each of two diet drinks, Diet Coke, and either Diet Sprite or Diet 7-Up, whichever is available. Most stores don't stock large quantities of the diet drinks other than Diet Coke and Diet Pepsi. I never buy Pepsi, since one year everyone complained we didn't have Coke. From then on, I only buy Coke products for the picnic. Normally, when the Coke is on sale, the sale price applies to all Coke products, including the A&W Root Beer, used (popularly) for root-beer floats in the ice cream booth. Additionally, I purchased and brought along about two hundred (200) juice boxes from Smart & Final for the kids.

The quantities came out pretty close - with maybe a couple of dozen 12-packs remaining after the picnic, which I had Sarah store at the Parks & Rec office closet, to use for future town functions.

** Note: When the soda sale price is 'buy2 - get 2 free', you have to purchase everything in even multiples of 4 in order to get the lowest price. Otherwise you may end up paying full price for any remainder quantity that is less than 4.*

Wine

As in past years, I buy a total of nine (9) cases of wine, with more white than red. This year, I bought 3 cases each of Foxbrook Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, and Merlot. I only pay about \$2.50 per bottle, but avoid Trader Joe's Charles Shaw, aka "2-buck Chuck's" because of its poor reputation. I would have bought Whole Foods "Three Wishes" wine, as they always stock plenty of cases in the aisles, but their price was much higher this year, as was the "Quail Oak" brand at Safeway. So this year I bought the Lucky brand, "Foxbrook," except they don't stack cases of it any more in the store because the low cost detracts from sales of higher priced wines. Most people aren't familiar with this brand, so they don't know how inexpensive it is, but the quality is as good as any "house" wine you order in a restaurant, and no one has ever complained about any of the wine we have served at the picnic.

Similar to the soda purchase, I ordered the wine I needed from the Beverage Manager at Lucky, who gave me a couple of dollars of additional discount per case. It took him about 3 days to get it in the store for pickup, but you can order the wine weeks ahead of time to make sure there aren't any delivery problems.

Beer

I made contact with a relatively new brewery in San Jose, Strike Brewing, located near San Jose State on 10th Street. There is a place on their web site to request donations of beer. Jenny Lewis, the Co-Founder, and CEO, is a Los Altos resident, and was more than happy to help us, with not only a generous half-price discount (saving us about \$500), but she also helped me set up my beer equipment and serve the beer for almost the whole duration of the picnic. My dual jockey box had some trouble keeping up with the volume of beer, with only 50 feet of cooling coils for each beer tap, which results in excessive foam. Foam is not a problem when you are giving the beer away without cost. If the drinkers don't get a full glass of beer, you just tell them to come back a little more often for refill. If they are paying for beer, you have to fill the glass completely, which is not the case at our picnic. Anyway, Jenny offered to loan us her professional equipment next year with 120 ft. coils in their jockey boxes! Thanks Jenny!

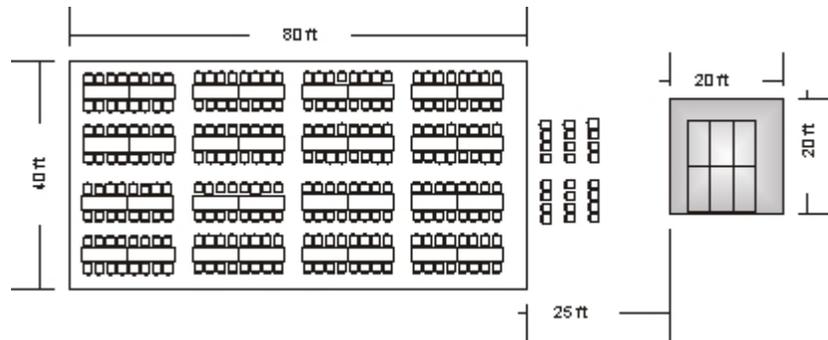
Like last year, we had two (2) kegs of three different kinds of beer. People always ask for either a "light" or a "dark" beer, so I procure a light Pilsner or Hefeweizen, a dark amber or Porter, plus a stronger and 'hoppy' IPA. From Strike brewing we served their Belgian Wheat, Irish Red, and Double IPA beers. The quantities came out just about right, using one full keg of each, and small partial quantities remaining of each at the end of the picnic.

I used all my own equipment, including a dual, 2-tap jockey box cooler, a single wooden barrel jockey box, and a CO₂ tank. I also bring all the hoses, back up accessories and tools, including a 2nd backup CO₂ tank, just in case there are any problems, which would be a disaster, if for example there were a major gas leak and the CO₂ ran out.

Music

A couple of years ago, we had THE “*Touch of Class*” band, with lead singer, Peggy Dove. She also works in another band, “*Element*,” which plays at many places around the South Bay. The band leader, Ray Buyco, was very cooperative, and did a great job within our music budget. We used the same stage setup from past years, a 12’ x 16’ stage on 12” risers, under a 20’ x 20’ canopy, located near the batting cage where the two 15A electrical power outlets are located.

This year we tried a new setup of the rental equipment. Rather than several 20’ x 20’ canopies with round tables, we placed one large 40’ x 80’ canopy, aligned in front of the band stage, with rectangular tables. The only problem, a minor one, was the rental company didn’t follow our instructions (diagram, below) to align the tables the long way in line with the canopy, such that everyone has a clear view of the band to their side. Instead, they aligned the tables across the short end of the canopy such that half the people were seated with the music and stage to their backs. Next year, let’s make sure they follow the layout, below. The only change I would make is to increase the distance between the stage and the canopy from 25 ft. to at least 40 ft.



V. Future Picnics (2017 et seq)

The following suggestions were made for our future picnics:

1. Arrange for the concessionaire or for members of the Youth Commission to collect meal tickets. (Note: This could be considered somewhat of a “thankless” job making it somewhat difficult to assign volunteers; however, we have found that the person-to-person opportunity to meet and greet redients and attendees is an opportunity to be appreciated and to inspire comraderie and enthusiasm among the crowd. We have had instance in which engaging the crowds in the lines is as much fun as the event. For example, having them turn around and Meet ‘N Greet one another!)
2. Several Committee members voiced concern over the volume of the band, expressing that they found it difficult to talk during a meal; next year the large canopy should be substantially further (at least forty feet away) from the band, and the band volume should be lowered, if possible.
3. As mentioned above, tables in the large canopy should be oriented at 90° to the orientation that was used this year, so that everyone having lunch just has to glance to the side to see the band, and 50% of the people are not situated to face away from the band.

4. Ice cream was melting by the end of the day, in spite of having \$100 to \$200 of dry ice available. Next year it is recommended that a freezer be rented for the ice cream.
5. The traditional “train” between the main picnic area and the riding ring was not considered “a train” at all, but more like a short chain of four-wheel drive trucks. It would be nice for future picnics to have a cute little train more like the train used in the past.
6. The Car Show Awards were somewhat disorganized; the caligraphic, personalized, awards were not ready to be given out at the time slot reserved for them, so more coordination of these awards in the future is needed. In general, the picnic does have to keep to a schedule, so the awards have always been presented given during the main band break.
7. Committee nametags with ribbons as have been used in past years were not available this season, and were missed. These separate nametags should be prepared ahead of time, as in the past, in the future years for identifying our Committee members.
8. Some people brought dogs to the picnic, in spite of the standard town ordinance prohibiting dogs at the Little League Fields. There should be better signage and more publicity to inform the public about this rule.
9. We also need a very visible sign that the event’s “Lost and Found” is located at the Registration canopy.

VI. PUBLIC INPUT

(From Kathy Evans:)

I think that most people stayed under the shade of the tents because of the heat. If the tents had been spread out, it would have seemed like more people. If there was another tent, it would also have been full. We had such a hot week that even though the temperature was lower than earlier in the week, people were still hot, and that made it look like there were fewer people.

Also - I think people arrived a little later than usual, so it did not reach critical mass until later in the day. My photos show plenty of people, but they were all under the tent seeking shade. People said the tent was too close to the band (agreed) and that (and possibly therefore) it was loud.

People also universally liked the addition of the vegetables as an alternative to the band with their meal. Unfortunately, initially, the caterers would not let people have the vegetables unless they were vegetarian, but later in the day they allowed people to add it as a ‘side.’ It was a good addition and possibly another vegetarian salad or side dish would also be good to add. We do have a health conscious population.

Also - We have in years past, offered something “special” like a pirate show, or pig races. A big event that caught people’s attention and curiosity. We talked at the time, about featuring something special every few years - but that has not continued. You might want to revisit this idea to draw a larger crowd.

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