

FINAL REPORT-- October 2017 Bridge Tournament for 299'ers

By:

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General:

Since the tournament had morning and afternoon sessions on Thursday and Friday, we served lunch on those days.

Since Saturday only had a morning session, we were not asked to provide lunch but were asked to provide breakfast and snacks.

After the tournament, we were told that over the course of the tournament, there were 70 paying tables which equates to 280 paying participants.

On Thursday morning, they had an additional special game for new players with less than 20 points. The players with fewer than 5 points got to play free.

We started our planning way in advance by meeting with the previous tournament chair, Myra Groome. Her comments and her notes, as well as the notes of her co-chair, Diane Powell, were invaluable.

About a month before we had checked the kitchen and pantry for staples they keep- plates, utensils, napkins, cups, tin foil, plastic storage bags, salt, pepper, tabasco. We should have checked again several days before because we had to get tin foil and pepper at the last minute. (We are fortunate to have Dollar General so close!) We should have also checked to make sure that we had adequate serving utensils for the lasagna and salads.

Number to Plan for:

We planned food for 100 participants each day.

Budget:

Although we were never given an actual budget figure, we followed the lead of the previous tournament organizers and decided to stick to a budget of \$750 for food plus \$300 for the 2-day fee for a Kitchen Manager.

Since we estimated that the decorations, soft drinks, snacks and breakfast items would cost about \$150 in total, that left us with about \$300 each day to provide lunch for 100 people. Since this was a very limited budget, we decided that the way to attack this was to use the funds to buy the entrees and to get the salads and desserts donated by Bridge Center members.

We were successful in that our total expenditure for food came to \$757. Adding the \$300 for the Kitchen Manager brought our total expenses to \$1,057. This allowed the Club to make a small profit after paying the Directors and paying fees to ACBL.

Another way that we conserved funds was to not have the entrees delivered each day to the club by the vendors. We were fortunate that Tommy Swayze did this job for us each day.

Publicity

Diane Scott handled publicity Her success was evidenced by the high number of attendees as compared to previous tournaments. Starting more than a month ahead was extremely helpful. Strategies included

- Making and posting colorful, clever signs about the tournament around the Bridge Club
- Printing and mailing a packet of flyers to nearby bridge clubs. This had been done before by Theresa Gendus Federico, but she said she had stopped doing it.
- Providing Sherrie Goodman with a flyer to send out electronically to other bridge clubs
- Asking Directors to start announcing tournament before their games
- Making small 1/3 page "take away" flyers which were left on the front table and handed out at games in the month before

Decorations

We went with a Fall theme and used real pumpkins and fall colored paper leaves and sparkly accents as well as a couple of plastic halloween pumpkins filled with chocolate candy. (Check the store room because the sparkly things may end up there!)

We ordered yellow plastic tablecloths from Amazon at a very reasonable price- 2 4-packs.

Sharon Henry brought several beautiful arrangements using flowers from her garden.

Day Before

On the afternoon before the tournament, we loaded in most supplies to the Bridge Club, and we set up the tables in the configuration we wanted. We put out the tablecloths and the decorations.

There was a drink table, a dessert table, and the food was put on 2 long tables plus 1 square table lined up and placed about 3 feet from the wall. The partnership table was by the front door.

A few days before the tournament we had posted signs telling people to get anything out of the refrigerator that they wanted. On the afternoon before the tournament, we threw away everything left in both refrigerators knowing we would need the space.

Kitchen Manager:

We used Theresa Ruiz (352-1651.) She is a very competent young woman and is very able to work independently. She worked from 9 am to 3pm on Thursday and Friday and was paid \$150 each day.

Each day we gave a "receipt" to the Tournament Director (\$150 received, date, your name, purpose-- "to pay Theresa Ruiz, Kitchen Manager for work on xx/xx/17"). He then gave us cash to pay Theresa with.

To make it flow more smoothly, we typed up and posted in the kitchen general directions and specific directions for each day. These directions were sent to the Kitchen Manager in advance, and kitchen volunteers were asked to review them upon arrival. The directions included items like "periodically check food table to see if items need to be replenished," "cut, butter, and heat bread."

Volunteer Food Providers

Previous tournament organizers had posted sign up sheets asking people to bring food items for tournament days. We decided that we wanted to actually have a firm commitment for food items since we were depending on them, and because we wanted to be able to send reminders to persons who had offered to bring a food item.

Since we felt that the personal touch would work best, we made sign-up sheets to circulate before games at the Bridge Club. We started recruiting volunteers over a month in advance. People were very generous and we were able to get all of our slots filled.

The list asked for

- Item to be donated
- Person's Name
- Person's Phone Number
- Person's E-Mail Address

We had lists to ask for volunteers to make

- A green salad for 10 people for Thursday (5 volunteers requested)
- A spinach salad for 10 people for Thursday (5 volunteers requested)
- A hearty salad for 10 people for Friday (bean, pasta, coleslaw, potato) -- 10 volunteers requested
- Homemade pick-me-up desserts (10 volunteers requested)

All food and kitchen helper volunteers were sent 1) an e-mail thank you/reminder shortly after signing up, 2) a second e-mail reminder about 5 days before the tournament, and 3) a thank you e-mail after the tournament.

Signs were posted near the food table thanking and listing the various volunteers.

Volunteer Kitchen Helpers

We also had sign-up sheets asking for volunteer kitchen helpers on the days of the tournament.

We ended up with one early morning volunteer from 8:00 to 9:00 on 2 days and with 2 lunch volunteers from 10:30 am to 1:00 pm on each day on Thursday and Friday (2 on Thursday and 2 on Friday.). Our volunteer helpers really made the process go smoothly because not only could they assist the Kitchen Manager with food prep, they could also check the tables periodically to see if any cleaning was necessary or any additional snacks, food, or drinks needed to be put out.

Coffee

We followed the quantity suggestions that had been given to us for making coffee each morning.

- Thursday & Friday
 - regular-- whole pot-- 5 packets
 - decaf-- half pot-- 3 packets
- Saturday
 - regular and decaf- half pots

Making the coffee proved to be a very easy task. The machine has water tied into it so there is no ferrying of water necessary.

- There is a section at the top of each pot that you pull out.
- Take the old filter/grounds out
- The filters and coffee packets are in the top drawer to the right of the machine
 - there are more in the storage room in the kitchen
- Put the filter and the correct number of packets in
- There is a rocker lever on the machine that has roman numerals I and II on it
 - I (one) is for a half pot
 - II (two) is for a whole pot
- Then, all you do is press the START rocker lever which is the first lever

Caution: Before starting the coffee, be sure that the dispenser switch is vertical, otherwise the coffee will pour out while it is being made.

Beverages and Ice

We checked the grocery store ads and were able to buy 2-liter drinks on sale for \$1 each. We had stored them in the store room, and accidentally bought more on the second day thinking we were running low and so we ended up with leftovers.

15 is probably a good number to start with and the diet drinks are the ones in demand. 2 diet to 1 regular is probably a good guideline.

With Dollar General so close, we would suggest that you start with a smaller quantity and buy more if needed.

Ten more soft drinks were purchased but many were not needed, as the extras were in the storeroom and were not noticed. Diet soft drinks, particularly diet coke, was in more demand than other types of drinks.

We were fortunate to have ice donated by Elizabeth Sewell that she had in her freezer leftover from hurricane preparations. The general need is 2 bags per day (1 on Saturday) and it was placed in a ice chest owned by the Bridge Club.

Previous tournament organizers had only put soft drinks out beginning at 10am and had cautioned us to not let non-tournament bridge players have them, but we decided that with the low cost, we could afford to be gracious and put them out in the morning. We did not worry if non-tournament participants had a soft drink. It worked fine.

Menu

For **breakfast** we served orange juice, boiled eggs, donut holes, homemade mini-muffins, and grapes.

We way overbought orange juice. Costco had packages of 3 60-ounce bottles for \$7.99 per package of 3. One package would have been enough.

Sharon Henry offered to boil eggs for us. She did 7 dozen and donated them. Her perfect boiling directions for easy to peel eggs- sit out all day to get to room temperature, put in room temperature water and bring to boil, boil 1 minute, cover and let sit for 11 minutes, remove from boiling water and place in ice water to cool. Eggs were put out with Tabasco, salt, and pepper. (Check quantities a couple of days before the tournament.)

The grapes were bought at Costco (2 3-pound packages) and were cut into small bunches before serving.

50 assorted donut holes were picked up each morning on the way to the Club.

When we couldn't find any reasonably priced mini-muffins, Diane Scott made them.

The **Thursday Lunch** menu was lasagna, green salad, spinach salad, and buttered french bread.

The lasagna came from Hobnobber's Cafe. It had been served at a previous tournament, and everyone we talked to had given it high recommendations. We bought 3 large pans. Each pan is about the size of 2 9 X 13 pans. It was ordered about a month in advance, although that much notice was probably not necessary. We had Hobnobber's heat it up, and one of our husbands picked it up at 10:30 am. (They will deliver, but picking it up ourselves was another way to save money.) We didn't even have to reheat it because it stayed hot. We waited until close to serving time and cut it into serving size pieces. It is quite a bargain at \$85 a pan and serves more people than Hobnobber's states. We had leftovers that were put out on Friday. We got many compliments on it. It was quite good. We put all 3 pans out at one time and with people moving down both sides of the table, it would have been nice to have 6 spatulas. We had not checked this ahead of time, and since we could only find 3 in the kitchen, we put one spatula and 1 large spoon in each pan.

We had one entire pan of lasagna leftover from Thursday that was re-heated and served Friday. Everyone loved it the second day as well and it was completely gone by the end of Friday's lunch.

Three loaves of French Bread were bought the night before. The kitchen helpers sliced it, buttered it, and heated it up. 2 loaves and 1 pound of butter probably would have been enough.

We had a lot of salad-- probably 4 green and 4 spinach would have been enough. People seemed to really like the spinach salad, so maybe we should have had more spinach and less green. One volunteer had made an Italian salad that everyone really enjoyed.

We dressed all of the salad before putting it on the table. Possibly we should have left one undressed.

The **Friday Lunch** menu was party sandwiches and hearty salads, and everyone enjoyed that too. We had decided to get the sandwiches from Martin's Wine Cellar. They were of excellent quality. We ordered a variety of meat and salad. There was one tray of sandwiches leftover, and they were put out on Saturday and eaten up quickly.

With regard to **desserts**, our preference was for homemade cookies, bars, brownies as opposed to "store bought." There were people who brought desserts that did not sign up so we had more than expected. We asked everyone to bring the desserts on Thursday, and then we put out some of each on each day of the tournament. We had plenty to put out on Saturday as well. We left the desserts out in the afternoon after lunch.

We did buy sugar free cake and cookies from Dorignac's. They were placed on the dessert table with a sign indicating they were sugar free. The sugar free desserts were almost untouched throughout the tournament.

For **snacks** each day in the morning around 10 am and in the afternoon around 2:30 pm, we put out nuts (purchased from Costco) in half-full medicine cups, cheddar cheese cubes (purchased from Sam's in a 5 pound bag), peanut butter pretzels (purchased from Costco), and miniature candy bars (purchased in a large bag from Costco and put in plastic Halloween pumpkins on the dessert table and the partnership table.) We also had the boiled eggs out and desserts. On Saturday, the leftover sandwiches and salads were put out as well.

Partnership Table

In advance, we checked with our Partnership Chair, Carolyn Dubois, to inquire as to what we could do to assist her. We put a tablecloth on the partnership table as well as decorations and a plastic pumpkin filled with chocolate candy. We offered to make signs for the table and the buy nametags but Carolyn took care of those tasks herself.

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