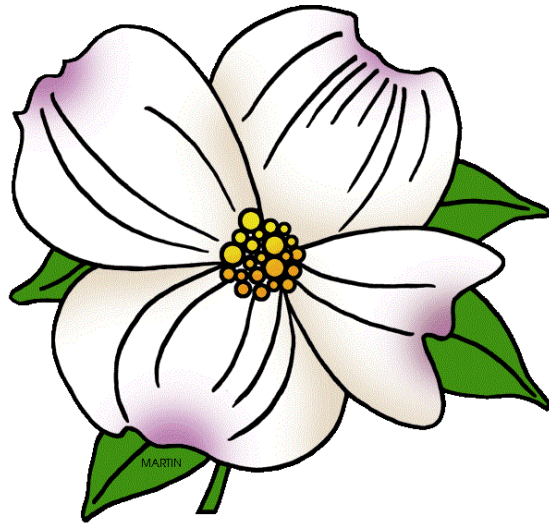




Dogwood Hosting Handbook



Preface

This handbook was prepared to aid hosts in planning and running a Dogwood chapter rally. One of the first things to remember is that **you are not attempting to “out do” any past rallies** but to add your personality and originality to your own rally. This idea has been very successful and thus creates a lot of new and different experiences.

Keep in mind that our membership and future members come in all ages and sizes and, therefore, plans should be made accordingly. No matter what you plan, there will be one or two individuals who will not be pleased. You must recognize this and not let them ruin the rally for you and everyone else.

When you decide to become a rally host you will find the experience very rewarding. In the process, you will have many pleasurable experiences and the membership will enjoy themselves. Many of the members will compliment you on having a very successful rally.

Planning A Rally

Once you have agreed to host a rally there are a number of steps to follow:

Find a suitable site for your rally. Pick an RV park that you are familiar with or try to locate a new park that meets the chapters criteria. The VP Rally's should also be able to help you in making your selection. Sites should be at least 20' by 60' and drive-thrus are preferred by most of our members who are towing cars. Identify sites that would be contiguous to the clubhouse that can be reserved for members with physical challenges. A clubhouse or covered meeting facility is essential in case of inclement or chilly weather. Make sure the RV park you select is clean and attractive and is in a desirable setting. A form for collecting the pertinent information is located [here](#) on our website.

Review the club's rally attendance history. This information can be found on old posts from our blog or from the Treasurer. Try to match the average number for the month you are hosting and add a few more coaches for safe measure.

Think about the time of year or season and try to schedule the rally dates to coincide with special events going on in the RV park neighborhood such as Air Shows, Antique car shows, Seafood Festivals, Craft Fairs, Christmas, etc. Perhaps you can plan your own theme.

While not a major issue, try to negotiate a discount based upon the number of coaches expected to attend. Usually, parks will reduce the rate for larger groups.

Be sure to confirm that pets are allowed for our members who travel with their animals. If there is an extra fee for pets let the members know in pre rally presentation material.

It is important to ensure there is adequate (minimum 30 amps) power available at each site, especially if hot or cold weather is anticipated. A minimum of 50 amps should be considered, if the weather is hot enough that 2 A/C units are needed. Check to make sure power towers are in good and safe condition. Sewer and water connections at each site are also essential. Wi-Fi is also a consideration when making your selection. TV cable is also a real plus in case trees might block satellite signals. Even though full hookups are preferred, dry camping is acceptable at certain rallies. If the rally is going to be dry camping, be sure to relay this information in the pre-rally writeup.

Kitchen facilities should be checked for cleanliness and suitability for our meal preparations. Cooking and refrigeration facilities are a plus and heat/cooling capability is a must during extreme weather conditions to ensure the comfort of our members.

Hosts Checklist

Find Co-Hosts: Now that you have found the perfect place to hold your Rally, the next step would be to find someone to help you. You probably will pick a couple whom you are friendly with or someone who has specifically offered to help host a rally. Since the list of potential rally hosts in most chapters is limited, the number of host for each rally should be just enough to pull off a successful rally. There are always members more than willing to lend a hand and assist rally hosts.

Draft Agenda: The next step is to draft a rough agenda of the rally to incorporate applicable coffee times, chip and dip, food, etc. At this point in time, you must decide on what type of food you are going to have, if any, such as “potluck”, “theme potluck”, prepared by hosts, dining out, catered, etc. Some ideas in this area are crab feasts, shrimp or crawfish boils, traditional picnics, pig roasts, Italian, Mexican, etc.

Estimate Costs: As soon as you have formalized plans for what the rally is going to include, a package must be put together of “X” amount of dollars for rally fee and “X” amount of dollars for camping per evening. Also you may not elect to include that camping fee but allow each member pay their own camping fee. In the event you decide your rally consists of a large number of people some information is available [here](#) on our website to help with quantities needed.

Publicizing the Rally: The host should prepare the rally details with a good description of the rally, events, cost, where to send reservations, how to find the RV park, rally theme, who will bring snacks for happy hour, how to plan for pot luck meals, etc. If going to a restaurant as a group, include their website. Also, you should include web sites of any attractions you are suggesting. This information should be sent to the VP Communications prior to the end of the preceding rally. Include a contact phone number at the RV park in the event of an emergency.

The sooner the article is sent to the VP Communications, the better. This allows the VP Communications to plan future newsletters based on the material available. Please note that fees

must be kept as low as possible, yet not scrimping so as to hurt the success of the rally. LOTS OF ENJOYMENT CAN BE HAD AT A LOW PRICE. Attached to the article should be the information for your registration form.

The pre-rally write-up should include the following information and a pre registration form.

Name and concise directions to the rally site.

Names of the rally hosts.

Name/Address of person receiving registration form and money.

The amount of the rally fee.

The dates and the length of the rally.

Emergency contact phone number for the campground and/or police.

Planned highlights or local points of interest.

What, if anything, you are asking registrants to bring.

The registration deadline.

Handling Reservations/Collecting Rally Fees: This should be handled by one couple so there is no confusion as to how many attendees can be expected. The rally fee, if paid by check, is always made out to name of the person running the rally as they will have expenses to account for as well on the Rally Expense Form.

Finalize the Rally Agenda: See the section for Activities Schedule to ensure members will know what is going on. The agenda which will be a handout out upon arrival will include meal times, what utensils are required, meeting times, places for all events, etc. Also, include the phone number and directions for the nearest hospital. This info should be distributed in the package of handouts. An example of a final rally agenda can be seen [here](#).

Handouts and Welcome Bags: Collect info from the local tourist council, include a list of attendees, identifying guests for the President's use and any free souvenirs, if available. Finding free souvenirs and "goodies" can be time consuming. Don't go to a lot of trouble trying to outdo a previous rally. Distribution should be made by host as members arrive at the rally area.

General Rally Information

In order to assist with planning the consumption of food and other items, it is important to have a good handle on the number of attendees expected. The section on Hosting Large Groups of People will give you an ideas on quantities of food to prepare.

Review the Rally History retained by the Treasurer which shows the number of coaches in attendance depending on the month and season. You can also find the number of attendees at past rallies by checking our web blog under "older post". The VP Communications can help, if you have trouble. Figure two persons per coach. As reservations arrive this number will become

better defined.

BINS - You should inventory the bins and determine the items left over from the previous rally and purchase items necessary to bring the bins back up to suggested quantities. Three laminated sheets, showing suggested quantities for the bins, can be used to help with replenishing. It is very important that you **do not** leave anything in the bins that is not part of the suggested inventory. Any food or condiments left over from the rally, should be offered to the membership and then divided up by the hosts.

CHAFING PANS - Along with the bins, chafing racks and pans are supplied by the club. The large aluminum pans are primarily used for holding hot water to allow foods to stay warm as well as providing a cover for the food. You should fill them with approx. 1 inch of hot water (if available) to give the alcohol burners a head start. The smaller pans should be lined with aluminum foil for serving and keeping foods warm. By using the foil, you can save the pans for future rallies and make it easier for cleanup.

COFFEE MAKING - No one really has a handle on the amount of coffee to make each morning. It would depend on the number of people attending the rally. Have coffee pots set up the night before and turned on by 6-6:30 in the morning as it takes about an hour to perk. Use the larger pot of regular and the smaller one for decaf. The instructions on the laminated bin sheets, recommends 1/2 cup of coffee, for every 10 cups of water measured on the side of the coffee pot.

DOGWOOD BANNER - Try to locate a place on a wall to display the club's banner. Bungee cords are included with the banner to aid with displaying. We also use this backdrop for photos of new members.

TABLE CLOTHS - Dogwood has a bin with approximately 9 tablecloths. Table decorations are a nice touch and can be purchased if your budget allows. Try to use natural materials such as, pine cones, sea shells, etc.

Rally Count Down

Although the rally site selection and schedule should have been selected and contracted for at least one year in advance, regular follow up is required to ensure there are no surprises on rally weekend.

60 Days prior: Check back with Park management. Notify the VP Rally's of any problems or changes.

30 Days Prior: Check with the Park once more. Notify the VP Communications of the info for

the Newsletter. Include a map with good directions to the Park.

7 Days Prior: Notify Park management of any changes in the number of reservations. Check food delivery plans, arrange hand out material.

Day of the Rally: Check in early with your co Hosts in order to make final preparations.

End of the Rally: Work almost done. Provide the VP Communications with names of attendees and any other details of the rally that would be of interest to those who could not attend. Complete the financial reports and give them to the Treasurer. Clean all the equipment and make it available for the next Host to load and transport.

Rest in the knowledge that you have had an opportunity to give something back to the club in exchange for all that club members past and present have done for you now and in the future.

Your efforts are appreciated and this Club is stronger thanks to people like yourselves who are willing to share their skills, experience and assistance to those in need.

Rally Expense Reports

Not only are expense reports necessary to keep the chapters books balanced it is also one of the requirements by FMCA for chapter rallies to be covered under their blanket insurance policies.

Risk Management requires that a formal invitation to club members be extended as well as an attendee roster to meet the criteria of their insurance underwriters, for a rally to be official.

There are 3 downloads on Dogwoods blog (located in the right pane) that pertain to expense forms.

1. **Instructions for rally expense report.** - These instructions will aid you in filling out the rally expense reports.
2. **Expense Report Form - Rally Expenses** - A 3 part form that goes into the specific details of your rally.
3. **Expense Report Form - Misc. Expenses** - The misc. report form is used primarily for the expenses of the bins. It was decided by the membership, that items such as paper towels, coffee, plastic wrap, etc. should be purchased separate from normal rally expenses such as food. Each bin should include a laminated sheet indicating the normal stock levels of items that are contained in the bins. (Items are not assigned to a specific bin.) Note: Although the bin items are paid by the treasury, host should "try" plan rallies leaving a little left on the table to help defray the extra cost of those items. And, it is the duty of the next host(s) to inventory the bins and bring them up to the required levels prior to their rally.

Risk Management

In the unlikely event that an incident should occur that may involve personal injury or property damage, you should make yourself aware of the Rally Incident Report. You should report the incident to any officer present at the rally and/or have someone fill out the report ASAP. The information on the form is very straightforward. A copy of which can be found on the Chapters website along with the expense forms.