

written 12 July 1965
revised 10 August 1965

To: Executive Board, FSGW, and The File

Re: Pick-nic #1

The Pick-nic was held as planned on Saturday, 3 July, 1965, at Fort Ward Park in Alexandria. My guess is that about 150 adults and perhaps 75 children attended.

Preliminary financial report:

INCOME

Memberships (4, incl. partial payments)	\$ 22.00
Non-member donations (\$5 at \$1.00 each)	55.00
Member donations (72 at 50¢ each)	36.00

113.00

Plus income from sale of soft drinks (about	37.00
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Approximate total \$ 150.00

EXPENSES

Addressing & mailing notice to members (printing was free)	about	\$ 7.00
Tags, banners, posters, etc.	about	8.00
Charcoal (50 lb.), lighter, ice	about	3.00

18.00

Plus 20 cases of soda at \$2.15 each including deposit, plus 100 lb. of ice (\$2.00), less credit for returns and bottles	about	28.00
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Approximate total \$ 46.00

Although the picnic was scheduled to begin at 11 a.m. (allowing time for eating and setting-up before the program began at noon), preparations did not begin until noon, and the program finally started after 1 p.m. We were rained out heavily about 4 p.m. (in the middle of the children's concert) and moved to Chuck Perdue's home for supper and informal singing.

Particularly in view of the threatening weather, I would judge the event to have been a success in all major aspects. Following is a more or less detailed report of arrangements, with comments and recommendations.

A. Grounds, location, etc. (See previous report on available parks, in The File, and Board minutes). -- In general, facilities at Fort Ward are more than adequate for this kind of activity; in good weather we could probably have managed twice as many people (400-500) without much difficulty. The park was chosen because the management permitted us to solicit donations and were friendly and cooperative about detailed arrangements, including use of their electricity and special dispensations for parking on the grounds; however, lack of a rain shelter is decidedly inconvenient, as we discovered.

A special permit was obtained from the City of Alexandria Traffic Department for overflow parking across Braddock Road (not needed, but might have been on a nicer day when the park is more heavily used). A policeman (at \$3.00 an hour) would have been available to direct traffic and watch parked cars, but not required by regulations so not hired.

Cleaning up the picnic area was no problem because people attending policed the area well and there were many volunteers to help.

COMMENT: 1. We should find a site with similar advantages (restrooms, park guards, parking, electricity, friendly management, nice terrain, and especially permission to collect money), but also with a rain shelter!

2. Have a responsible person in charge of parking, with someone always on duty to direct traffic (absolutely necessary if attendance is any greater than it was).

B. Food and drink. -- Simplest possible arrangements were made for food; because we were asking donations and to help confine cooking to the picnic areas, 50 pounds of charcoal and some lighter fluid were purchased. About 10 portable grills were solicited from members (by telephone committee) for group use besides the 2 permanently installed "ovens" in the park. Actually, about 4 grills were sufficient for a group this size. Two members were assigned to light coals and watch fires (one member for lunch, the other for dinner). Cooking was actually done throughout the afternoon, and we would have needed more charcoal for dinner. Dave Suddeth, in charge of lunch fires, also took on the duties of fire warden.

Twenty cases of mixed soda (Pepsi, Teem, and orange flavors only) were ordered from the Pepsi Co. together with 100 pounds of ice. These were delivered free to the park, together with ~~XXX~~ a cooler; the Pepsi man picked up bottles and returns from Chuck Perdue's house. At the price per case we were forced to charge 10¢ per (6-oz) bottle. Under direction of Joe Brennan, about 15 cases were sold by 4 p.m. and the rest would have been gone by dinner time if it had not rained. Another 50 pounds of ice was purchased in midafternoon (probably 100 lb. by dinnertime, if...).

I called the Good Humor company to suggest the regular route man be prepared for us. He arrived just before it rained.

COMMENT: 1. Charcoal system worked well, is relatively simple, cheap, and convenient. A fire warden should be appointed for any future activity involving cooking, fires, etc.

2. Drinks also worked well, thanks to the hard work of the committee. (Ft. Ward does not have very many water fountains.)

3. If any more ambitious plans for food are made (hot dogs, or full meals) they should be executed by a professional caterer or some individual(s) with a contractual obligation to the Society; we should not go into the food business because (a) of health regulations and risks and (b) it's an awful lot of work and involves some financial risk -- not worth the effort.

C. Posters, tags; admissions, membership. --- Thanks to Nan Perdue's heroic efforts, colored admission tags, posters, signs, and banners were made. The results, though perhaps not absolutely necessary in a minimum operation, added a good deal to the spirit of the occasion and made an excellent impression.

Tags were made in three colors: for members, for non-members, and for guests (limited strictly to performers and their families); tags were counted out in bundles to simplify bookkeeping. Tags and banners were block-printed on colored cloth (mostly waterproof). A large poster was made for the entrance to the park, and signs labeled places for charcoal, drinks, and the admissions-membership table. Banners were hung about and on a string delimiting the concert area.

Admissions and membership ~~occupied~~^{occupied} a strategically located table; as with all duties involving money, a responsible chairman was in charge of change, money-box, accounting to the Treasurer, and dispensing receipts or tags.

COMMENT: 1. Keep the "Pick-nic" theme, which is corny but nice.

2. The admissions-and-membership table should be manned at all times, even during concerts, as people arrived continuously throughout the afternoon. Nearly all persons attending seemed willing (even anxious) to pay.

D. Program. -- Although he never formally accepted the job, Chuck Perdue acted as program director and made most of the arrangements for the program. Originally four events were planned, by the process of compiling long lists of (a) what events we would like to have and (b) what people were (or might be) available to participate, then winnowing the lists down to a reasonable size, given the limitations of size of the park, p.a. facilities, minimum crew, time during the picnic, and the instructions of the Executive Board to spend no money on program (for fees or travel expenses) and to utilize primarily the membership and friends of the Society.

Chairmen for each event were selected/drafted and offered primary responsibility for organizing and directing their sections. The chairmen were chosen for a fair acquaintance with the general subject and with performers in the area.

A partial list of scheduled performers is appended.

COMMENT: 1. Perhaps there was too much program planned, with not enough time allotted for people to sit under trees and make their own music. On the other hand, since all performers on the program were not paid, we had to allow a reasonable safety factor in case some people did not show up. Anyway, perhaps three events would have been sufficient.

2. I strongly recommend some activity for children be included in any such event.

3. A program director should be appointed to supervise and back-up chairmen's planning and to keep the actual programs moving on time. Such duties are clearly different from those having to do with physical arrangements, and one person really can't watch grounds and program at the same time.

4. We need a bugle or bagpipes or some other unmistakable call for the beginning of a program.

5. Not used, but worth trying sometime, were several suggestions for other possible kinds of activities:

a. Brief (10-20 min.) demonstrations of specific points of technic, e.g., fingerpicking

b. Children's play-party. Requires somebody who knows how to do it, how to lead, etc., plus a prearranged cadre of dance leaders.

c. "People" workshops -- e.g., John Jackson sitting under a tree someplace, chatting with interested bystanders, demonstrating songs and technics, trading songs and stories, etc.

5. For full report on p.a. system, recording, etc., see The File and Board Minutes

E. Publicity. -- See Board Minutes. As attendance was to be limited by the size of the park and our pla. system, no formal publicity (posters, newspaper or radio advertising) was planned. Publicity was carried out (a) in the Newsletter, (b) through a special mailing (including map) to members and a few others, (c) by a campaign conducted by the telephone committee, also asking for help in working on the picnic. Unsolicited announcements also appeared in "Do You Know," the calendar published by the D.C. Recreation Department; and in the daily calendars of the Star and Post; all these notices drew a few responses.

GENERAL COMMENT

This was the Society's first real family activity, and a fine way to keep present members happy and to draw prospective members. With the strictly limited budget (drawing generously, I might add, on some members' resources) it risked virtually nothing of the Society's funds and was on this scale a financial triumph. I do, however, believe that we must continue to offer a program if we wish to collect money. Even given some leeway concerning expense money and/or performers' fees, it would still be possible to clear a modest profit without much risk.

There is a serious question as to the desirability of putting on a full-scale festival; from my small experience in helping plan the picnic and with other festivals, I wonder if we should ever consider putting a major strain on all our resources for an artistically dubious purpose. We might consider doing it, eventually, simply to make money; it would certainly not be much fun for those working.

I can, however, envision a modest alternative: a gathering basically of the same general format as this Pick-nic, with strictly limited attendance (say, 500), and featuring a small number (say, one or two) of well-known more-or-less professional musicians who would give a program for part of the afternoon, then be accessible for informal conversation, song-swapping, or whatever. [Examples: New Lost City Ramblers, Doc Watson (& family?), John Hurt, Libba Cotten, Obray Ramsey, Dock Boggs, etc. etc.]

Hopefully submitted,

Jani Henneman

Addendum: Prices and arrangements for soft drinks (information as of about 15 June 1965)

1. Coca-cola Co., 5401 Seminary Road, Alexandria (481-2323: Mr. Jones)

The Coke line (Coke, Tab, Orange, Sprite, grape soda, etc.) is available in 6-oz, 12-oz, & 16-oz bottles and 12-oz cans, but not all flavors in all sizes. Prices for case lots: (minimum order, 8 cases): no-return cans, \$2.50; 6-oz, \$1.40 plus 75¢ deposit (total \$2.15). Ice, \$1. for 50 lbs. (will cool 5-6 cases for about 3 hours). Will loan cooler free. Prefer one week notice, minimum notice one full day. Will deliver to parks, but will not pick up from parks (?). Full cases of bottles over minimum can be returned for refund. Deliverymen work until noon on Saturdays (no Sunday delivery).

2. Pepsi-cola Co., 2402 Oakville, Alexandria (KI 8-9400: Mr. Roland)

Pepsi, Teem, Orange, Grape, Ginger ale are available in miscellaneous sizes as above (not all flavors in all sizes; Pepsi is only flavor in 12-oz bottles). Prices: 6-oz: \$1.40 + 75¢ per case; 12-oz: \$1.80 + 75¢ per case; 16-oz: \$2.00 + 75¢ per case; 12-oz cans, \$2.50 per case. Minimum of 10 cases for these prices and delivery. Will loan cooler free; ice extra.

3. Rock Creek (LI 3-2400)

Minimum order 5 cases; service charge of 25¢ on each full case returned. Will loan cooler, but require \$20 deposit. Will deliver and pick up. Two brands: Blair House (throwaway bottles) \$2.20/case (I am not sure of the sizes); Rock Creek, \$2.55 including deposit per case.

PROGRAM Chuck Perdue

BLUES { Ed Morris
 { Chris Morris
 John Jackson & family
 Archie Edwards
 Randy Mason

CHILDREN'S { Helen Schneyer
 { Andy Wallace
 Chuck & Nan Perdue

COUNTRY MUSIC { Mike Rivers & friends

Al Vazquez

Hazel Dickens & Alice Foster (maybe)

SONG SWAP { Sol Schneyer / & Helen
 Geo. Simpson
 Peter Forsyth
 Dildines
 Jerry Parsons
 Hoffmans (?)