

The Eglin Yacht Club Dining Guide

PLANNING AND PREPARING MEMBERSHIP NIGHT DINNERS

GENERAL

The Advisory Council in coordination with the Entertainment Coordinator shall solicit volunteer crewmembers from the club membership. The responsibility for the planning and preparation of Family Night and Membership Night Dinners shall be assigned to a designated Crew Skipper (CS) for each month. The CS will direct all required actions to include recruiting other club member volunteers who will decorate the club and assist with the food operation. Additionally, the CS shall act as mentor, the intent being that volunteers learn how to become the CS for future dinners. This should in no way dissuade volunteers since no one will ever be assigned the CS duty unless completely willing and able.

Most dinners will fall into one of four categories. These are 1. The Potluck Supper; 2. Bring Your Own Whatever; 3. The Catered Meal; or 4. You Cook. There may be other possibilities that the innovative may conjure up but the guidance in this paper will cover the most likely choices.

Whatever the type dinner the CS should begin preparations in the week preceding dinner night. Contact the Club Manager to obtain a door key and request money to cover the estimated cost of the meal (up to \$500). The Club Manager will also provide a sales tax exemption number for the purchase of non-food items. The money will be provided several days later in the form of a cash advance to the CS from 96 FSS. The CS should then inventory the club for existing supplies, spices, condiments etc. Supplies (napkins, plates, table covers etc.) can be obtained by calling the Club Quartermaster or Manager. Those food items not normally in grocers' stock (e.g. large quantities of meat) should be special ordered using best guess to be refined upon receipt of final head count on Tuesday night. Food should be picked up on Thursday or early Friday morning and transported to the club. The club can be decorated anytime during the week, but CS should coordinate any decoration plans with Entertainment Chairperson. All expenditures must be documented by receipt or will be disallowed by 96 FSS. On the night of the dinner the CS should be prepared to advise the Entertainment Coordinator and/or Commodore of the cost of the meal so that the price can be set. All receipts must be turned in to the Club Manager along with all unexpended monies if an advance was requested. Keep good records. The numbers must match up! (REMEMBER THAT CREDIT CARDS CANNOT BE USED, DEBIT CARDS OR CASH MUST REFLECT ON THE RECEIPTS - NO TAX ON FOOD ITEMS).

1. THE POTLUCK SUPPER

This is probably the simplest choice but is not a guaranteed success unless you use a little imagination. Everyone brings a favorite dish and the dishes are spread out on serving tables for all to enjoy. There usually a minimum charge to reimburse the club for

paper supplies or any supplemental food items purchased. In order to attain a compatible variety of foods the CS should try to maintain some control over who brings what. Short of dictating, try to make clear to the members what you would like them to contribute. Be as specific as you can and hope for the best. You might want to provide the main course (e.g. a steamship round or other meat) and ask that the potluck be geared to supporting your centerpiece. This combination potluck/you cook offers all sorts of opportunities. You might also consider themed potlucks (e.g. Mexican, oriental etc.). This would narrow the varieties that people might bring. Think about it and then jump in. It will be delicious! Reservations for most membership night dinners are requested.

2. BRING YOUR OWN WHATEVER

This approach involves the members bringing their own entrée and cooking it at the club on the large family night grill. This works best when the club provides and prepares the trimmings such as potatoes, salad, dessert etc., for a nominal fee of around \$5 per person. Alternatively, members could be asked to bring potluck type accompaniments but this somewhat complicates an otherwise simple dinner. Reservations are required so that the CS can get a head count. As noted above the CS can draw funds through the Club Manager to finance the necessary purchases.

3. THE CATERED MEAL

This sounds simple but there are pitfalls. **Do not make a firm commitment until you have a good reservation count (provided Wednesday morning of the same week as the Friday night dinner)**. The goal is to keep individual dinner cost as low as possible and routinely under \$8. The key to success lies in carefully selecting a menu from a qualified caterer and paying attention to details. Assume nothing and ask a lot of questions. The food must be delivered fresh and ready to serve. How will the caterer assure this? When will they prepare it and how will he deliver? Would it be better if you picked it up? Will they provide insulated containers? Could the caterer do some or all of the cooking using the club facilities? This could work best for a fish fry or perhaps a BBQ. How does the caterer determine portions? You certainly need to know this if you are doing the serving. You might need to be specific as to how much food you want instead of relying on the caterer's portions (e.g. X pounds of meat, Y pounds of potato salad etc.) These are just some of the things you need to consider. You can lower cost by purchasing sides from Walmart or Sam's. Make up your own list of questions and be sure you get satisfaction before ordering.

4. YOU COOK

For those of you ready to display your culinary skills, this is the avenue for you. Here's your chance to share your favorite recipes with all of the club members. As with all dinners, planning and attention to detail will get the job done. The club's cooking facilities consist of 2 four burner electric stoves, 2 refrigerators, a large warmer, 1 large gas grill and a modest variety of cookware. Because this clearly limits the types of meal you can prepare at the club you may want to consider cooking some of the meal at home. Also, you can farm out items like baked potatoes or desserts to members of the crew to cook at home while you prepare the entrée at the club.

Once you've decided what it is you want to cook you must then determine how much you need to buy. Attachment 2 provides some suggestions as to quantities in various categories of food items, but only you know how much you intend to serve so consider the numbers as a guide only. Obviously, we all would like the quantities purchased to exactly equal the quantity consumed but it's probably not going to happen that way. Clearly having a little too much is better than too little because you can usually sell the surplus after the meal. An accurate head count will be available by 1800 on the Tuesday before the Membership meeting. People who come without a reservation do so at their own risk and you have no obligation to cook for more than the head count number. Although ultimately you will have to use your own judgement when you shop, consider the following: For most food items simply multiply the desired serving weight by the expected number of attendees. Be sure to allow for shrinkage and weight loss. For most other items such as butter or salad dressing weight or volume is still your best measure. Gather up the portion you desire to serve (this can be done at the place of purchase) and weigh it. Multiply by the number to be served and you have the amount needed. Still not sure? Then ask an experienced CS who will be happy to share his/her experiences with you.

Now let's get to the cooking. Anyone can properly cook for 10 people and serve in a timely manner. Cooking for over 100 people presents more of a challenge. Expect much longer cooking times with large quantities. For example, getting a pot to re-boil after adding cold food can take up to an hour! Sixty pounds of meat in one oven will take considerably longer to cook than ten pounds. The club has at least one cooler that is very useful for holding hot foods as well as cold. Therefore, plan your cooking so that the items that hold well are cooked first and then held. Remember that food taken off the fire, wrapped in foil and put in a cooler will continue to steam cook and increase in temperature 5-10 degrees. Rare meats can't be held this way but rather need to be held in a 130-degree oven (the club has a large warmer to maintain heat). Last but not least, be absolutely certain that the folks on the serving line are aware of the serving size you have purchased and want doled out.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this paper is to encourage volunteers for providing the Membership dinners at the EYC. The guidance provided is to stimulate your thinking and is not intended to give detailed instruction in any area. Do not let the problem areas scare you. They are yours to resolve, and in doing so you will achieve a great feeling of satisfaction. And last, you will receive the best reward of all. Members will come up after the meal and say, "Thank you, the meal was delicious and you all did a good job".