DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE
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SUGGESTIONS FOR CONDUCTING FUND-RAISING DINNERS

The political dinner is an important part of political organization and successful politics. It can enlighten and inspire, or it can be boring and a breeding ground for misunderstandings and dissention. If carefully done it can contribute to harmony and friendliness as well as to the party treasuries. Other new forms of fund-raising have recently been used with much success, but the fund-raising dinner is still a major, and in some places an all-important, event.

While the main purpose of the dinner is to raise sizable amounts of money in a relatively short time, it has the added virtue of bringing together party leaders for meetings in which they become accustomed to working for a common cause.

KINDS OF POLITICAL DINNERS

Most of the states use the Jefferson-Jackson Dinner as an annual fund-raising device, but there are variations on the dinner theme which may be helpful.

The practice in a number of states is to hold one big statewide dinner, at a $25-a-plate admission (or contribution), with a well-known speaker. However, some states have had several J-J dinners during the year in different cities throughout the state. This encourages much wider participation, and since the charge is frequently less (about $10.00), these events are within reach of more of the rank-and-file party workers.

Another successful variation is to have the central J-J Dinner, and then hold state-sponsored or district-sponsored banquets in each of the Congressional Districts. The Congressional District Dinners can then be billed as "recognition" or "appreciation" dinners for incumbent Congressmen or other Party leaders. In the same way Recognition Dinners can be given at the County or City level to honor local office holders or key party leaders; these may or may not be tied in with the major state fund-raising dinners.

Whatever type or variety of fund-raising dinner you plan to use, the following suggestions may be valuable. These do not constitute a "Book of Rules" for holding successful dinners, but they may save you some headaches. Local conditions may require changes.

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The two main ingredients for conducting a successful political dinner are EARLY PLANNING and GOOD ORGANIZATION.

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BASIC ORGANIZATION

CALL A MEETING — Have your State Chairman or appropriate District leader call a meeting of all County Chairmen and Vice Chairmen. The meeting should be held in a central location and, if possible, at least two months before the date of the dinner.

HAVE A LIST OF NAMES — Be prepared to submit several names for consideration as Chairman of the Dinner Committee. It is ordinarily advisable to select as Chairman an active Democrat who is a successful business, professional or civic leader, but not one who is a Party or public office holder. It is also advisable to consider naming an outstanding Democratic woman as Co-Chairman of the Dinner Committee.

NAME PLENTY OF VICE CHAIRMEN — It may be a good idea to appoint all County Chairmen and Vice Chairmen as vice chairmen of the Dinner Committee. Leading Democrats who are not Party office holders also are a good source of members for this Dinner Committee.

CHOOSE OFFICIALS FOR THE COMMITTEE — From the Dinner Committee, select your principal officers for such functions as treasurer, publicity chairman, program chairman and committee, arrangements chairman and committee.

ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE

The care and dispatch with which important details are handled is most important. An Arrangements Committee should be selected as early as possible. Be certain that some one person is in charge of each of the following:

HEAD TABLE GUESTS — This includes assembling all Head Table Guests before the Dinner and getting them to the dining hall at the appointed hour so the Dinner can begin on schedule. It also includes watching out for late Guests and getting them to their places. (See "Precedents for Seating Head Table," page 7)

DECORATIONS — This includes decorations for walls (and bandstand) as well as the head table and individual tables if the committee decides this is what it wants to have. Don't forget the American Flag!

PRINTED PROGRAMS — This includes assembling the information for the programs, pictures, menu, credits, committee names, etc. Prepare the copy, take it to the printer, check the proof. Finally, be responsible for the delivery of the printed programs (and seating books, if any) to the dining hall. (See "Ad Selling for Dinner or Conference Programs", page 7)

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ENTERTAINMENT — This includes engaging the entertainers or orchestra, making sure there are facilities for dressing, if necessary. Also, this committee is responsible for seeing that the Toastmaster and those working on the printed programs have complete information about the orchestra or entertainer.

FOOD COMMITTEE — This includes selection of the menu and handling all relations with the caterer--number guaranteed, price, tip, time of serving and clearing. (Many a dinner program has been spoiled by the clatter of the catering service clearing dishes.)

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS — This includes meeting and transporting distinguished guests. Check in advance on time of arrival and accommodations and be sure all is in order. Also, make arrangements for the departure of the distinguished guests. Don't let them fend for themselves.

PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEM — This includes arranging for microphones and loudspeakers so every person in the dining hall can hear clearly. It also includes providing the proper type of lectern to go with the microphone. Remember, speakers need a place for their texts or notes.

TV-RADIO COVERAGE — This includes supervising any special arrangements that must be made for TV cameras, microphones, recording equipment as well as taking care of the personnel of TV and Radio. A special TV platform may be needed. Cooperate with both the person in charge of seating arrangements and the person in charge of publicity.

USHERS — This includes doorkeepers, ushers or ticket-takers. Be sure ushers are familiar with the set-up of the room so they can give clear instructions to ticketholders. Also, courtesy and tact are necessary to straighten out misunderstandings that may arise about seating. Be on the spot from the time the doors open until the dinner is well under way.

PROMOTION

At the initial meeting of the County Chairmen and Vice Chairmen see that all are impressed with the importance of the dinner.

Here are the important steps in promotion:

1. Each county should submit to the Dinner Committee Headquarters a list of persons who will probably attend the dinner.

2. This list should be canvassed by letter from the Dinner Chairman, enclosing a reservation card and return envelope.

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3. Several days after the letters have been mailed, each county committee should hold its own meeting. The names of persons solicited would then be divided among the county committee members for personal contact.

(Note: Further letter writing normally produces only limited results. The original letter is simply a means of "breaking the ice" by letting as many people as possible know about the dinner. From this standpoint letter writing is important.)

There are two basic things that make a fund-raising dinner successful:

$ A GOOD SPEAKER WHO WILL HAVE APPEAL IN YOUR AREA,

$ A LARGE DINNER COMMITTEE WITH EACH MEMBER MAKING PERSON-TO-PERSON CONTACTS TO PROMOTE THE DINNER.

PUBLICITY

The Publicity Chairman should be a person with experience in dealing with press, radio and TV. In general, several press releases should be put out announcing: 1) the date and purpose of the dinner and the Dinner Chairman; 2) the Committee Chairmen; 3) the principal speaker. Arrangements should be made for the press to interview the speaker. An effort should be made to get an advance text or press release on the speaker's talk. Check on the possibility of local radio or TV coverage of the speech or recording for later broadcast. Consider purchasing advertising space in the newspapers or spot announcement time on radio.

Finally, the Publicity Chairman should make certain that the press is invited to the dinner and that a good spot is set aside for the press table.

TICKETS AND RECEIPTS

You should determine in advance the size contribution for which a complimentary ticket to the dinner will be issues ($25.00, $50.00, etc.) and no tickets should be issued for a smaller contribution.

(Note: If a rumor should get out that you may cut the contribution, you will be involved in all kinds of complications.)

TREASURER'S PROCEDURE — The Treasurer, or someone specifically designated by him, should receive the contributions, keep a record of them, and be responsible for issuing the tickets. Tickets should not be issued until the contribution is actually received. The person designated should make a daily list of the contributors, the amount of the contribution, and the number of tickets assigned to him. A daily deposit of the moneys received is recommended.

QUICK CHECK LIST

The above procedure gives you a quick check-list at all times as to the number of tickets issued, the amount of money received, with a grand total at the end of each day, and you will then know approximately how many to count on and what to notify the caterer to prepare for.

SEATING ARRANGEMENTS

You may, or may not, wish to use seating arrangements--that is, assignment of people to certain numbered tables. It is simpler to use the first-come, first-served arrangement, whereby people who come early get the best tables. If you do use the seating arrangement, you will need to determine how many may be seated at each table (ordinarily the number is 10) and then assign your guests to tables in a manner determined in advance--preference tables for those purchasing tickets early, groups desiring to be seated together, importance of the ticketholder, size of the contribution, etc.

PROGRAM OF THE DINNER

Promoting a dinner to "full house" status does not necessarily mean you have been completely successful. After you have encouraged a capacity crowd to attend your dinner, you must make it an enjoyable event so your patrons will want to come back the next time.

Planning a program for the dinner is an important job. There are many angles to consider besides audience enjoyment, although that should be kept uppermost in mind. Remember, everybody wants to be on the program but will accept the fact that they can't be if you have a definite formula for making introductions and selecting preliminary speakers. Here are some suggestions:

1. Limit the speaking part of the program to a maximum of one and one-half hours (one hour is preferable).
2. In addition to the principal speaker, invite two or three local persons to make brief remarks.
3. Select a toastmaster.
4. Make out a time schedule for the dinner and be sure each speaker knows how much time is allotted to him. Here is a rough schedule:

Invocation	1 minute
National Anthem	1 minute
Serving of Dinner	60 minutes
Introduction of Distinguished Guests	10 minutes (depending on number)
Preliminary Speakers	30 minutes (about 10 min. each)
Principal Speaker	30 minutes
Benediction	1 minute

5. Be sure to have a written list of all persons to be introduced--both those at the head table and those on the floor. Reduce the possibility of making mistakes or omissions in this important matter of recognizing notables and guests.
6. For other helpful suggestions see "Tips for Speakers," published by the Office of Women's Activities, Democratic National Committee.

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ENTERTAINMENT

Professional entertainment is expensive unless it is a volunteer performance. A good quartet or glee club is very satisfactory because the group can sing the National Anthem and provide additional entertainment throughout the serving of the dinner without stringed or brass accompaniment.

A local group performing a skit is excellent entertainment. If the skit is long, it might be advisable to cut down the number of preliminary speakers.

THE DAY OF THE DINNER

On the day of the dinner, re-check with the Dinner Chairman on the time schedule and firm it up. Have it typed out minute-by-minute, step-by-step.

Meet with the Dinner Chairman, the caterer, the TV and Radio engineers (if such coverage is provided), the public address system engineer, the director of entertainment, the toastmaster and all concerned with the technical aspects of the program. Be sure every one has a schedule and understands his cues.

Quite frequently even the best planned dinners "fall apart" at the last minute--sometimes through unavoidable accident, sometimes because some one has overlooked an important detail. The Chairman of the Arrangements Committee should have two check lists to be sure everything is covered. He should be on the spot at all times and he should have thought through the possibilities of emergencies and be ready to meet any that arise.

TICKET TAKING

Ticket takers at the dinner are necessary for two good reasons:

1. To make certain that only ticket holders are admitted;

2. To have an accurate control over the number served.

(Note: It is essential to check on the number served even though the caterer may prefer to take up tickets at the table.)

USHERS AND SEATING

Ushers or hostesses are required if reserved seating is used. They can correct or adjust any errors that may occur such as guests inadvertently sitting at the wrong table or "switching" table numbers.

If reserved seating is used, you must either print the table number on the ticket or prepare an alphabetic seating arrangement booklet. The former is preferable because it is foolproof.

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AD SELLING FOR DINNER OR CONFERENCE PROGRAMS

Corporations and labor unions are forbidden by law from giving contributions to either political party. However, both of these entities normally spend money for advertising and they may legally purchase ads in publications or programs sponsored by political parties. The Federal Tax Court has ruled that this is bona fide advertising (Denise Coal Company, CCH Decision 22,714, 29 TC 528).

Even Republican owned or managed businesses often purchase ads in Democratic programs and publications because it is good business to do so.

Selling advertising is an extra source of income and often means the difference between profit and loss at our conventions and dinners.

A number of states, using volunteer salesmen, have had excellent success with getting ads for programs, yearbooks, and other party publications. Some have used a combination of volunteer workers and professional solicitors who work on a commission basis.

PRECEDENTS FOR SEATING THE HEAD TABLE

Head table seating at a political dinner is a difficult task because most of the rules are unwritten. In Washington, the Department of State's protocol officials have established a set of rules and the Capital city's social arbiters have hardened them with use. The table of precedents below applies not only in Washington but anywhere members of this particular group of people may go in the United States. Knowledge of this practice may make your own decisions easier and provide a formula which will make your decisions more acceptable to all concerned.

The President of the United States
The Vice President
The Chief Justice
Former Presidents of the United States
Ambassadors of Foreign Powers (in the order of presentation of credentials)
Widows of Former Presidents
The Speaker
The Secretary of State
United States Representative to the United Nations
Ministers of Foreign Powers
Associate Justices of the Supreme Court
The Cabinet Members (in order of the Department's creation)
Governors of the States (in order the States entered the Union)
The Senate (in order of seniority)
Former Vice Presidents
The House of Representatives (in order of senority)

SPECIAL RULES FOR WOMEN — The wife of an official always assumes the rank held by her husband, whether he is present or not.

Wives or widows of former officials have no rank at all but are usually given courtesy positions. Note that widows of Presidents are an exception--they have a specific place in the list.

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If your state does not have an official table of precedents, here is a guide list compiled for the mythical state of Pennsyltucky:

The Governor of Pennsyltucky
The Lieutenant Governor
The Chief Justice of the State Supreme Court
The United States Senators (in order of seniority)
Former Governors of Pennsyltucky
The Governors of other States
The Senators of other States
The Chairman of the Democratic National Committee
The United States Representatives (in order of seniority)
Pennsyltucky Statewide Elected Officials
State Senators (in order of seniority)
State Representatives (in order of seniority)
Pennsyltucky Statewide Appointed Officials
Democratic Party Officials

This Pennsyltucky listing solves only the most obvious problems. So here are some other rules that may be applied:

1. In general elected persons outrank appointed persons except in case of the higher courts and of persons appointed directly by the Governor.

2. State officials may be ranked in order of the creation of their offices.

3. Seniority of service may be applied when two persons would otherwise appear to be of equal rank.

REMEMBER: HOW WELL KNOWN A PERSON IS OR HOW WELL LIKED HE IS HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH HIS RANK.

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A question that frequently arises is: Who ranks first among Democratic Party officials in the state? The answer is: It depends on the nature of the event. Here are some general guides:

1. The National Committeeman and National Committeewoman are of equal rank. If a choice must be made let seniority of service apply.

2. At any event sponsored (or jointly sponsored) by the Democratic National Committee or for the benefit of the National organization or in honor of the Presidential Candidate or any event in which two or more states are participating, the National Committee members would outrank the State Chairman and Vice Chairman. Otherwise the State Chairman is generally considered the chief political officer of the state.

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Another element that enters into political seating arrangements is courtesy.

For example, if Pennsyltucky has invited a U.S. Representative from another state to be the principal speaker at its annual Jefferson-Jackson Day dinner he is treated as an honored guest ranking just below the Governor, not as an ordinary House Member. Special courtesy is also extended to members of the clergy who attend so many of our political events. NEVER put a clergyman at the end of the table.

The general rule on seating is as follows:

The center of the table is the place of honor. Ranking guests are placed alternately to the right and left of the center. (Right and left are determined by the right and left hand side of a person seated at the table and not from a person sitting or standing in front of the table looking at it.) Consequently, the two persons of lowest rank at the head table will be sitting on the two ends of the table.*

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Now let's see how all these rules apply to the average state Jefferson-Jackson Day dinner. The state is Pennsyltucky. The dinner is being held in the largest city of the state, Metropolis (which is not the state capital). It has been suggested to you that the following list of persons (20) be seated at the head table (where there is room for only 16):

The United States Senator from North Oklasota who is to speak
The wife of the Senator from North Oklasota
The Chairman of the Democratic National Committee who is to speak
The Governor of Pennsyltucky who will introduce the Senator
The wife of the Governor of Pennsyltucky
The National Committeewoman of Pennsyltucky
The Toastmaster who is a member of the State Legislature
The Mayor of Metropolis who will introduce the National Chairman
The wife of the Mayor of Metropolis
The State Chairman who will "say a few words"
The Chairman of the Dinner who is the Democratic Chairman of Metropolis
Former U.S. Senator Smith of Pennsyltucky who is 92 years old
The Speaker of the State House of Representatives
The Junior Senator of Pennsyltucky
The wife of the Junior Senator of Pennsyltucky
The Minister of the Methodist Church (the Mayor's Church)
The U.S. Representative of the 1st District (where dinner is being held)
The wife of the U.S. Representative
The Democratic County Chairman (where dinner is being held)
The State Vice Chairman (a woman)

*Sometimes a fern banked lecturn in the middle of the table hides the ranking guests if they are seated in the exact center of the table. In this case "buffers" may be seated on either side of the lecturn with the honor guests to their immediate right and left. The "buffers" should be the toastmaster and an acting host or hostess. See footnote example on next page.

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Your job is to eliminate 4 persons from this list and then to decide how the rest shall be seated. Work the seating problem and then compare with the solution.

Below is one way to do it. It is not the only correct way. However, the top ranking guests are shown the respect due their rank. Toward the ends of the table there is room for debate.

AUDIENCE

Head Table

Seat	Guest
8	Dinner Chairman
7	Toastmaster (State Representative)*
6	National Committeewoman
5	Former Senator from Pennsyltucky
4	Mayor of Metropolis*
3	Junior Senator from Pennsyltucky
2	Wife of the Governor of Pennsyltucky
1	Senator from North Oklasota
1	Governor of Pennsyltucky
2	Chairman of the Democratic National Committee
3	Wife of the Senator from North Oklasota
4	United States Representative
5	Speaker of the House (State)
6	State Chairman
7	Clergyman
8	State Vice Chairman

Eliminated from the list are: The wife of the Mayor of Metropolis, the wife of the Junior Senator from Pennsyltucky and the wife of the United States Representative. Although technically these ladies would assume the rank of their husbands and thereby outrank the National Committeewoman, State Vice Chairman and several of the men seated, this is a "working" event of the Democratic Party as opposed to a purely social event. Consequently, it can be argued that Party officers deserve the courtesy of recognition for their contribution to the Party.

The other person eliminated is the County Chairman. Since this is a state sponsored event, his county does not necessarily deserve more prominence than any other. However you might debate whether the County Chairman or the Former Senator (whose seating is strictly courtesy) should be seated.

*If you were obliged to use "buffers" between the lecturn and the guests of honor the Mayor of Metropolis would be placed to the right of the lecturn and to the left of the Governor as "acting host" since this dinner is in his city. The Toastmaster would be placed to the left of the lecturn and to the right of the visiting Senator. The Toastmaster would then be handy to his working position.