

Auction – February Meeting, 2014

The idea has previously been used several years back. The event made for a fun meeting, a chance to make money for the association and the opportunity for members to get rid of some of their extra "stuff". This auction made almost \$1100.

In the past, the first year was extremely successful and well received. My understanding is that it was done the following year and then a third year in a row. The third year was not as good as members were out of donations; attendance was low as was money made. A future recommendation is that an auction not be done again until at least 2016 or later.

What worked well:

Three months out, an announcement of the event was made to the membership and each was asked each member to donate at least one item for the sale. To eliminate "junk", members were asked to only donate items they would buy themselves. Members were asked to email details to one of the committee member so she could keep a list of items that were to be given.

Coordination was made with Nick at Bethesda Senior Center to reserve the back part of the ballroom. He also ringed the room with tables and set up chairs in the middle of the room with a lectern for Dan to use in front of the chairs.

Members were asked in a later email to bring their donation for take-in to the meeting before the auction meeting. Volunteers set up tables in the back of the room, did take in, started a list of items received and bagged and/or boxed the donations. This allowed the committee a month to collect, price and sort all the items for the auction before auction night. No items were accepted the night of the auction.

Having the majority of the items pre-priced before auction night made set-up much easier.

"Paddles" were made by Maggie using paper plates and marked with numbers from 1 to 100.

Fifteen to twenty items were chosen for live auction (items that might bring higher prices as well as competition). All the other items were priced and put on the tables with a bid sheet that had the name of the item with a starting price and space for a name and raised bid to be entered. Bids had to be in increments of \$1 (no cents).

When the live auction started, table bidding was closed and sheets were collected by two of the committee members. Any table item that had not been bid on was auctioned off after the big items, prices typically starting at \$1.

Three people were needed for the pay table. Maggie, Margaret and Carol processed all the table item bids and grouped them by bidder name. The table was also marked with three alphabet divisions (A – xxx, etc.) for faster pay and pickup. Table items were picked up after payment.

Dan Smith was a terrific auctioneer! The auctioneer needed two spotters to help; one to help recognize a bidder, the other to track the highest bidder and give that info to the pay table.

What could have been done better/things to consider:

Drop-off points for those members who could not make the meeting the month before the auction.

Provide/bring calculators for the pay table workers or recruit two additional helpers to add figures.

Consider three helpers for the auctioneer with two to help spot bidders, one to write down the winner and give that info to the pay table.

There were glass yard totems and bee traps made for the auction which sold well. A suggestion was made to ask for more gardening items to be member-made to auction off such as troughs, stepping stones, bird houses, hypertufa.

Several of the committee members stored the donations at their home with many items at one home. A central storage area would be ideal if possible to pre-price everything – as it was, only the majority items stored at the one home were pre-priced.

The committee was mixed on whether February timing was good or move to March or April or the fall. March and April might be too busy for members with spring approaching and the numerous other gardening events during that time. Though early emails went out in November and December, members didn't seem focused on GCMGA due to the holidays having it in February. More emails, earlier in the fall would likely fix the issue of members remembering to bring items.

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*Committee members: Dan Smith; Mary Ann Maher; Jackie Kujawa; Sonia Friedus; Maggie Howze; Margaret Bergeron; Carol Hassell; Becky Wolary*