La Ligue Henri IV Banquet Review

(*Comments in Italics for discussion*)

Added in underlining:

April 20, 2019

Please feel free to add your comments to the event discussion items, or make your own list for our next meeting. The list includes comments from my table and others at the banquet. This list is generated for discussion and not meant as a personal criticism. We only had 758 people this year. Easter Conflict. Colby

1. Marriott Hôtel
   1. Positive:
      1. Bars opened on time. *Please comment on what you thought of the service?*
      2. Table Service at 42 was great.
      3. Early start (5:00 PM) worked out fine. No complaints.
      4. The Bar Closure (6:15-6:45) worked again. I had to close the bars in the lobby at 6:20. The employees are accustomed to saying: Yes.” It is hard for them to close the bars. We need to assist them next year. We were able to start at 6:35. It made the task of convincing people to come inside much better. Additionally, with the lights flashing and a staff member ringing chimes, it motivated people to come to dinner. Need bigger signs to tell bar closure time.
      5. We had the glass podium which is nicer. It worded great. We just placed all the gifts on the floor by the curtains.
      6. The presidential Suite # 3249 was nice. Beautiful day to be on the Balcony.
      7. The food at the presidential suite was not sufficient. We only had cheese and bread. Normally we have pate and deli plate. This must be improved.
      8. The shrimp appetizer were on the table for the opening. This was a good idea and they were good.
      9. They poured the wine for us. This took too long. *Next time just place the wine on the table so that we can start sooner.*
      10. The wine remained on the tables after the meal for people to enjoy.
      11. Meals were served in timely fashion.
      12. Staff was present and available during the event. Alan Gibson (over 13 years’ experience with our banquet) and Colby kept in touch with the event progress and really assisted with the timing of the meal delivery and when to bring out the ice sculptures. He was excellent to work with. In prior banquets, didn’t we have a parade of the staff with trays of desert following the sculptures? This looked more elegant.
      13. The shrimp, scallops and crab appetizer was a great improvement and well liked. I *One comment was scallops were bland* !
      14. The onion soup with the toasted bread in side was very good.
      15. The white fish was very good. It was moist and tasty.
      16. The filet was very good, too. It had a nice sauce and it was not overcooked: *General Feedback is steak was really good and cooked appropriately.*
      17. Vegetables didn’t hear a word on them. *Comment Please.*
      18. The salad. I did not eat any. *Comment Please*
      19. Sherbet was a nice touch and tasted good. One question-was there alcohol in it.
      20. Cheese nothing to report. Selection was wide enough and we had enough to eat. Add in Petit Basque cheese next year
      21. Vegetarian meals were available. *Comments please.*
      22. Deserts were good. *Comments please*
      23. Chocolates were good. Chocolate taken away before we could finish. *Please leave on table till we eat them next time.*
      24. The Ice Parade was a hit again. Removing it from the dance floor avoided interference with our event. People went to the lobby and took pictures there. This turned out to be a great idea and should be continued.
      25. We had about 880 people in 2018 and 750 in 2019. We normally have about 1,000. Could be spring break or Easter preparations.
      26. Marriott staff (Eilyn Gonzales, Kati Walny, Alan Gibson and Event Director Geoffrey Leonard, Keith, and Hotel Manager, David Wong were available during the evening.
      27. There was water at the back of the room all night long.
      28. The wine was on the table as long as you left something to show that you were just dancing.
      29. Didn’t hear that there was a shortage of fish, steak or veggie.  *Pascal Maunas at table 55 didn’t receive has steaks. His waiter said no more were ready. He complained an Eilyn sent his server looking for the steaks. He finally did receive his steaks. He was surprised to hear no steaks were available when table 80 near to him was still receiving steaks. Need comments on this.*
      30. Didn’t hear comments on wait staff. *Need comments on this.*
      31. Jean Claude said that wine delivery upstairs was adequate. The wine choices were good. Bob Ford picked up the remaining wine. We ordered too many cases of wine (40 cases of red and 25 cases of white). Total cases consumed was 27 (13 white and 14 red) or 324 bottles or wine or 0.42 bottles per participant. This means that we have 38 cases of wine to drink, sell or use for our next banquet.
      32. Elign Gonzales confirmed that Marriott Hotel Management agreed to remove the service fee that they charge to PSAV our AV Company. Thanks Kati and Eliyn. This was done again in 2019. Thanks Geoffery Leonard and David Wong
      33. The Ron Borelli Orchestra had green room salon 5 and they had a hot meal this year versus sandwiches. *Need comments on this.*
      34. OUR BAND (Ron Borelli) was very very happy with the hot meal provide to us 5 STARs, thank you La Ligue and Marriott
      35. Dance floor was large than normal (66 feet wide by 48 feet deep in 2018 and 42 feet by 42 feet in 2019). *Need Comments*
      36. Unless we hear some negative comments, it appears that the Marriott functioned very well this year.
   2. Negative:
      1. Unlike last year when the hotel was sold out, we paid Since the Marriott was $159 versus $299 per room this year. Easter is a slow time of the year. C*omments?*
      2. The Orchestra had water. Thanks
      3. The bars were moved into the Banquet Room. Thanks.
      4. *There was a problem with the Port Wine. More information needed from Jean Claude Mallein.*

1. Presentation Services Audio Visual (PSAV)
   1. Positive
      1. Tim Saxton involvement (Since 2002). Tim was in advance at our planning meeting. We reviewed the year to year pricing and PSAV provided us the equipment for a reasonable discounted price. We had some price increases due to use of upgraded equipment. We had the equipment fully operational and ready for practice around 3:30 to 4:00. Jonathan James of PSAV was very corporative. Additionally, PSAV was very agreeable to allow us to have Tim Saxton as our event leader. We thank PSAV for that great spirit of cooperation. Our banquet is Tim’s favorite program of the year and he is committed to make it work for us.
      2. Speaker/Public Address system worked well. We had less people and less crowd noise this year from the audience. *Comments*
      3. The staging of the equipment and film presentation were well done. The place looked perfect for a formal affaire. The elevated drummer platforms were nice. (THANK you From the Ron Borelli Orchestra for the elevated drum platform, we liked it) The two larger screens were nice.
   2. Negative
      1. A couple of cues were missed. American flag displayed when sing La Marseille was not correct. We need to hear Peter Gunn music as Bob Ford entered the banquet room. The Basque Dancers first song was incorrect but it was quickly changed. We are confused on the presentation order. I didn’t see the picture of Eddy Joseph’s family home in Arret, France
2. La Ligue:
   1. Positive
      1. The doors opened around 6:15 versus 6:00 just as planned. They closed at 6:30 and the performance started on time. 6:35 Thanks!
      2. Introducing the executive board on the stage was well received. Holding the applause till end of the introductions was good idea to move program along.
      3. Bob as MC was fantastic. His bunny rabbit idea was well received. He had his lines memorized. He easily accepted program and agenda changes. It was having fun it was obvious to us in the audience. His additions of humor were well received.
      4. Although J P Barthe was great on La Marseilles. He remains a hit. Nice job on the French National Anthem. Jean Paul arranged to have a picture of Notre Dame burning in Paris while he was singing. This was very poignant. Beautiful. Thanks JP.
      5. Danielle Nobel has a good voice and did a Beautiful job on the National Anthem, which was sung last as per protocol.
      6. Bob honored Gerard Burnett as a member that we lost and Jean Paul Barthe had some pictures of him displayed on the screen. It was very touching. *Some people think that this should be continued with a reading of all the past members that we lost the previous year. Some other French clubs do recognized the recently departed members.*
      7. The Pere Siffert and Pere Gonzales were not able to attend our banquet which we held on Holy Saturday. Michel Duport stepped in and sang the blessing for us. He did a nice job.
      8. Eddy Joseph’s speech was well prepared and the correct timing length. He spoke of the 4 past presidents who’s family roots lead them back to a small farm house in Arret, France. Eddy’s speech was mostly English with some French for effect. It was well done.
      9. The presentation of the Legion of Honor plaque to Charles Segalas by Eddy Joseph was completely unexpected by Charles. He was very pleased to be recognized. Great selection another fine La Ligue memory was made last night.
      10. Bob Ford’s speech thanked us all for helping him make a successful year as president.
      11. Jean Moulia’s presentation of the presidential plaque to Bob Ford for his service as president of La Ligue for 2018 went very well.
      12. The Consul speech was in English. She spoke about the recent tragedy of the burning of Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. She expressed hope for the future. She ended her speech in French when she encouraged the French citizens to vote in the upcoming election. The audience seemed to listen to the entire speech. Her speech was the correct length.
      13. Jean Lacoste’s video presentation of Pau and the surrounding areas was very professionally done and appreciated by the group. His speech was directed to us and our link to the old country. It was the correct length and good. Later Jean assisted in singing La Montagne Pyrenees. Thanks Jean.
      14. Having the King Henri and the World Cup sculptures were good selections. People were surprised to see the French recognition for winning the World Cup. Eddy Joseph came on stage later during the evening wearing a blue jersey of the World Champion team. Allez les Bleus!!
      15. Liz Barthe was at Colby’s table and provided good advice and guidance as usual.
      16. Jean Paul Barthe added the attention grabbing intros, which were not used because Bob Ford was able to obtain the attention of the crowd from the podium. This has never happened before.
      17. Stage looked good.
      18. The singing of Montagnes Pyrenees was well done. A great tradition to our event. It was nice to have JB Mousitrats and Jean Paul Barthe lead us in the singing.
      19. Table seating was open again this year and we could walk around easily.
      20. The presentation of gifts went well. The singers had smiles of recognition too. *We could not find Duo Gadjo but we gave them a bouquet and wine a little later in the evening.*
      21. Marcel was there taking pictures on the dance floor, of the band, of the dancers, of the workers, of the people at the table. Great job
      22. The President Suite invitations to Ron Borelli, Tim Saxton, Eilyn Gonzalez, Kati Walny, Aaron Duport and Martin Ash continues to be a good idea. They felt like team members.
      23. Joanne and Jacques did good job on the tickets in advance of our table seating meeting at Jeff Libarle’s Chicken Coop. It was a fun event getting together and organizing the tables. Marc cooked breakfast and we enjoyed it. We had about 750 tickets sold. Louis Lucq prepared the digital version of the seating chart. Steve Pehargou was great on his written version of the ticket seating locations. This was perfect for us and the Marriott seating committee. We had a good turnout by our past directors and new directors. The job was completed by 11:30. It was a Fun and productive day.
      24. Joanne and Paul did a good job at the reception table.
      25. Speedway Digital provided great large prints of Henri IV. *Someone picked them up-Bob Ford?*
      26. All directors wore tuxes. They looked great on the stage. Bob called them to the stage individually and that worked great.
      27. We started on time (6:35). After opening remarks, we were ready for Soup at 6:49. Dinner main course was served at 7:30 which was same as last year. People had their Salad at 8:05. They ate the salad a little slowly; so, we delayed the ice parade until around (7:45 in 2018). We sang Les Montagnes Pyrenees at 21:14. MC started and remained close to the schedule. We were dancing by 9:20.
      28. JP Barthe spent much time working on our photos for this year’s program. They look great. Thanks.
      29. Having the Basque Dancers on the dance floor when we were singing Les Montagnes Pyrenees was great. Take a look at that picture. Our singing went well. We had good leadership with Jean Paul Barthe and Jean Lacoste.
      30. The Basque Dancers did a fine job, in spite of us starting with the wrong music. We had Danielle Nobel sing some songs while they changed into their Bernais costume. Later that evening, they changed clothes and danced with us during the evening. It was nice to have young dancers on the dance floor. *Maybe less songs and dancing time*
   2. Negative:
      1. People asked for our La Ligue program that we usually have on the table. Gerard Burnett is missed. People do notice the small stuff.
      2. Presidential suite food was not presidential. It was not impressive.
      3. We had some comments on the reading versus memorizing the speech.
      4. Tables 83 (Jean Lacues) and 60 (Louis Lucq) had their locations switched for some unknown reason. It placed table 83 closer to the dance floor.
      5. Marriott bar drinks are expensive
      6. Colby forgot to bring his table seating chart and could not find all the directors to give them a warning to be prepared to come to the podium (Bob did call them up-thanks Bob)
      7. Liz Barthe brought copies of Les Montagnes Pyrenees, but Colby forgot to distribute them.
      8. We overfilled the program this year. John Lacoste, Basque Dancers, Duo Gadjo, Danielle Nobel. *People suggested have the dancer dance during dinner. We need less singing and dancing in the program if we want to be dancing earlier. In 2018 we were dancing by 8:54 and in 2019 we were dancing by 9:20.*

1. Ron Borelli
   1. Positive
      1. Ron works with the singers prior to the event makes sure everything will flow smoothly. He loves our music and we have a great working relationship with him.
      2. Ron Borelli present on the piano with Duo Gadjo which was a hit. Nice songs played at the perfect volume. He is so easy to work with. When we needed to stretch the time he played on. When we needed to cut the time, he quickly ended the music. So easy.
      3. Ron Borelli band was on point. He has his team of All Stars including the second lady drummer and lady saxophone player. The drums were on elevated stands which was impressive and adds to the sound transmission. They played the walzes early on as planned. They played some Eddy Joe French songs by Johnny Hallyday, which were good. Ron called up Martin Ash to sing a couple Johnny Cash and Elvis Presely songs, which Martin loved doing and it showed. The audience danced and liked the performance. Ron Borelli continued to play some fine rock and roll including the chicken dance. Then Ron called up Aaron Duport (10:09). Aaron is a “Rocker” and he entertained us very well. He walked out in the audience singing. He was sweating up a storm. He loved doing the show and wants to come back. Ron took a break as required by union contract and boom-it was over. The dance crew was reduced to 20 people when he returned.

* 1. Negative
     1. We had good music to the end. Only Jean Moulia and Francoise plus the Palu’s (4 Couples) remained dancing until 11:40.

1. Future Considerations
   1. Following input from Louis Lucq’s friend Russ Robinson, we may want to list some of this handicap access information in a future mailer. Many people may prefer the elevator.
      1. Take any elevator down to level B2
      2. Follow signs to Yerba Buena Ballroom via Mission Tunnel
      3. At escalator look to left for second elevator. Take to level B3
      4. Proceed pass the escalator and find the Yerba Buena Ballroom on your right

NEXT BANQUET DATE SCHEDULED FOR: APRIL 4, 2020 AND EASTER IS APRIL 12, 2020

TENTATIVE FUTURE DATES ARE: APRIL 24, 2021 AND APRIL 23, 2022