

Briggs-Salmond Family Reunion

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE for Host

This document is provided for the hosts of our annual family reunion, held Memorial Day weekend each year. It is intended for guidance and assistance with the planning tasks that are inherent in hosting our reunion. It is the heartfelt intention that the hosts not be overwhelmed with this effort and are encouraged to reach out at any time with questions and concerns, or if assistance is needed. We all stand together to support the continuance of having these reunions to inspire family unity, love and relationships as originally intended by our elders that started this beautiful and important tradition.

We fully expect that as this document is put into practice, recommendations and suggestions will come to mind. Please be encouraged to contact someone on the planning committee so that your ideas can be discussed and this procedure improved and updated as required.

It will be mentioned repeatedly throughout this document because it is truly heartfelt... If at anytime you have questions or need help, please feel welcome to reach out to someone on the planning committee. We are a family and these reunions are a shared responsibility among every family member. We love and care for one another and in no way want anyone to feel stressed or burdened in hosting a reunion. We are here to help...

- I. **Budget for the reunion** – Routinely, the family reunion is planned as an event that pays for itself. Which means, the amount of money being required for each person attending (what we call the reunion registration fee), should cover the costs for anything that the hosts intend to provide at no extra cost to the attendees at the time of the activity. That said, there is some money available to the hosts up front to pay for costs that require a down payment at the time of signing the contract with the vendors for some of the activities and meals being provided. This is a critical part of the planning process in keeping detailed records of costs and keeping receipts for all reimbursable costs. If are required to get prior approval from the finance committee for any specific costs that you either need down payment money or expect money to be paid from the reunion treasury, whether in advance or at the time of delivery for the goods or services. Because the reunion is supposed to be self-funded, it is imperative to begin planning far in advance so that you can calculate how much to charge for the reunion fee for each person that plans to attend. This part of the process requires regular and clear communication with the finance committee and auditable record keeping. If you are unsure of how that should be done, please speak with someone on the finance committee up front before you begin planning. They can assist you what is required for record keeping. Before you sign ANY contracts for goods or services, please review it with the finance committee for their review and input. Once **you** sign a contract, **you** personally are **legally** responsible for those costs and terms and conditions. This is why it is highly recommended that you not make these decisions alone without

someone on the finance committee to review, discuss and provide feedback on it before making the commitment. It is in the hosts best interest to follow this guideline to ensure financial accountability from the reunion treasury.

- II. Deciding on a hotel** – This is a major part of planning the reunion and can be started as early as a year ahead of time. Some hotels get booked for holidays far in advance. If you have a special hotel in mind, you may want to contact them as soon as you have been scheduled for a specific reunion year. Please consider the following in considering various hotels:
- a. Centrally located to most activities that you are planning
 - b. Near interstate and preferably near an airport (if possible)
 - c. It's easiest to hotel shop online. If you are not familiar with using the internet, please ask someone on the finance committee to suggest someone in the family that can help you.
 - i. Prefer hotels that have 2-room suites for all guest rooms. This makes it economical for those who have children or for room sharing
 - ii. Prefer hotels that have complimentary breakfast (many do now days)
 - iii. Meeting rooms
 - iv. Airport shuttle service (a nice to have, not required)
 - v. Family friendly amenities spacious lobby/public areas, swimming pool, exercise rooms, free internet
 - d. Begin contacting potential hotels and have telephone or email interviews to find out the following information:
 - i. Availability for the Memorial Day weekend for approximately 20 or more guest rooms for starters. Recommend checking with last year's host to see what they did and how it worked out to give you a bit of a gauge. Also bear in mind your location and if you perceive low or high attendance considering where the bulk of the family is geographically located.
 - ii. Adequate meeting rooms (space) to accommodate our family traffic for multi-purpose use that may be used to use throughout the weekend. Some have been able to negotiate having this space free of charge which is best of course! But sometimes there has been a discounted rate at least. Again, if you're not comfortable negotiating, please let us know and someone can assist you.
 - a. Friday night meet and greet. This can held in the hotel's lobby or other public areas (if allowed), please confirm with the hotel if this is okay or not). Some hotels offer a complimentary or discounted Happy Hour drinks and snacks in their lobby/lounge area. When that is not offered, some hosts have provided some refreshments in our meeting room/space. That is your choice carefully bearing in mind your budget. I think most of us have attended often enough to be prepared to fend for ourselves aside from Saturday picnic and Sunday dinner, so it's nice to have a little something but not required. There have been times that those present chipped in and got pizza or other snacks.

- b. Having a meeting room is extremely helpful as a central meeting place for registration, welcome packet/itinerary pickup, tee shirt sales and pickup, family tree display, impromptu or late evening gatherings to fellowship and have refreshments.
 - c. Meeting room(s) for Sunday church service/dinner/family meeting. Will need request set up for rows of chairs, a podium, microphone and pitchers of water. If they want to assess an extra charge, you may want to see if you can get some volunteers to do the chair and water set up. But you'd still need their podium and microphone. Unless you are planning to have any or all of these events somewhere outside of the hotel. Please be mindful when planning meal catering to have adequate vegetarian/vegan options for those who do not eat red meat, poultry or seafood (including fish).
- iii. It is best **NOT** to sign a contract with a hotel until you have had an opportunity to gather quotes from 2 or 3 hotels, to compare what is offered as their best guest room group rate, meeting room rates and catering rates. Another factor in making this decision should be location of the hotel and amenities. Don't be afraid to negotiate pricing or terms. Please **feel free** to reach out to the family for assistance in this part of the planning process if you have questions, concerns or if you are unfamiliar with negotiating a contract. We are willing to help and will readily assist you. Everyone that hosted a reunion had a first time of doing so and it can be a little unnerving the first time around, so please feel welcomed to call for help if you need it.

III. Activities

- a. Friday night meet & greet – Held on the hotel premises, so that as family members arrive, we can gather and fellowship.
 - i. Some hosts prepare a 'guest packet/bag' for each attending family unit. It should include an itinerary, with details (what/where/when and if extra costs are required) for all planned events for the weekend. Directions to activities and area points of interest, restaurants, shopping, banks, gas stations, etc. Perhaps small inexpensive welcome gifts/trinkets.
 - ii. Light refreshments at a meeting room or area within the hotel. This can be your choice according to your budget. Some hotels have complimentary 'Happy Hour' snacks and beverages, if they do, we recommend that you take advantage of that for your refreshments. If they don't offer that, you may want to use the meeting spaces that you have contracted for the weekend. range from trays of cold cuts, veggie trays, fruit trays and beverages to
- b. Saturday
 - i. Breakfast – Hopefully the hotel that you have chosen offers a full complimentary breakfast. If not, please reconsider your hotel choice for one that offers it. This is an attempt to keep costs down for each family unit, especially those with dependent children. It's also a convenience and time saver not to have to drive somewhere and be back for other planned activities

of the day. If for overwhelming reasons you have decided on a hotel that doesn't offer complimentary breakfast, please be sure to identify nearby restaurants to choose from that have a relative good quality and are cost effective/inexpensive.

- ii. Family picnic/barbeque – This is one of the main events of the weekend and requires a considerable amount of planning well in advance. Careful consideration of your menu to be appropriate for the venue. Menu selections should include vegetarian/vegan selections of a variety commensurate with the main menu and what each attendee is paying for their reunion fee. An example would be providing a salad, that is not commensurate for a \$35/per plate charge that is rolled into the reunion fee. Selecting a caterer that has can provide references. Please do contact the references and ask specifically about the various aspects of the service they received such as food quality and presentation, portions provided, timeliness, professionalism, cleanliness of workers, set up, clean up. Ensure that eating utensils, plates, beverages are included/not included in your contract (there might be a considerable cost savings to purchase those items vs what they might charge). Please consider planning games and activities for the picnic with regard to the various age groups.
 - iii. Saturday evening – games in meeting room(s). Other activities as you plan, perhaps bowling, live music, etc. Try to have a list of activities nearby for all to choose from. List these on the itinerary.
- c. Sunday
- i. Breakfast – same as Saturday
 - ii. Church Service –Confirmed the engagement (in writing) with a Christian minister, as the Lord had laid upon your heart to extend the invitation to. (we have many within the family)
 - iii. Family Dinner – May be held within the hotel or at an outside restaurant, church or meeting hall. Some hotels do not allow outside catering to come in when they offer catering, so please bear that in mind. Again observe the menu planning regarding menu choices for special diets (vegetarian/vegan, etc.), buffet or plated (plated is usually more expensive, but again is your budgeting/planning choice).
 - iv. Family Meeting – If within the hotel, we usually contract the room from dinner to be long enough to include the meeting. If dinner is outside the hotel, a meeting space will need to be planned accordingly. Preferably with a podium and microphone.
 - v. Evening Activities – planning procedure same as Saturday nights activities.
- d. Monday
- i. Breakfast – same as Saturday
 - ii. Farewells and hotel check out
 - iii. Possible activities for anyone that will remain. This is not required, but it's nice to ask perhaps during the family meeting if anyone is staying around on Monday and maybe those folks would like to do something together... (just a suggestion)

IV. Timelines for Milestones and Notifications

- a. The basic reunion details and fee per person should be communicated to the family by October 1st (prior year). Exclusions in that initial notification would be: Activities that are self pay at the event. Activities that are not fully scheduled or planned yet.
- b. Hotel – Contracted one year to 9 months in advance (or sooner)
- c. Picnic/Barbeque location – Contracted one year to 9 months in advance (or sooner, sometimes a deposit is required)
- d. All Catering - Contracted one year to 9 months in advance (deposit usually required with balance due at a specified date or at the event. This must be detailed specifically in the contract including the costs.)
- e. Minister for Sunday church service – Agreement accepted one year to 9 months in advance. Be sure to address honorarium (or lack thereof when making the agreement). Gain approval from finance committee prior to agreeing if an honorarium is expected/requested.
- f. Activities – Never too soon to begin this stage of planning... you can begin to send out requests for volunteers to assist with activity planning at any time. Group tours are usually a considerable cost. With the major plans completed 9 months prior to reunion, there's plenty of time to research and plan activities. If you want to cover the cost in the reunion fee and will need a deposit, please consult with someone on the finance committee before contracting. Tours can be self-pay activities, but adequate notification is needed to give everyone proper notice to budget for themselves. Please ensure that there are adequate activities planned for all age groups. Solicit assistance for planning these. We have a wide array of gifts and talents in our families. This is a good place to get involvement from our youth and young adults (and those not normally involved). Performances of our gifted family members. Let's get our elders involved. For example we can have story telling by our elders to pass along stories of our family that would help to give our younger generations a sense of where they come from and who we are as a family. Creativity encouraged! 😊
- g. Notifications – As soon as you have your hotel contracted, it's best to send and introductory message out to the family with your greeting as this year's host, your contact information, the hotel information, requesting feedback for any special needs that anyone may have that need to be considered for hotel rooms, diet and activities. email address changes, street mail addresses, phone numbers and anything else pertinent. Email and our family Facebook page have been used as the primary means of communication with the request for every family member to ensure asking other family members that they are in contact with if they have been receiving the emailed information. Please be sure to confirm all email and contact information during registration at Friday nite meet & greet or when appropriate during the weekend. The current email list can be obtained by the prior year reunion host.
 - i. **The hotel must be contracted (this includes contract signed with all terms and conditions detailed for what the hotel is providing, all costs and notification deadlines). Ensure that you set reminders to yourself to contact your vendors to observe your contractual obligations and**

deadlines. Ensure that you give adequate notification to the finance committee when monies are due for your vendors.

- ii. **Prepare the registration form (see attached example) to include the** Hotel name, address and phone number of whom to contact for reservations. Also what is the group name our room block is under.
- iii. There should be periodic notifications as deadlines approach for the cutoff to reserve rooms at the group rate, reunion registration fees, golf fees or any other time sensitive activities. Make a schedule for yourself for when all of your notifications should be sent out. It's a good idea to set reminders on your email Calendar or cell phone calendar.
- iv. Tee Shirts – Design your reunion tee shirt as you choose. Again, please observe the cost per shirt when planning the color and design so that the tee shirts are affordable. Resist the temptation to grossly over order. Set appropriate response deadlines for tee shirt orders so that you can order as closely as possible to the orders that you have received.

In closing... allow the planning of the reunion to be a labor of love... Planning well in advance will allow the creative process to flourish and will remove the stress so that you can ENJOY IT, having adequate time to mitigate unforeseen circumstances.

Communicate, communicate, communicate... with your vendors, team members that are assisting you, finance committee, planning committee and other family members. Remember that we all are with you, here to assist, support and encourage you. We are a family connected by blood, love and God... Our goal is to gather together to have good times and deepen and extend our family ties.