



New Deal Cafe General Manager's Report June 2011

Overall Summary

This is my first report as general manager. The last 8 weeks have been very busy with the major project of the air conditioning installation and a significant number of special events. This report will be prepared for each month's board meeting, and in addition, there will be an informal General Manager Report sent to the Board each week on Thursday summarizing current happenings and issues.

Financial Summary

Beginning next month, this report will include a financial summary of each month, including year-to-date information. At this point, I am managing the checkbook and the bank accounts, paying the bills and taxes, doing payroll, and handling administrative tasks. I have been working closely with the treasurer during the transition, and assisted in the preparation of the first quarter financial report. I researched Quickbooks alternatives and sources, and ultimately purchased it from Amazon.com for \$133. I plan to focus on setting up the structure and inputting financial data during the next month.

Avg Gross Income Per Night for May: \$365

Busiest Night: Friday, May 13 Underscore Orkestra \$941

Projects and Events

Air Conditioning Installation

The air conditioning installation was the biggest project to tackle in the cafe for some years. After many hours of research, talking to many contractors and specialists, we contracted with Brown's Refrigeration to install a Mitsubishi 4-ton multi-split heat pump with 2 ceiling-recessed cassettes. Rob Baluch did the electrical work for us on a volunteer basis, and we are compensating him with co-op credit. After 2 days of installation, another 2 days of electrical

investigation and sealing a leak, the unit seems to be performing beautifully, and the customers are happy and cool. I've attached a summary of the air conditioning project costs.

“The Wild Vine” Book-Signing/Wine-Tasting Party

With a proposal from Leeann Irwin, the cafe and FONDCA presented a Book-Signing and Wine-Tasting featuring Todd Kliman, food and wine editor of the Washingtonian, and author of “The Wild Vine”. The event was quite time-consuming – determining how and where to order wine, and in what quantity, working through Leeann initially on coordination with Todd, convincing the co-op to sell the wines and books, trying for increased publicity, preparing handouts for the wine-tasting, determining how to actually set-up and carry-through with Todd's ideas. In the end, over 40 people attended (which was actually our projection), and it was wildly successful from Todd's viewpoint. Karim's catering was perfect, and paid for by FONDCA, as were the ads and 3 bottles of each wine for tasting. Todd sold all of the books he had, including spare hardbacks in his car, and left the cafe very, very happy.

Financially, the co-op ended the day having spent \$98 more for wine than we made in sales. However, several customers have become real fans of the Norton, and we have since broken even on costs, with more wine still to sell. Even if we hadn't broken even, I think this event was a perfect fit for the cafe, and the boost from Todd's pleasure with its success (a local guy from Greenbelt and Hyattsville) is priceless.

Stage Lights Installation

Through a significant specially-marked donation to FONDCA, the cafe installed new stage lights just 2 days ago. Amethyst Dwyer led the project, and was able to use the lighting design services of a friend from out-of-town, Mark Zucker. Our resident volunteer electrician, Rob Baluch, did the significant electrical work required, and volunteer Karl Gary was a big help (standing 6'4”) with attaching the electrical boxes and the lights themselves to the ceiling. Dorian Winterfeld was on site the entire time to support installation, and was patient in figuring out how to finally make the lights and the controller work together. This was a true team effort from all seven of us, working together on placement and details of installation, and the lights look fantastic shining on the stage. For now, they just turn on and off, and can dim, but with further exploration by light-controller expert Dorian, we envision the days of disco lighting in the not-so-distant future!

The lights were first used Saturday night, and we are very pleased with the new, professional look.

Concerts

Arranged for and set-up the stage, chairs and picnic tables, posted fliers, prepared and set out the Cafe Posterboard, greeted and helped the musicians, sometimes performing introductions, for the following three special concerts:

Eileen Peterson Youth Music Series:

Robert Goddard Jazz Band and Robert Goddard Electric Strings

Greenbelt Middle School Jazz Band and Northwestern Jazz Band

Mini-Jazz Concert over Greenbelt Day Weekend: Not 2 Cool Jazz Trio

Cafe Spiff-Up

A number of minor tasks were undertaken this month to improve the overall appearance of the cafe: bar chair rail attached, back room bar and wall paint touch-up, old and excess tape and signage off all doors and windows, t-shirt display folded and sized, electrical outlets covered and secured, excess lighting and cords removed from ceiling.

Bar Operations

We seem to have ironed out our issues with beer pressurization and carbonation (no more foamy beer!) The key to satisfactory performance seems to be a combination of careful adjustment of the CO2 pressure and making sure the beer is at the proper temperature before dispensing it. The beer lines were finally cleaned, after repeated calls, and we are doing a better job at keeping the bar area clean.

The bar manager, Amethyst Dwyer, continues to do an outstanding job, as do our regular volunteers. John Cooper, our Tuesday night volunteer bartender, decided to take a break after a year or so of helping, so Sonja has picked up an extra night on Tuesday, in addition to her now-regular Sundays and Wednesdays. Connie remains a steady Friday night volunteer. We are planning to recruit more volunteers as soon as possible.

Restaurant Contract

Met with Karim periodically regarding special events, ordering, back room policy, air conditioning installation... Plan expanded communication, including use of large shared calendar to be located in the office.

FONDCA

Coordinated the above concerts, “The Wild Vine” event, and the Green Man Show art hanging and reception. Helped arrange two CDC meetings, hosted by the New Deal Cafe. Attended the quarterly FONDCA meeting.

Meetings

Board Meetings = 5

Board/Restaurant Manager Meetings = 2

Committee Meetings = 14+

Bar Manager Meetings = 2

FONDCA Quarterly Meeting = 1

RCMA Meeting = 1

Air Conditioning Meetings = 2

“The Wild Vine” Meetings = 2

Stage Lighting Meetings = 2

Upcoming Projects & Activities

Summer is traditionally a slower season (spring being the busiest one), so this will actually be a good time to tackle getting the books in order. Research and installation of a credit card machine is next on the priority list for major projects. Ongoing projects include continued work on air conditioning repair and implementation, improvement of coordination/scheduling with KMK, the Board and all committees, ongoing research into register reporting, updating forms, possible new signage for the back room, art hangings and receptions, etc. The next special event will be the Labor Day Festival September 2-5, followed by the Blues Festival on September 17.

Note: I appreciate the Board's patience as I settle into this position, and hope that each of you feels free to come to me with any questions or concerns.

Terri Rutledge