

Picture it... Los Angeles Athletic Club, April 6, 2013, 7:15am. A groggy Soroptimist, dressed for physical labor, exits the elevator onto the third floor to see how well the eating and reception rooms have recovered from the BIG wedding party given there the night before.

Our determined Soroptimist discovers a staff of six LAAC staff working to reconstruct the dining area to accommodate the close to 200 guests that SILA expects to arrive at 11AM. Their next target will be to set up the silent auction tables in the reception area.

It is hard to overlook the ample evidence of human use of the room the night before. Wild patterns of fingerprints adorned the mirrors in the silent auction area. The surfaces of the brass hand rails were an odd combination of bumpy and sticky. The bathroom paper supply was low. The reception table from the night before showed signs of use and maybe some misuse.

But the club staff is more than happy to make these markers of the night before... go away. They are involved, working to set up the rooms as described in our room set-up plans and to welcome the "nice ladies" back to the club.

The still groggy Soroptimist gets back on the elevator and descends to floor two where a continental breakfast awaits. Just after 8:00 am our mission worker is at the club alley loading dock along with members of the Blaylock, Washington and Dukes families. All worked diligently to off load and up load the two dozen plus silent auction items from the Blaylock SUV to the third floor club reception area.

The auction tables were ready for approval by DeAnna Blaylock who had provided the measurements from which the number of linear feet of table tops needed was calculated. Once the auction item transfer from the alley to the third floor reception room was accomplished, the familiar process of placing the silent auction items in number order on the floor beside the tables began. Then auction items were moved to the tables in ascending number order and the spaces were allocated to allow about 36 inches for each item. Decorative mats and adornments were placed and distributed on the tables. The items were inspected over and over again until just the right balance of space and adornment had been accomplished. Other members had joined the effort as they arrived. All were generous with their work and attention to detail. In the meantime the reception crew and the table decoration crew, video crew, entertainment crew and finance crew had begun their set-up.

By 10:30am the now almost exhausted Soroptimist and DeAnna Blaylock were able to escape to a sleeping room to change out of their physical labor duds, splash on some cold water, get a drink of water, have a few laughs, stuff their "stuff" into their duffle bags, change into their glam outfits and scurry back to the silent auction room.

Just before 11am the club group photo was taken and then the members were off to their hostess duties. As guests had begun to arrive at a little after 10am, several were well acquainted with the chamber music, restaurant, gourmet food and drink, artworks, jewelry, libation, home goods, travel and happy cooking time items in the auction.

Before we knew it, the riser was up, the salads were on the table, the video was set up, the honorees had arrived, the musical entertainer was well into his work (mesmerized by his appointed member escort), and the silent auction was coming to a sudden end! As usual the piano was in the wrong place for one of the users, but again the club came through and moved the instrument without throwing the tuning to ruin.

In less than four hours after we had met in the alley, we were getting ready to have lunch, all except DeAnna and her wrap up crew who were now peeling the auction items off the tables and getting the respective bills to, and the payments from, the right "winners" in the dining room.

What had taken MONTHS to plan was almost over!

By 2pm (!) the event was in closure mode. We had done it again and in record time. The food was WONDERFUL. The dessert was a glory. The company was great. The program got raves from the guests, and we made some money for our most worthy projects.

Just another day in the life of a once early morning groggy Soroptimist who was now feeling the impact of every auction item moved out of the SUV, onto the dolly, off of the dolly, onto the floor and up to the table, and to another spot on the table. Good fun.

JM