



Holly Society of America, Inc.

Annual Meeting Guide

INTRODUCTION

This manual is intended to provide information for those responsible for the Annual Meeting of the Holly Society of America. It should not be regarded as imperative, but rather as an indication of those things that should be considered and when. This is an evolving resource to be improved by each person who uses it.

The preferred situation is for a chapter to accept responsibility for a meeting. The Chapter President would then be responsible for the organization of the meeting. The chapter might choose to have a meeting theme if they wish and incorporate that as appropriate.

We have drawn on the experiences of past meeting planners as well as the manual of the American Association of Botanical Gardens and Arboreta, Inc. Our thanks to that organization.

Cliff and Betty Dickinson

ANNUAL MEETING CHRONOLOGICAL CHECKLIST OF TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The HSA Executive Vice-President is responsible for coordination of the Annual Meeting. The Annual Meeting Organizers, Treasurer, Secretary and Computer Specialist work closely with the Executive Vice-President to ensure all deadlines on the checklist are met in a timely manner. HSA President and members of the Board are to be kept informed of all aspects of the Annual Meeting preparation.

| Time Before | Task |
|--|---|
| 5 years | Board of trustees decides upon meeting site |
| 4 years | Executive vice-president arranges for chapters or individuals to help with meeting arrangements as annual meeting organizers |
| 3 years + | AM organizer begins the search for meeting facilities and selects meeting dates |
| 3 years + and then at least biannually | AM organizer reviews meeting plans with executive vice-president Executive vice-president reports meeting status to the board at each board meeting |
| 2 years | Treasurer works with facility contact to finalize and sign meeting contract (please note that <i>ONLY</i> the treasurer is authorized to sign contracts) AM organizer begins to solicit speakers and arrange tour stops |
| 1 year before | Board at annual meeting determines AM speaker gratuities for upcoming year Publicity committee and AM organizer begin promoting next year's meeting at current annual meeting and chapter meetings; and in HSA web site, journal, other web sites and magazines |
| 1 year to 9 months | AM organizer finalizes: Tour details Welcome dinner host, speakers, and activities Scientific program moderator and speakers Decorations committee chairperson and tasks Treasurer obtains and signs tour bus contracts |
| 1 year to 6 months | AM organizer and public relations committee begin meeting promotion at chapter meetings and outside HSA in trade magazines and gardening web sites |

| Time Before | Task |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| | AM organizer arranges hotel meal menus and tour lunch Treasurer , where necessary, obtains and signs meal contracts (please note that <i>ONLY</i> the treasurer is authorized to sign contracts) |
| January 1, year of meeting | AM organizer sends note publicizing meeting to editor for inclusion in the first <i>Holly Letter</i> of that year |
| March 31 - DROP DEAD DATE | All information and decisions needed to establish meeting fees should be complete. Speakers should be confirmed, food arrangements and menus completed, buses contracted, tours established, optional Sunday tour list written up, etc. Executive vice-president and AM organizer must send all information necessary to do the AM budget to treasurer (or designated assistant). This information <i>must</i> include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percent gratuity or service charge and percent tax amounts charged by hotel List price and unit cost (list price plus tax and gratuity or service charge) of hotel meals, beverages served during breaks, open bar setups, audio visual equipment, etc. List price and unit cost of tour buses List price and unit cost of box lunches Entrance fees Estimated decoration or other supply costs Any reimbursable expenses incurred to date (fax/ phone charges, postage, printing, etc.) |
| April 15 | Treasurer , or designated assistant, sends completed meeting budget to president, executive vice-president, and secretary for review and approval |
| May 1, year of meeting | AM organizer and/or executive vice-president sends computer specialist the following information necessary to prepare the meeting announcement <i>Holly Letter</i> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting schedule including times, description of activities, locations/room names Information on welcome address including speaker's name, title, and address along with the title of his/her presentation Tour schedule Program schedule including the name, title, and address of each speaker along with the title of his/her talk |

| Time Before | Task |
|-----------------------------|--|
| | List and description of optional Sunday tours Date of hotel registration deadline Directions on how to get to hotel including several copies of hotel brochure Time hotel restaurant opens for breakfast Mailing inserts, if any are to be sent out with meeting announcement |
| No later than June 9 | Computer specialist mails completed AM announcement <i>Holly Letter</i> to the secretary |
| Interim Board Meeting | Board must approve: Slate of nominated officers and trustees Any bylaws amendments that are to be included on the ballot |
| No later than July 1 | AM organizer sends article promoting meeting to editor for inclusion in third <i>Holly Letter</i> of that year AM organizer sends secretary : List of speakers' names, addresses, work and home phone numbers, and E-mail addresses An agenda of which speaker will be speaking on which day and at what time Secretary Mails AM announcement <i>Holly Letter</i> to HSA members (requires approximately 3 weeks for delivery by bulk mail) E-mails <i>Holly Letter</i> to overseas members Mails confirmation letters and <i>Holly Letter</i> to speakers |
| 3 months before the meeting | Chairman of the Publicity Committee submits meeting announcement to <i>American Nurseryman</i> for publication. |
| 1 month before the meeting | AM organizer makes arrangements for 2 people to assist the Secretary in manning the registration and sales tables and for tour bus captains Hotel and early bird registration deadlines Secretary sends registrant totals to executive committee Treasurer modifies bus reservations if necessary |
| 1 month before the meeting | Secretary Mails annual board meeting packet to board members E-mail speaker thank-you letters to the president |

| Time Before | Task |
|-----------------------|---|
| 1 week before meeting | Secretary sends meeting registrant totals to treasurer who informs hotel and tour lunch providers of final meal counts (Secretary has a 72 hour deadline to adjust meal counts) |
| 1 month after | Secretary, treasurer and AM organizer each send meeting summary reports to Executive Vice-President |

MEETING CONSIDERATIONS

for

ANNUAL MEETING ORGANIZERS

Familiarize Yourself with Previous Meetings

With the assistance of the executive vice-president, secretary, and computer specialist, make note of tours and speakers featured at previous meetings held in your general area. Then make arrangements for a completely different tour agenda and slate of speakers.

If possible, make arrangements to visit a private garden while on tour. This is a proven favorite among our meeting participants.

Date of Meeting

This should be set with the executive vice-president's approval. Some issues to consider are:

Should be around end of October but not include Halloween

Hotel rates (some drop significantly at the end of October)

Holly berry development for sprig competition and local garden interest

Local seasonal weather

Convention Bureaus

Some cities and tourist areas have a convention bureau that will gladly provide you with a booklet containing information on all the hotels in your area and their facilities. They may circulate your needs to their members who will get in touch with you, thus sparing your time and effort.

Hotels

Try to choose a hotel that has potential for nearby eating places for the "dinner and evening on your own.

Basic room requirements are based on 125 lodging nights split across Wednesday through Saturday nights and include:

Approximately 2 lodging rooms for Wednesday night

Approximately 35 lodging rooms for Thursday through Saturday nights

Open area for Registration Table setup

Conference room for board meeting Thursday

Holly sprig room for Thursday noon through Saturday night

Storage area for auction/trial plants Wednesday afternoon through Holly Banquet

Meeting room for seminars, annual business meeting, auction

Banquet room for Thursday night Welcome Dinner and Saturday night Holly

Banquet

Hotels may allow free use of meeting rooms if we rent enough rooms and include food and beverage orders. They often list a cost per meeting room which is compensated for by renting a specified number of rooms.

HSA may need to guarantee a number of rooms and be responsible for a percentage of those. Work with the secretary and treasurer to determine a room estimate based on numbers of those who stayed at the hotel during recent past meetings and consider whether the site change or other circumstances may influence the total.

Hotel room rates may be negotiable. It costs nothing to try negotiating.

Hotels frequently overestimate meeting room accommodation numbers. If at all possible, you should check the room size in person and make a realistic count.

There may be one or two free lodging rooms, or lodging room upgrades, again depending on the number of rooms rented.

A contract with the hotel will need to be drawn up and signed. ***NOTE THAT ONLY THE TREASURER OF THE HOLLY SOCIETY HAS THE AUTHORITY TO SIGN CONTRACTS!*** It will be the responsibility of the annual meeting organizer to make sure that all contracts are sent to the treasurer for his/her signature.

Some hotels will provide or acquire audio/visual equipment for you; some require that you hire the needed equipment yourself from an outside concern.

Some hotels prefer to supply their own mail-in reservation cards and we would prefer this to minimize our effort and responsibility. They should be sent directly to the secretary no later than May 1 the year of the meeting. She will need at least 400 of them.

Registration

The secretary is in charge of registration for the meeting.

Two eight-foot tables covered with white tablecloths and four chairs are needed for the registration area.

Suggested materials for table and/or packets include:

- Extra meeting agendas (provided by secretary)
- List of meeting participants (provided by secretary)
- Hotel map
- Local area map
- List of local restaurants/pubs
- Host city attractions

These last are often in a local magazine for visitors available from the hotel or local Convention Bureau.

HSA books, etc. will be sold at the registration table.

At least four people are needed to man the registration table on Thursday from noon until the cocktail hour or half an hour before dinner. One person is needed to man the registration table at all other times it is scheduled to be open.

A list of emergency numbers for those manning the table is helpful.

A waste basket provided by the hotel.

Board Meeting

Should be scheduled from 8:00 a.m. through 5:00 p.m. Thursday.

Conference room should be big enough to hold 20 people comfortably.

Arrange for a hot beverage setup for 20 from 8:00 a.m. to noon, and a cold beverage setup after lunch. Pitchers of water and glasses should be available on the conference table.

Arrangements should be made for a noon lunch for the board. They have little time to eat and do not need an enormous meal so work with the hotel to provide a light, fast lunch. A sandwich buffet in the meeting room is preferable, although tables reserved in the dining room for its lunch buffet or soup-and-salad bar also works well.

Check with the executive vice-president or treasurer to see if any audio/visual equipment will be required.

An extra table in the conference room for personal belongings is always useful.

Holly Sprig Room

Plan to open at 1:00 p.m. on Thursday and close after the banquet on Saturday.

Twelve, narrow, eight-foot tables covered with white tablecloths arranged around the perimeter of the room are needed for the competition.

Two eight-foot tables covered with white tablecloths set up in the center of the room are needed for the silent auction.

A fifteenth table for registration of auction materials is helpful.

A couple of large pitchers of water.

A large waste basket.

Program/Auction Room

Set up to seat about 75 people theater style.

For morning seminars, room should be provided with a miked podium, projection screen, projector stand, and a slide projector with remote control extension that reaches the podium.

Two tables covered with white tablecloths in the back of the room for seminar coffee break.

A seminar room monitor should be arranged for that is responsible for proper functioning of the AV equipment, changing slide carousels and/or equipment as needed by the speakers, and light control. Should be supplied with spare bulbs/parts and/or backup for electronic equipment.

A seminar moderator should be selected to run the morning sessions, introduce speakers and their topics, make sure speakers use the microphone, encourage questions and comments, and enforce the time schedule.

If the seminars and auction are both to be held the same day, arrange the schedule so that the annual business meeting starts no later than 1:00 p.m. and the auction no later than 2:00 p.m. and earlier, if possible.

Two tables covered with white tablecloths in the front of the room for auction recorders and small sale items. Four chairs for recorders. Pitcher of water and glasses for recorders. If the seminars and auction are both to be held the same day, the tables can sit along the front wall in the morning and be slid forward for the auction in the afternoon.

Welcome Dinner

Optional, but should be considered for early arrivals.

Set up with round tables seating eight; no head table.

Local hosts and a speaker giving a welcome address/talk about the area are nice additions.

A brief welcome by local hosts might be considered. The Secretary may have announcements to make.

If a speaker has been invited, plan for someone to introduce him/her and for someone else to make sure necessary equipment is in place, operating properly, etc., and to man the lights.

Provided with a miked podium and if a speaker needs them, projection screen, projection stand, and slide projector with remote control extension that reaches the podium.

Cash bar.

Holly Banquet

Set up with round tables seating eight and if so desired, head tables (on a dais if possible) to seat 14 (President, two Vice-presidents, Immediate Past President, Secretary, Treasurer, an honored guest or speaker, and spouses). Note that this head table arrangement is *extremely* unpopular with the board.

A miked podium (centered on dais, if there is one).

Area to put hardiness test hollies for distribution. Cover area with plastic drop cloths to protect carpeting from possibly wet pots.

Cash bar.

Speakers

Contact speakers by phone or in person to discuss the topics you would like them to address. Follow up with a letter verifying details, including time and location of talk. A standard form letter is included with this guide. Fill in the your name, address, etc. at the bottom of the form and mail a copy to each speaker.

Send the HSA Secretary copies of your follow up letters, mentioned above, along with:

List of speakers' names, addresses, work and home phone numbers, and E-mail addresses

An agenda of which speaker will be speaking on which day and at what time

Secretary will send out a confirmation letter to each speaker along with the annual meeting announcement *Holly Letter*. A sample letter is included with this guide.

Find out what visual aids the speaker may require.

Shortly before the meeting, call speakers to discover and clear up any last minute problems.

Speakers do not have to pay the meeting registration fee and are given an honorarium determined by the board at the recommendation of the executive vice-president. A speaker giving a welcoming address at Thursday night's dinner gets his/her meal free. Seminar speakers and moderator have their lunches paid for by the Holly Society. If a speaker is accompanied by his/her significant other, that person's meal is free also. These arrangements need to be coordinated with the treasurer.

HSA's president will give/send each speaker a thank-you note along with his/her gratuity. The treasurer will give the president the necessary gratuity checks and the secretary will provide form letters for the president to sign.

Buses

Arrange for buses a year in advance. Remember that *only the treasurer is authorized by the Holly Society to sign contracts*.

Consider the need for restroom facilities on buses.

Appoint bus captains for each bus and provide them with instructions or maps to the sites on tour. (Bus drivers do not always know how to get where you want them to go.)

The bus captain is responsible for maintaining the tour schedule and for keeping track of the group on his/her bus—taking an initial head count and making sure everyone on his/her bus is accounted for when reloading the bus.

Each bus captain will be issued a bull horn.

An "emergencies" car driven by someone familiar with the area should accompany each bus.

Early Arrival/Sunday Tours

Optional "On Your Own" tour recommendations are always nice.

Private gardens or special trips not included on tour day because of distance or time constraints might be arranged for here. Transportation could be left to the responsibility of the visitor or prearranged (see "Buses" above) if participation is expected to be good.

Sponsors

Arrange for reciprocal support from local nurseries, garden centers or distributors, fertilizer companies, etc. for a \$50.00+ donation. Get the names, addresses, contact persons, and web site

addresses of all donors and send that information on the the HSA web master and editor so that they can advertise local support for the Holly Society.

Promotion

Six to eight months in advance of the meeting, send the chairperson of the Public Relations committee a list of suggested organizations and newspapers that could/should be notified of the meeting. The Board has approved opening parts of the meeting to outside visitors in an effort to encourage new memberships.

Suggested groups to notify of the upcoming meeting are garden clubs, cooperative extension agents and their master gardener programs, newspapers, state gardening magazines, etc.

No later than fifteen weeks before the meeting, provide the chairperson of the Public Relations Committee with the information necessary to submit a meeting announcement to *American Nurseryman* for publication. To promote the meeting, information about it including the sponsor (HSA), location, city, contact person, phone and fax numbers, e-mail address, and URL should be sent to: Calendar Editor, *American Nurseryman*, 223 West Jackson Boulevard, Suite 500, Chicago, IL 60606-6904, fax 312-427-7346, e-mail editors@amerinursery.com.

Hardiness Test Hollies

Contact Executive Vice-president concerning this program and their availability.

Auction

Held after the Annual Business Meeting in the Program/Auction room.

Requires at least two recorders (usually the Treasurer and Secretary), one spotter, at least two auctioneers, and three to four assistants to bring up plants and deliver them to buyers.

Possibly a complimentary room, part of a complimentary suite, or if it is large enough, the Holly Sprig Room could be used for storage of plants for auction and hardiness tests. This room should be open 3:00-10:00 p.m. *Wednesday* for early arriving board members, 7:00 a.m.-11:00 p.m. *Thursday*, and 7:00-9:00 a.m. *Friday*. The Secretary should be supplied with a key to the room upon his/her arrival at the meeting.

Provide plastic drop cloths to cover/protect carpeting where plants are to be stored or displayed.

Decorations

Decorations can be planned for a wide spectrum of the events, namely, registration table, all meals, meeting rooms, etc. At the very least, arrange for decoration of the banquet tables.

Most hotels will decorate meal tables if so requested.

A Decorations Committee could be established in advance of the meeting to plan and provide necessary arrangements and decorations.

HSA owns simple containers for table arrangements. Contact the executive vice-president to locate them.

Evaluations

Occasionally it might be worthwhile to give the attendees a chance to voice their opinions on the event and to give suggestions. A simple form can be included in participants' packets or made available during the meeting. Contact the executive vice-president about ten months before the meeting to see if the Board has requested that such a questionnaire be sent out.

Final Report

Within thirty days of the close, send a summarizing report to the Executive Vice-president including:

Problems that arose

Innovations that went well

Suggestions for improvement of future meetings

The Secretary and Treasure should in collaboration also send the Executive Vice-president a report providing meeting statistics useful for planning the next meeting such as number of attendees, hotel rooms booked, number at Welcoming Dinner, number going on tours, etc.