



NCAR Advocate Committee - Growing Membership

Venues – “Think Beyond the Church Hall”

This document is provided to NCAR chapters by the NCAR Advocate Growing Membership Committee. We hope you find this information helpful.

As we prepare to meet again in person we may be faced with new challenges. Will our former venue be available? Will we have to socially distance and will we all fit in the existing space? Can we afford our previous venue? Many halls and churches are increasing their rental fee due to additional staffing needed to clean and maintain their common areas.

The Growing Membership Committee has put together some ideas for alternative meeting spaces should your chapter or study group be looking for a new home.

FREE IS BEST!

In most communities, public spaces can be utilized free of charge. Public Spaces include:

- Public Libraries
- Community Centers
- Local Activity Centers
- Parks and beaches (many which have large open pavilions with accessible restrooms - reservations can be made in advance to secure pavilions). Contact your city or county *Parks and Recreation Department* for such venues. Often this is the body which schedules reservations.
- Your local Agricultural Extension Service usually has meeting spaces as well.
- Fire Stations often have community rooms for rent

WHAT MAKES A GOOD PUBLIC SPACE?

- Easily accessible
- Comfortable for patrons
- In a safe location
- Adequate parking
- Lower levels with elevators
- It must have a bathroom, preferable ADA accessible
- A source of water
- Food allowed on premise
- Set-up provided

NETWORKING WORKS!

Remember to contact other smaller organizations to find out where they meet locally. Many organizations have conference rooms or open halls used for their meetings, but they are not used daily. Consider the following:

- YWCA
- Senior Citizens Center
- Party Rooms in condominiums and Common Rooms
- Fraternal Organizations: Elks, Moose lodge, Knights of Columbus
- Business organizations: Rotary Club
- Service Organizations: SERTOMA Club, Kiwanis Club
- Social Clubs: e.g., Polish American Club, National Grange
- Banks: Surprisingly, large banks often have meeting spaces. Anything is worth a shot!
- Remember to contact other smaller organizations to find out where they meet locally e.g., Girl Scouts and 4-H groups

SCHOOLS



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Think creatively as to what you bring to an academic/community setting. You have a unique skill to offer. **NEGOTIATE!**

- Community Colleges - These are very community focused entities. Often, they will open spaces to you if you let the public attend a meeting. This could be a great way to get new members. Negotiate with them and let them know that after two meetings you will be asking attendees to join.
- High schools - offer to be an afterschool club at your local high school in exchange for holding your meeting.
- Colleges - Offer to assist with their Department of East Asian Studies. Do a spring and fall workshop on campus in exchange for meeting space.
- Private schools

LARGER FACILITIES

- Banquet/Wedding venues - they might not get used during the week and would rent for a nominal fee.
- Arboretums
- Conservatories
- Private/Public Gardens
- Historical Building
- Japanese Community Centers

RETAILERS

- Art studios
- Flower shops
- Flower wholesaler
- Empty spaces at a mall

Your VERY BEST connection is your local Chamber of Commerce. For a very small fee you can be a part of their consortia. It has great advertising. Through the Chamber you can get the best information on spaces in your locale.

If all else fails, try these. **Meetings.com and Uniquevenues.com**