



LLLAC Newsletter

1730 Monroe Ave. San Diego, CA 92116 (619) 298-8008 www.lllac.org

Shall We Move the Alano Club?

Dear Fellow Alano Club Members,

By embarking upon an open letter to the Live and Let Live Alano Club's (LLLAC) membership, I wish to address an important issue facing the Alano Club. This letter will present the necessity and challenges of relocating the Alano Club. Here are the options in a nutshell:

- Does LLLAC continue renting the ground floor of 1730 Monroe Avenue, or . . .
- Does LLLAC seek another rental property, or . . .
- Does LLLAC search for a building to buy?

The First Move

LLLAC occupies the ground floor at 1730 Monroe Avenue and has since 1993. However, it is the club's second home since its founding in May 1983. The move to Monroe Avenue was necessitated by high rent at 3867 4th Avenue (where American Apparel is currently.) The landlord wanted more money for the space than what the club was comfortable paying. A suitable building search commenced and 1730 Monroe Avenue was the winner. Despite the necessity to move, there was much wringing of hands and gnashing of teeth regards the Monroe location. "It's too small!" said some.

"There's no room for dances!" argued others. "We must remain in Hillcrest!" wailed yet others. Nevertheless, enough members felt the new site was workable, and the move commenced. After 23 years since relocation, the Alano Club is still open to those seeking recovery. It appears that the nay-sayers in '93 were just . . . well, . . . just clinchpoops!

The Alano Club experienced several tough years: over 40% decline in membership since 2006, meeting rents dropped, coffee bar sales slowed, and yet utilities, rent, and labor costs increased. It began to devour its own with finger pointing, placing blame, accusations of embezzlement, manipulation of facts, misrepresenting issues, even out and out lying. (*Lions and tigers and drama, OH MY!!*) The net result was Board upheavals via mass resignations and lots of instability. Meanwhile, the major problems persisted and by 2012, the financial situation was bleak at best, and utterly dire at worst. The Club had about six months of operating capital. Immediately the Board of Directors took action to stem the tide of red ink by eliminating the Club Manager position, its salary and insurance. It also took on renegotiating the lease with the Landlord, with limited results. The Landlord agreed to slightly reduce the monthly rent and hold that rate for two years. Afterwards, rent annually increases by 3%. The Club's present rent is \$4,207 a month, and is now in year 5 of a 7 year lease that ends December 31, 2018. With all those "evil drama spirits" lingering around, would it

not be nice to start afresh, to create new, positive memories?

Recently, the Board saved \$1,000 annually when it switched payroll services, renegotiated the fees for credit card processing (down from 11% to less than 3% per transaction), and ceased renting an off-property storage unit that cost \$1,200 a year. Furthermore, the Board approved switching coffee suppliers in the hope of bolstering coffee sales. The cost from one supplier to the next was nearly equal, maybe a little less. Their aim was to improve coffee quality, and thus sales. I'm happy to report coffee sales have increased this year over the same period in 2015.

The serenity case generates income, too. What's nice is word about the serenity case is spreading and folks need not drive to Claremont Mesa to buy tokens, Big Books, 12 & 12s, etc. Instead, they can purchase them here. The Board is doing what it can to keep costs to a minimum and increase sales to fill the coffers.

Today

Sadly, an eerily similar situation reared its ugly head in the past couple of years. For 2016, the rent for LLLAC is \$50,484 annually! That's a lot of money in anybody's view. Truth is, rent increases by three percent each year. (*Ouch!*) The Landlord does not maintain the building either; the Club maintains the two suites it rents: air conditioners, doors, electrical, plumbing, etc. Yes, the Club pays for all wear and tear, let alone any and all damages. The Club pays for all utilities it consumes, as well. The Landlord - zip. That makes one ask why the Alano Club should pay to maintain someone else's building as well as pay them over \$50 thousand for the privilege?

So, one might think that after 23 years of religiously paying rent, month after month, the Landlord would give the Club strong consideration before leasing an upstairs office suite to a Medical Marijuana Dispensary. Regrettably, they did not. Their decision was about the all mighty dollar. It is suspected the Club lost potential business as sponsors advised sponsees to "stay away from the Alano Club" because of the permeating pot odor. Sponsors feared it would trigger relapses. Maybe, maybe not, it's very difficult to prove factually. One thing is clear though, the Landlord has had a "sea change" in attitude regarding LLLAC. Is the Club "persona non grata?" That remains to be seen, but who wants to stick around to find out?

Next Steps

However, prior to moving the Club, a source of financing must be secured. That's much easier said than done. Due to several year-end donations, and a couple of grants, the Club finished 2015 in the black for the first time in several years. (Not by much, mind you.) The amount of financing will determine the size of building the club can purchase. Certain types of loans require a minimum of 20% down. The Club's current financial reserves fall far, far short of that mark. Worst case scenario, the Club begins a capital campaign to raise funds for a sizeable down-payment of up to \$200,000, perhaps more. Furthermore, the Club will seek the assistance of one or more professional real estate brokers to find a suitable property. Hopefully, their experience will lead the Club to viable financial institutions, too. The Board will explore every option possible, but it will take time, perhaps *a lot of time*. Continued on P.4

News from Local Celebrities



By
Estee
Dee

This year's Pride Parade was an unqualified success, any way you slice it. Our lovely little Alano Club was once again *the leader in glitz and glamour*. The Ab Fab girls riding the Cadillac preceding LLLAC's float tried everything to steal the show. Despite big balloons and all, they failed. The Club's 2-ton, gaily-bedecked float was chocked full of happy, smiling, waving, and drenched-in-sunscreen LLLAC members. Ella Rose L., Michael C., Jason G., Rodney M., and Tanya – the Fender Tranny all put forth their best to show that those in AA are *not* a glum lot; whereas I, Estee D., took the controls of Beulah "The '48 Wonder Buick" for the fabulous 3-hour tour.

This year, as opposed to last, the weather cooperated fully. Ol' Sol shone brightly, cool breezes flowed freely, and the crowd cheered mightily. Any concerns this author may have had about security were assuaged by the commanding presence of San Diego's Police and Sheriff Departments. One could not have swung a dead cat by the tail without hitting a lawman!

Mucho kudos to Chris C., who organized and ran LLLAC's Pride Fest booth. This year S.D. Pride officials saw fit to move the Sobriety Village outside Pride Fest's gates to a "free zone". Unfortunately, the result was low attendance due to confusion as to its location. Regardless, Chris soldiered on, single-handedly, to draw attention to the Club's booth. He decorated it to the hilt, staffed it, rallied volunteers, etc. The Alano Club owes Chris a big debt of gratitude.

LLLAC Plays at Pride



The Club's 2-ton, gaily-bedecked float



The Alano Club owes Chris a big debt of gratitude



Well, that's all through Estee's rose-tinted glasses. Have a fabulous remainder of the summer, and remember, be sober and be safe, y'all.

Point of Sale System

The Live and Let Live Alano Club is about to have an upgrade at the coffee bar. No, we are not upgrading Choo Choo for a newer model (although we can table that idea for a future time). We are going to be implementing a Point of Sale (POS) system to replace the cash register.

For those of you who are unfamiliar with a POS System, a POS System is, basically, a computer/iPad hooked up to a cash register. You see them all the time at local stores and shops. A few general benefits of point-of-sale systems are:

- **Accuracy:** Scanning or using a touch screen interface (like an iPad) with prices pre-programmed is more accurate than punching in numbers on a register or expecting the cashier to remember what each item costs.
- **Analysis:** POS systems let you manage inventory, flag items for reorder, and analyze sales data.
- **Integration:** with some POS systems (like the one we are getting) sales data from the POS can integrate directly into accounting software (like QuickBooks). Eliminating the need for data to be manually entered into the accounting software.

Here are specific benefits the club should realize using this POS System

- **HUGE TIME SAVINGS and IMPROVED EFFICIENCIES.** The POS System will simplify the manual accounting process. Specifically, the club manager will save many hours each month as he currently totals each of the two daily shifts into



- one daily sales report. These daily reports are then given to the Treasurer who also spends many hours each month entering this daily sales data into QuickBooks, the club's accounting software. These two time intensive activities will no longer have to be done as sales data will flow seamlessly from the POS System into QuickBooks, freeing up a lot of time to be used performing other functions to benefit the club and eliminating any errors potentially introduced by "keying in" data. Another time savings will be at the time of sale for credit card purchases as there will be an integrated credit card swiper built into the POS system eliminating the need to key in the sale amount into an external credit card terminal as it is done now. Having both cash and credit card payments integrated into the POS System also provides a time savings when closing out the register at the end of a shift as all the sales data is integrated into the data feeds.
- **REDUCED ERRORS.** The chance of keying in the wrong sale price for an item or registering the item to the wrong department will be eliminated as prices will be set in the POS and the cashier need only scan an item or touch the appropriate item on the POS screen. Hitting a wrong key is always a risk when ringing a sale, but the POS System has built in checks to ensure

that the information is entered accurately.

- **INTUITIVE and EASY TO USE.** The touch screen iPad interface is very intuitive and easy to use which will help with training of new volunteers at the café counter.
- **REWARDING OUR CUSTOMERS.** The Club has been very appreciative of those who buy at the coffee bar, whether it be to buy a beverage, a snack or a serenity case item. In addition to knowing that each purchase at the café helps keep the club's doors open and the lights on, the POS System will enable the club to reward customers. Simply, you earn points with every dollar spent and accumulate points until you have enough to redeem toward a purchase (i.e. the points are Alano Bucks). More to follow on this.
- **RECURRING MEMBERSHIP PAYMENT or DONATION.** In partnering with a new credit card processing provider, Vantiv, we will have the ability to initiate and process recurring membership payments or recurring donations. Currently, a member or donor has to go to PayPal and initiate the payment themselves. With the POS System, club personnel at the counter or from the office will be able to easily initiate or cancel recurring payments or donations. Another associated bonus of switching to Vantiv is the money the club will save in credit card processing fees as the processing rate will be lower than what we currently have. Yeah!
- **ACCURATE REPORTING.** With detailed sales reporting the club leadership will hopefully be able to make better business decisions rooted in accurate, detailed sales figures.

Well it sounds like an outstanding system. So who's going to pay for this? Great question!

Before any POS System would be considered or implemented, there were 2 clear financial requirements which had to have been met first:

1. The POS System would not be funded from the LLLAC operational budget or funds as club funds are tight and the club could not incur the expense so an additional source of funding needed to be identified.
2. The POS System including all hardware and software costs must be fully funded for at least a two year period. The club will review the benefits of using the system during this two year period and make recommendations about POS use going forward.

Happily both of these requirements were met as the chosen POS System is fully funded for the two year period from the generous donations received from some of our club members along with a portion of the funds received from a Human Dignity Foundation Grant. **Thank you to the generosity of these members!!!**

The club plans on implementing the POS System in September. We ask everyone's patience during the initial training and transition period as we all become familiar with its use. So, please, "Patience before Personalities." Please provide feedback as your input is very helpful.

Shall We Move the Alano Club?

Continued from p. 2

The task is set out before the LLLAC Membership. This is a big task, bigger than what one or two people should handle. If you want to be an integral part of this great endeavor, then please let a Board member know. Nothing is more powerful than an idea whose time has come.

Written by Chairman of the BOD, Choo Choo

Sobriety Happens

LLLAC BOD will represent the Alano club at the Liberty Station "Sobriety Happens." This event will be held 9/17/2016 from 9:00-1:00.

Halloween Dance

October 28, 2016, the LLLAC will host a Halloween dance. A \$10 admission cost will include a DJ and both costume and pumpkin carving contests.

Board Meeting Date Changed

The September Board of Directors meeting will be held on 9/24/2016 at 9:00 AM at the LLLAC Alano club room G.

UPCOMING EVENTS

LABOR DAY POT LUCK

9/5/2016

SOBRIETY HAPPENS

9/17/2016

SEPTEMBER BOD MEETING CHANGED
TO 9/24/2016

DEADLINE FOR BOD CANDIDATE
APPLICATIONS

10/8/2016

MEET AND GREAT THE CANDIDATES

10/16/2016

BOD ELECTIONS

10/17/2016-10/23/2016

HALLOWEEN DANCE

10/28/2016

INSTALLATION OF POS

SEPTEMBER