



January 28, 2020

I remember the days when the Fresno Selland Arena was full, and I was assigned guard duty along the ring between the top and bottom section. That was my first Grand Assembly Experience. 7,000 girls, parents, alumni and members of our Masonic family listened carefully to speakers, applauded talent and participated in all activities.

What a treat it was to travel to Anaheim for sessions the following year. Our assembly was excited; we enjoyed sessions and extended our stay an extra day to visit Disneyland on Wednesday. Unfortunately, our Grand Assembly dates in Anaheim were blocked by another group. In 1998, California Rainbow negotiated with Fresno Convention Center to reserve their facility through 2018. 2002 sessions were held in Sacramento due to a previously scheduled event in Fresno.

We were fortunate that at the time of negotiating our dates for 20 years in the future, our costs were partially offset with multiyear discounts and housing credits (tax portion of each room night) to help offset yearly increases. In addition, the Grand Assembly Committees worked hard each year to reduce costs by negotiating with vendors, caterers, etc.

The cost of holding Grand Assembly rose 4% yearly. At the same time, our Grand Assembly Registration dropped to 1600. This reduction in attendance and yearly costs of living increases demanded a raise in registration fees. In 2018, we experienced a loss of \$1300 for Grand Assembly Event. Fortunately, there were General Operating funds in the CRFGF to cover this shortfall.

In 2008, California Rainbow for Girls established a Venue Committee to scour California for venues large enough and financially viable to hold our annual events. There were 5 teams: North Coast (SF to Eureka); North Valley (Sacramento to Redding); Central Coast (San Jose to Ventura); Central Valley (Manteca to Visalia) and Southern California. Unfortunately, due to our mandated Grand Assembly Dates, Fresno and Ontario were the logical locations.

In 2015, we started negotiations with the Ontario Convention Center to hold Grand Assembly at their facility in 2019. Our goal was to hold Grand Assembly in Fresno on the even years and in Ontario on the odd years.

The Ontario Convention Center was fabulous in 2019. The building was beautiful, there was adequate meeting space to our competitions and committees and nice dining facilities. Unfortunately, based on 2018 attendance, we planned for 1600 attendees and room nights and only 1100 attended. With fixed costs for the facility, we sustained a \$45,000.00 loss. Loss in attendance accounted for \$36,000.00 (500 x \$50 = \$25,000 loss in registration income). In

addition, we did not receive hotel credits due to not meeting 80% occupancy rate. (1100 x \$10 = \$11000). As you can see, registration and housing within our block dramatically impacts the cost of Grand Assembly.

We learned from our experiences in 2019 and have already started negotiation with Ontario for 2021. As Mrs. Dyck stated "We started in Fresno 40 years ago and it took years to feel comfortable with staff and negotiating to reduce costs."

California Rainbow Alumni, your support is needed to ensure your daughters and granddaughters have the same opportunities to grow in Rainbow that you had. Support your assemblies, encourage our youth members to take leadership roles in their assemblies. Attend Grand Assembly and make housing reservations through our portal. Ideally, your support of the CRFGF General Operating Fund will help reduce future registration increases.

Remember, yours is the only 100% volunteer Masonic Group!

Respectfully,
Jim Redman
Grand Executive Committee Member
Grand Assembly Co-Chair