



DECEMBERFEST

A GENERAL(s)

**Guide to
Throwing a DecemberFest!**

This guide is last updated on 16 January 2015.



DECEMBERFEST

WELCOME!!

The following is a guide to what is involved in planning our fabulous gathering called DecemberFest each year. We are posting this in the hopes that everyone will look through it and get on board as far as the planning, and executing, of the party. There is a LOT to do each year, and although it always manages to get done (and in spectacular fashion, we might add) it is not an easy feat!

Each year, there are few key people who do the majority of the work, and to be honest, those people, as able and enthusiastic as they are, are getting tired! It's past time to others to jump in, take some responsibility, and start helping. There is actually, in this 42nd year of the Fest, more than 1 new generation involved and we NEED the younger generation to start shouldering the load.

Each year, crews are put together that, when combined, make DecemberFest happen. Getting help for these crews is a big job, and isn't always easy, since once people at AT the festival, some tend to be less available when all is ongoing. We are NOT saying that the majority of people do this, only that dedication is key to this endeavor, and new (and old) blood is needed to continue this most wonderful of traditions.

It is amazing what is involved in putting this party together, and the following may help you to SEE what is actually involved. Our hopes are that once you read through the guide, you will want to jump on board, if you haven't already! As one fester has said wisely many times, "If you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem." Well, we are trying to find the solution and eliminate the problem. And this guide may well open some eyes to why we are even SAYING there is a problem.

If you think something should be changed, done about, or eliminated from DecemberFest, then STEP UP and say something about it, and then help to DO something about it! We really need input, not just second-hand grumbling, unhappy, and jaded Festers! DecemberFest is what YOU make it.

As of today, having not made any changes since couple years, the DecemberFest mailing list has approximately 400 people on it! And there are about 250 who have email, and who receive the updates sent, as we get closer to the Fest. That's a lot of people, and we would estimate that less than 30 TRULY do the majority of the actual work. Communication is the least of our problems; it's the ACTING on the communication that seems to get lost.

Read on Festers!!

And By The Way.....

GENERAL DRINK!!!!!!



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FEST FUNDS

DecemberFest has a bank checking account, Julia Sander and Nancy Putnam are the two people whose signatures are on the file and are the only people who can write checks and release funds.

DecemberFest is NOT intended to be a “money-making” or “for profit” event. The general fund, and bank account, exists solely for the purpose of paying for the Fest. ANY money not used the year it was collected is kept in the bank and is used for the following years as start-up funds, and helps to buy, upgrade, or repair equipment should that be necessary. NO ONE profits from this festival, except in spirit!!!!

Any planner needing money to pay for fest-related things must PLAN accordingly and either get a signed a check before purchasing what you are purchasing (with fest approval of course!) or pay for it yourself and get reimbursed by one of the check holders. ALWAYS save receipts and ALWAYS clear a purchase before making it; otherwise the Fest may not be able to pay for it.

Price IS an issue on every aspect of the fest, so if you are someone in charge of something fest- related that will cost the fest money, please make sure to talk it through with others who know and can guide and ultimately decide with you whether the expenditure is a valid and reasonable one.

Unless we ask for, and receive, substantial funds from everyone each year, then certain things will not be purchasable, and the entire group will suffer because of it. Asking for, and receiving funds AHEAD OF TIME is key, and once a pledge is offered, a follow up reminder email or phone call sometimes is helpful to jog a memory!!

There is NO minimum donation amount. Any amount is welcomed and needed. Of course if you can afford it, and want to donate more than someone who may not be able to, the balance makes things easier as far as paying for what we need to pay for!

If someone asks what a “good or normal” donation is, we say that an average donation of \$10-\$20 per day is a good one for a family or individual. This will help to cover all food, drink, supplies, fuel, etc that we need to find \$\$ for each year. But again, any donation is a good one.

Whoever receives a donation or pledge of a donation MUST document it, and keep track of it. It’s especially important because a lot of pledges get made and time passes before the pledge is paid.

If money is truly an issue with a fellow fester, mention that donations of time, supplies, talent, equipment etc are also very, very important. It can also mean that someone who might NOT be able to attend the fest may be able to if they donate something other than money.

One great thing to volunteer for and to FIND volunteers for would be to circulate during the Fest with a copy of the mailing list, and get as many people as possible to update their information, and to donate to the general fund if they have not done so already. This will ensure that all information is as updated as possible, and will collect enough \$\$ to start-up the next years Fest! If someone finds volunteers for this duty, the email mistress/master can supply them with copies of the mailing list.



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COMMUNICATIONS AND EMAIL

DecemberFest has a really impressive mailing list. As of today there were at least 400 entries, 250+ of those with email. AMAZING! As those of you with email are aware, emails start being sent to the masses around August or September of each year to start informing festers of what is going on each year! The job of email mistress/master is a complex one, and involves more than just writing and answering emails.

The email mistress/master is the main link between the planning and the people. All information concerning the fest, from finding a site, to counting down the days are involved, and must be forwarded to the masses in a timely, straightforward, and patient manner. All questions should be responded to and all complaints, offers, and other communications must be honored in an effective way. All requests for removal from the list **MUST** be honored, no questions asked. And all emails sent must be really necessary and should not contain anything non-fest or fester-related. Ideally answering each email that comes in, while it's a bit time consuming, makes for better communication between festers, and also involves anyone emailing the email mistress/master with the actual planning of the/their DecemberFest!

The mailing list is **NOT** for sale, trade or give-away for any reason and never has been. No one should use this list for anything other than DecemberFest related reasons. On occasion people have asked for a copy of the list for a number of reasons, and the answer must be no. If someone asks for someone in particulars email/address/phone number, the decent thing to do is to say you will contact the person they want to contact and pass along the request. If okay, then do it.

When emailing the group, it is essential to BCC the entire group so that the entire list is not released to the whole group. This is for privacy reasons.

You, as an individual, cannot request that another individual be removed from the mailing list for personal reasons. People are removed from the mailing list only if they have requested to be removed, or if they have been out of contact and have had their invitations returned for at least 2 years in a row.



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Emails sent to the group generally consist of the following things:

Occasional and timely information emails concerning DecemberFest such as when where, what and why...whatever. These emails should be concise, informative, upbeat, and clear.

Requests for name/address/significant other/phone etc. updates and changes. These are important in order to make sure the right people get the emails and invites, and in a timely fashion.

Requests for donations of money for the general fest fund. These are crucial for the success of the fest, but we must be CLEAR on how their money is spent and what different amounts mean.

A donation of \$50 or more will allow their name (of their choosing) to be ON the invitation as a "Friend of the Fest"

ANY amount is welcomed and needed. No pressure should be applied to anyone who balks at donating money. Some people believe in it, some people don't and some people just cannot afford it.

Requests for donations of talent, services, equipment, volunteering, things, ETC! All these things are also CRUCIAL to the success of the fest. It is the PEOPLE who make it what it is with what they bring to it.

Reminding folks that camping/entrance fees at a campsite are ALWAYS separate from DecemberFest donations to the general fund. So make them aware they must budget accordingly.

Occasional requests for volunteers for certain jobs for that year. Sometimes a thing will need doing in preparation of the fest, and a volunteer will be needed for it. ASK THE ENTIRE group, unless you KNOW one or two particular people will come through.

Information on web page updates and/or changes. These can definitely be important to pass along quickly.

Any very important piece of fest info, such as a deadline date or time, needs to be sent out quickly and made clear (like T-shirt order, pledge deadlines, or contact info request deadlines).



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SITE SEARCH

This is THE single most important job each year. It's also one of the HARDEST and definitely the least volunteered - for job. Typically it is one or two of the SAME people who go out each year and put a LOT of miles on their vehicle, spend a LOT of \$\$ for gas, and spend a LOT of their own time to travel to all possible sites. This all consists of researching for possible campsites within 2-3 hours of Tallahassee (usually.....), then making road trips to visit these possibilities. There are a large number of criteria which must be met by the site to make a site acceptable to use for DecemberFest and part of why this is such a hard job is that MOST of sites visited during a site search don't even come close to meeting our needs and wants.

Once several sites are flagged as possible, a synopsis is put together by the site searcher spelling out all the positives and negatives of each of the possible locations. Eventually one of these possibilities (if there is even more than one!) is chosen as our site for the year.

Right now, Suwannee River Rendezvous Resort & Campground is the "home" for the DecemberFest. It has been our home since 2008.

SOME CRITERIA WE DEEM NECESSARY OR DESIRABLE FOR A SITE TO MEET:

Location - typically no more than 2-3 hours from Tallahassee/Big Bend area, which is where the majority of festers reside. These 2-3 hours represents an approximate 200 mile radius in all directions from Tallahassee.

In years past, staying in Florida has been our goal, however we may not be able to continue doing that as site choices are dwindling yearly as more and more "snowbirds" seem to be taking over potential sites as permanent residence! Keeping that in mind, sites in South Georgia or Alabama should also be considered as possible options (but only as a last resort).

- **Location** - Needs to be situated in an area that is NOT close to others, such as neighborhoods etc that might complain about noise and other things related to having 200-300 people celebrating in the same area!
- **Size** - should be large enough to host 200-300 campers with layout including a central location that will allow for a kitchen, bonfire, beer, and stage area.
- **Exclusivity** - we REALLY need the chosen site to be available ONLY to attendees of DecemberFest for the duration of the week we will be there. Having outsiders and locals present in more than minimal numbers has caused problems in the past and should be avoided.
- **Cost** - Given that the site chosen would normally, at this time of year, NOT be receiving 200-300 campers, we hope that they would just ask that everyone pay for camping, without asking for an additional fee for the use of the site as well. A deposit is an acceptable thing for them to ask for, however.
- **Friendly and Flexible Owners** - who will be willing to remain on site to collect camping fees, clean restrooms, etc.
- **Pet Friendly** - this is NOT a priority but is very nice, as long as those who bring pets are willing to follow the rules!
- **Fireworks** - depending on the dryness and availability of an open space, it's nice to have them permitted. This is NOT a priority thing, just nice, and usually isn't mentioned at the first conversation with site owners.
- **Golf Carts permitted** - always nice to have these allowed!
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- **Electricity available** - especially for kitchen and stage area.
- **RV and Camper Sites available** - this is becoming more of an issue and more of us want a slightly higher level of comfort for our campout.
- **Individual campfires permitted** - for those who want their own person “camp” fire. Also, permission for a bonfire at central site is a PLUS!
- **Located on a body of water** - this used to be a requirement for all DecemberFest sites, but now are not as easy to find! Definitely desirable.
- **Firewood Source** - especially on-site. AND permission to use our own chainsaws on-site is very nice, typically on wood that is already down and not wanted by the owners. We need it for our bonfire as well as for individual campfires. We do NOT ask to cut down anything.
- **Alcohol Permitted** - State parks are very nice, and beautiful, and have most of what we ask, EXCEPT they don't permit alcohol. So they are not good choices! We need to be able to bring our own beer on-site and serve it from our own equipment.

Fest Site Proposal

Occasionally, depending on which site is chosen and who owns it, having a “site proposal” is prudent. This resembles a contract or agreement document (we have a template in our files of recent proposals; all that needs doing is name changing and date adjustments). This will be read and signed by the site owner. This document lets us know what the site owner's rules are and what they expect from US as a group, and also what they can expect from US and what we expect from THEM to make the party a success for all involved.

Pets at DecemberFest

Pets are permitted only if the site owner allows them. Please honor this rule, however it goes. Please stress that others do too, along with whatever rules are placed (such as leash laws, etc.) by the site owner.

Please stress that those who DO bring pets that they supervise them at ALL TIMES (just as you would your children; after all they ARE our children too!) to avoid accidents and other pet disasters.

If there are fireworks planned, then have a plan for your pets!! Dogs who normally wouldn't THINK to run sometimes are so scared by the fireworks that they have bolted, and several dogs have not ever been recovered.

If you are NOT willing to treat your animal with respect and love by keeping them supervised, then we recommend that you leave them at home with a capable pet sitter.



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Porta-Potties

Depending on how many bathrooms/toilets are available at a given fest site, renting porta-potties has been a very important part of making the fest a comfortable one for all involved. Whoever volunteers for this duty is considered the “Gotta-Go-God or Goddess” and must do the following:

- Find a local provider of rental potties. Ask the owners of the site we have chosen; they usually can provide us with names/phone numbers of local rental companies.
- Depending on the facilities available at the site chosen that year, you must then determine how many potties we must rent. It varies from just 5, all the way up to 8.
- Have them delivered Thursday, as early as possible, and make sure you are there and available to show them where they should be placed.
- Arrange for a pump out at LEAST once during the weekend, more if the weather is going to be HOT and/or if the numbers may be higher per potty. If only one day is to be chosen for pump out and cleaning, make it Saturday, late day.
- Before delivery occurs, it helps to already have chosen where on the site you want the potties placed, using a map of the site we are using. The Gotta-Go-God or Goddess MUST be present during the arrival and placement of the potties, and an invoice should be gotten, or at least agreed upon. Get a check from Julie or Nancy for the purpose of paying the price for our rental.
- Ask what prices have been in the past so that you can find a company who will run about the same cost.
- If a company offers the potties that have hand washing capability, and they don't cost more, or much more, renting a few of those is nice.
- Ask if extra paper is available, and make sure they re-stock paper when pumping out and cleaning.
- If they offer handicapped-access potties, renting 1-2 of those is also nice and may be needed.

Firewood

DecemberFest ALWAYS needs a source of firewood. We need it for the kitchen, for smoking the meats, for our central bonfire if one is to be burned, and we ALL need it for our individual campfires.

It is a great idea to bring your own for your campfire, or to find a local source from which to purchase firewood. We try hard to find these sources and let you know about them

We are ALWAYS hoping someone can bring a load of wood for the smoking and bonfire burning, so if you have a way of doing so, THAT would be an incredible donation and would help out a lot.

We also attempt to get permission from the site owners to cut wood on the property, if any, using our capable chainsaw volunteers. We recommend utilizing the talents of someone who KNOWS how to use a chainsaw instead of doing it yourself unless you are capable yourself. In that case, we can use your talents.

Do not EVER cut wood on a DecemberFest site without permission. If the owner says no chainsaws, then we must honor that rule.



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INVITATIONS

Everyone who comes to DecemberFest MUST have either received an invitation in the mail, or been invited to the party by someone who HAS. This is NOT an “open” party, and we would like to keep it that way. Elisa Curtis has come through year after year with an original, artistic, and descriptive invitation for our gathering, and has not stopped yet!

WHAT IS NEEDED FOR INVITATIONS IS:

- The making/designing of the invitations is a volunteer thing and is considered a donation.
- Fest will pay for materials unless someone wants to do that as their donation. This can add up, as the cost of nice paper, labels, printer ink etc can add up.
- Fest pays for stamps unless we get a donation of that item.
- Fest will pay for the printing of the invites, unless someone donates that. This is a great donation! Invitations need to be completed, printed, labeled, stamped and mailed in time for t-shirt orders to get in to the t-shirt guy!

WHAT GOES INTO/ONTO AN INVITATION:

- Large, heavy duty paper for main Invite sheet.
- Insert, which is the info and direction sheet, is regular sized paper. It has directions and maps on it, along with site information everyone needs to know. Also contains t-shirt order form.
- Address Labels.
- Return Address labels (if using them).
- Sealing labels.
- Mailing Stamps.
- “Friends of the Fest” name listing - requires a \$50 or higher donation for a name to be on this list. Theme- each year a theme is decided on by SOMEONE and is a key part of the design of the invite. Graphics & fonts will also tie in with the theme.
- Site name, location, DATE of DecemberFest, Web site address for DecemberFest: <http://www.decemberfest.com>

HOW WE GET THE INVITATIONS DONE:

- Each year, we host an invite folding party. Anyone who comes to this helps to insert, fold, label, stamp and seal the invitations so they can be mailed out ASAP. . This is a BYOB and side dish gathering.
- This gathering is also known as a P³, or Party to Plan the Party!
- This gathering is great because it takes some time to fold that many invites! AND it saves the Fest \$\$ since those that attend this party can then claim their UNSTAMPED invitations along with some for people they know.
- A deadline MUST BE SET earlier that month (November) for getting the invites in the mail. This will tie in with the deadline for ordering t-shirts.



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- A deadline **MUST BE SET** for all updates to addresses to be sent to the email mistress/master in order for the mailing list to be updated in time to consolidate the mailing list for printing of mailing labels. This should be by early November.
- There are still a few people on our mailing list who do not have email. It is their responsibility to contact someone fest-related to find out about updates and to give updates of their own. If someone would care to volunteer to contact those without email either by phone or by postcard, that would be a big favor to all involved.



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MEALS

LEADS ARE NEEDED FOR THE FOLLOWING MEALS:

Friday Dinner - we prepare dinner for approximately 175-200 people. Friday dinner is generally a “specialty” meal and changes in menu each year. It is up to the lead on what will be offered. Friday dinner crew is the crew that unloads and sets up the entire kitchen as well. Normally offers one or more vegetable items as well and sometimes a vegetarian option too!

Saturday Dinner - We prepare for 200-300 people. Traditionally a BBQ/Smoked Pork offering along with some sort of salad and bread option. Other sides are sometimes included, as well as utilizing any leftovers from Friday dinner if there are any.

Sunday Brunch - We prepare for approximately 200 people and offer a simple breakfast-type meal. Eggs, potatoes and/or grits, bacon and/or sausage, fruits and any leftovers from Saturday night, if any. Champagne & Orange juice has also become a Sunday brunch tradition.

Pre-Party Dinners - Wednesday and Thursday night group dinners are becoming part of the DecemberFest tradition, although fest funds are not currently being used to fund these meals. These meals are generally planned by one or more volunteer festers and are organized outside of any “planning gatherings” although have become more popular as the years pass. Any food items for these meals are brought by festers and are not paid for by the fest. DecemberFest equipment is available to be used by the “crew” that puts these meals together but all **MUST** be cleaned and returned to the kitchen area before Friday dinner preparations commence. Any eating utensils and/or plates must be provided by the “hosts” of such meals or brought by those planning on eating those meals.

Meal Crews - The Volunteers who are leading the meal preparation choose their own “crews” and those who volunteer AT the fest are welcomed heartily for prep, clean-up, serving and general helping. It’s an incredibly social and fun atmosphere, and should be encouraged! All Leads of meals should definitely have their backbone crews chosen before getting to the fest so that pre-planning of meals can be done those key crew members.

Cost of DecemberFest Meals - Fest Funds cover the cost of all foods, cooking equipment, fuels and incidental items crucial to the preparation of Fest meals. The AVERAGE cost of meals in the recent past has been anywhere between \$2,000 and \$3,000 for all 3 Fest meals.

General Important Meal Stuff - Each meal crew is responsible for not only the preparation and serving of said meal, but is ALSO responsible for the cleanup of that meal. All leftovers must be put away and lead of meal should notify the lead of the NEXT meal as to where the leftovers are and possibly how they should be presented or heated up. All leftovers should be offered at the following meal so as to not waste any food. All pots, pans, prep and serving utensils, as well as all surfaces **MUST** be washed and left **CLEAN** and sanitized for the next meal crew. Leave it as you would want it left for you!! Which means **CLEAN!**



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Food and Needed Equipment Procurement Before the Fest - After the meal menus have been decided on (several weeks pre-fest) and numbers are estimated, then food must then be ordered. There are several different places at which this can be done:

- **Sysco Food Service Provider** - Bobby Staerker at Cabo's Tacos has been very generous in the past about allowing DecemberFest to use his contact at Sysco Food Service to order some food and kitchen items. This order is normally placed the Monday of the week of fest, for delivery to Cabos on Wednesday. There is very little storage in either fridge or freezer at Cabos, so a pickup **MUST** be scheduled for that day, and storage of those food items found immediately. A fest check can be used for this purpose.
- **Sams Club / Costco** - has some food items we can use some years, oils & spices in bulk, paper goods and eating utensils, some small kitchen equipment, mostly serving and prep items.
- **Albertsons/Publix/Winn Dixie** - small items and if bread is needed, a local grocery near the fest is the best place to get it. **PRE ORDER** is encouraged!
- **Tomatoland** - Butch is a fabulous DecemberFest provider each year. He normally gives us great deals, and can get almost anything fruit and vegetable-related that we ask for, and if not, will suggest alternatives to what he cannot get, or if he thinks we should go with something else. Order late the week before fest or early week of fest for pickup mid-week, in time to be taken by the big ass truck or someone with some room!
- **Restaurant Equippers** - offers pretty much ANY equipment we might find a need for. **GREAT** service and very fast delivery. Probably won't need it often, but a nice place to have on the list. A catalog is available at Nancy's. She receives one quarterly.

Food Organizing and Ordering - One (1) person to do the food ordering/organizing/menu consolidating is prudent. More than one person doing the final "list" makes it confusing and sometimes can lead to double ordering or forgetting an order. This do NOT mean more than one person cannot be a part of this!! Whomever is the "expediter" of food procurement should rely heavily on volunteers (and should make requests for help often!) to do pickups, help in loading, transporting, double checking of lists, etc.

Starting weeks in advance this "expediter" should find out who the meal leads are (make it happen!) and get menus set for each meal. Then find out what each meal will consist of, including all spices, charcoal, lighter helpers, wood, FOOD, paper goods, etc.

Suggested Lists for Food Procurement:

- **Friday Dinner**
-
- **Saturday Dinner**
-
- **Sunday Brunch**
-
- **Misc. and/or all**

Under each list, include food needed for each meal, including amounts per serving and for entire meal. Once these lists are done, you can then make a separate list that includes all shared items from all lists, such as spices, oils, charcoal, sterno, paper goods, and other miscellaneous items that may be shared by more than one meal.



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Things Meal & Food Expediter Must Have on To-Do List:

- Make lists of “what to do” for each day of week preceding the fest
- Make menu lists
- Consolidate said lists
- Order all food
- Organize food pickup w/dates and places. Including storage solutions before the fest
- Order Ice w/dates and places. Have volunteer(s) ready to help with possibly cutting and definitely placing ice in our ice boxes and freezer(s)
- Order Transport - lately we have been renting a large 24-26’ truck, which will hold all the DecemberFest equipment and food items, including all refrigerators containing ice and food. It is a huge time, labor and logistics solver.
- Organize licensed, competent and able driver(s) for rental truck if needed, making sure you have someone to drive there AND back, and who can also help in returning the truck to the rental location from the storage place for fest items.

Ice

The Fest need block ice each year to place in the reach-in “ice box” and fridge boxes to keep foods cold for at least 4 days. The amount purchased is dependent on the weather forecast. In the past years, we purchased four 300 lbs. blocks, each cut into 3 pieces and they lasted the entire weekend and still did not melt completely.

SOURCES:

- M & M Ice - 309 2nd Avenue NE, Cairo, GA 229-377-3422
- Keith also may have another source for block ice here in Tallahassee

Beer

Fest spends anywhere from \$1,000 - \$,1500 per year for beer. This may vary a lot, especially if a refrigerated truck is needed.

Jeff Harvey and Andy Kotcher have been recent and fabulous beer czars. The Fest needs an average of 13 - 15 kegs of beer for the weekend. We normally tap the kegs late Thursday or early Friday. There are normally 1 - 2 kegs of a special brew celebrating the fest, (to be tapped first), and split the rest of the kegs between less expensive but popular beers.

A refrigerated truck with taps is a PLUS since it means we can totally avoid having to craft a structure that will not only store the beer and keep it cold, but will also serve the beer that is tapped. Most distributors can provide a refrigerated truck with taps, but it is dependent on your location and whether they can even sell us the beer.

Nancy has a horse trailer that can be used for this purpose, but does not want it altered in any way that would make it unusable as a horse trailer! It can be insulated with enough Styrofoam, etc. to be usable as a beer trailer, but a



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constant source of ice must then be available at the fest. We would also then need a capable volunteer to haul the trailer to and from the fest, and to pick up the beer and return the kegs as well.

A local distributor, close to the fest site that year, must be used, otherwise it may not be legal to transport or even BUY the beer from another county. Make sure these laws are followed.

The beer czar and all cohorts of said czar MUST be available at all hours for keg changes, and any other problems, etc. related to the beer! Locking up the beer (and having a SPARE key) is a GREAT idea!

Propane

Larry Miller and/or Steve Wilson, fellow festers, have donated the filling of all our propane tanks each year, and also check and retrofit all connections as well. This is a huge donation each year, and is incredibly generous and needed.

Calling Larry or Steve early, such as early November, to set a date for filling and checking is a good idea. This works best if someone is able to take the tanks to them.

Fest Equipment

DecemberFest has inventory consisting of a full portable kitchen. Some things need updating and/or filling each year, such as propane so those are things that need doing each year several weeks in advance. The sink setup uses propane water heaters, so a pre-check of those, along with all propane connections and hoses is prudent.

Rental Truck

This is a relatively new addition to our expenses each year, but has proved incredibly helpful. The fest spends approximately \$1,000 (varies with gas prices and distance to fest) each year for rental and fuel. A driver is needed for pickup, driving to AND from the fest, and returning of the truck to the rental provider.

We have found that renting the truck for a full week makes it easier and less stressful and allows time to load and unload, as well as a return truck on the final day. Generally rental runs Tuesday - Monday. (Preferably Monday return to avoid paying an extra day).

Equipment Loading and Unloading

This is heavy work!! Ideally having 3-4 or more people for both ends of this process is helpful to have. The main loading for the fest happens preferably the day BEFORE leaving for the fest, usually Tuesday or Wednesday, depending on when the driver can leave for the fest.

The more volunteers found for this duty the better. On Sunday, at the fest, it's important to have SERIOUS volunteers lined up; Too often people magically disappear before loading happens, and often there are only a few people actually available for a very hard job. (Remember, we all JUST spent 3 wonderful and exhausting days Festing, and Sunday is the day everyone just wants to pack up and leave.



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Also, get some **SERIOUS** volunteers to help **UNLOAD** the truck at the storage location. This generally takes place on Monday so it's important to really get people who will show up. The truck also needs to be returned that day if possible to avoid paying an extra day.

When loading the truck before the fest, **PLEASE** make sure the main "Ice Box" is loaded near the **BACK** of the truck (where the door is) so access to the box is easy once at the fest, and food loading the day before or day of leaving for the fest is easy once all other equipment is loaded onto the truck.



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ENTERTAINMENT

DecemberFest has several incredible forms of entertainment each year, and it's always a treat! Our own Larry McCraw has been our stage manager for a LOT of years, and manages to pull amazing things together each year.

We have had bands, both Friday and Saturday nights. We have also has plays, skits, joke contests, and many other forms of silliness up there on the stage!

WHAT IS NEEDED FOR THIS PART OF DECEMBERFEST IS:

Musical Volunteers/Bands - DecemberFest does NOT pay for bands (or any other entertainment) All "acts" are either volunteers, or are paid for with private funds. Sometimes DecemberFest will cover the camping fees or entrance fees for the bands, but that is IT as far as that is concerned.

Thespians - to act in/direct etc. plays and skits

A Stage - this is SUPER important for our party! Occasionally we will find a site that HAS a stage and that is a great find, but otherwise we need to bring a stage, or the makings of one, with us each year. (Nancy has a 17' trailer with sides available for use, but need someone to haul it there & back, do not alter it so it is unusable!!)

Volunteers for stage construction/destruction - before and after the fest. Wayne & Dean Harden came through in a BIG way last year (2005), and have volunteered to do the same this year. They brought ALL components for the stage, and assembled it in splendid fashion!

Lighting - the stage needs to be lit and some lighting set-up is always needed. Volunteers of equipment and also the setup and breakdown of the lighting are needed every year.

A Sound Board - Someone usually comes through every year; a lot of the time it belongs to the band playing that year. That is wonderful. Just mentioning this with the thought that it may be an issue some year, and want it to be out there as a possibility. We also need someone to RUN the soundboard if it comes down to that!



DECEMBERFEST

SECURITY

We mention this because our main need for security involves keeping non-DecemberFesters from crashing our party. It does not mean having the use of, or the hiring of, security guards. It means that talks with site owners concerning how this may be accomplished is VERY important and should be discussed completely, and followed through with should any uninvited people try to attend our gathering.



DECEMBERFEST

GATE-KEEPING AND COLLECTING CAMPING FEES

It is highly preferable for the owners of the site we use to be responsible for these duties. It saves us from having to find people to man the gates, however fun that may be! That would mean finding people for almost all daylight hours of almost all days of the fest, involves having a “bank” and also involves having mailing lists printed and updating that list as people arrive.

The best thing to do is have the site owners be responsible for this, and assure them that we are an honorable group who will pay for our camping fees during the hours they state that they will be open to do this. THEN we must follow through and make sure that everyone does just that! If you arrive after hours at DecemberFest, it is YOUR responsibility to pay for your camping and entry. If you do not, then DecemberFest general fund may have to cover your costs and that is just wrong!



DECEMBERFEST

T-SHIRTS

DecemberFest has had t-shirts printed and sold at almost EVERY year since it started. Dave “The Shirtman” Watson, a fellow and longtime fester, has been in charge of this considerable duty for a LONG time and does a spectacular job of it!

Dave uses whatever theme is thought up that year, sometimes by him, to design the t-shirts. The design is set sometime in early November, with printing soon to follow.

There are usually several different designs/colors/logos/pocket placements, etc., which are decided by Dave, who uses opinions shared by fellow festers.

We have found that the most effective way to have the t-shirts produced is to leave all/most decisions up to Dave; this includes how many shirts are printed each year. Suggestions are, of course, welcomed, but please know that he knows what he is doing!!

Dave will also decide on the deadline for when orders must reach him. THIS deadline will determine the deadline for the invitation printing and mailing as well, since the t-shirt order form is included in the invitation.

Fest funds may be used for initial payment for shirt design and printing if Dave requests it. Any \$\$ received from sales of shirts over and above what Dave deems necessary for the printing are returned to the general fund for the following year (hopefully!).



DECEMBERFEST

WEBSITE

<http://www.decemberfest.com>

DecemberFest has hosted a website for a number of years, the address paid for by a very generous fellow fester! It is managed MOST capably by our webmaster who does regular updates, and keeps us all notified of the latest happenings fest-related. It's a LOT of work and we encourage everyone to check in regularly and to contact the webmaster with errors, updates, and information you feel should be mentioned.

There is a chat page where you can post information, comments (keep it nice, people!), and questions.

You can use the page for information only, or you can become more involved by signing up as a volunteer for the MANY and varied jobs that need doing each year. Please do so; it won't happen without the help of everyone! There are always places to fill and if you are interested, all you need to do is ask!

You can also contact the email webmaster with any changes in address etc. as well as asking questions. Your questions will be answered! Either by the email person directly, or you will be directed to someone who can answer your questions the best. Links to contacts are on the web page. So, please make use of our website. It's there for all to see, and use.



DECEMBERFEST

ONCE WE ARE THERE

Once we all arrive at DecemberFest, get our tents/campers, etc. set up and homey, then we can start what need doing there! The planning and execution doesn't stop once we all get there, there are many things that need doing, and you can help!! Sign up, drop by, do SOMETHING! It's all happening because of people like you who do step up and volunteer.

Here are a few things that need doing once we are all there:

- Unloading the "big ass" truck
- Raising the tarps over the kitchen area
- Hooking up water heaters in kitchen area to the sinks and propane tanks.
- Sharpen all fest knives
- Setting up the stage
- Setting up the lighting for the stage
- Setting up the lighting in the kitchen area
- Constant trash removal
- Watching out for one another
- Having fun
- Being grownups
- Volunteering for all sorts of things!
- Helping one another
- Asking for help!
- Meeting the owners of the site
- Making sure you know who to go to with questions
- Cutting firewood, if you are capable and can help the chainsaw master
- ETC.....



DECEMBERFEST

SITE CLEAN-UP

One very important motto of DecemberFest is “Leave it cleaner than you found it” and we try very hard to follow that motto. It is not just the right thing to do, but is also an indication of what kind of people we are. Every year, our wonderful clean-up crew, who always end up doing WAY more than they should, are amazed at what people (YOU) leave behind at your respective sites.

Most sites we use have a central trash area and most times just ask that we bag and dump all our trash there, whether it is a dumpster, trailer or whatever. This is made clear to all who attend and yet we still find piles and bags of trash left behind instead of having that trash put in the trash area. NOT FAIR!

Please...clean up after yourselves! It’s not only nice, but saves our already exhausted cleanup crew a lot of work. AND, volunteering for cleanup is also a great way to help out and do your part.

How we leave a site also can make or break a future good reference BY the site owners. We like to offer owners of possible future fest sites references by past site owners, and it’s a safe bet that if we leave a site less than clean, then the site owner will state that in our reference, or may not give us one.