

New Meeting Location – 2018

Good-Bye Olympic Collection; Hello St. Augustine's

Our November general meeting marked the end of an era for WFF – it was the last dinner meeting and speaker program to be held at the Olympic Collection (OC) in West L.A. Several “old timers” in attendance, (including Larry, Rich, Gus and a few others) were overheard before the meeting reminiscing about our last relocation from the Radisson Hotel in Beverlywood to the OC more years ago than anyone could accurately count. But everyone seems to agree that a change in location was necessary.

Our new meeting location beginning with our dinner meeting on January 16, 2018 will be St. Augustine By-the-Sea located at 1227 - 4th Street, in Santa Monica 90401. Peter Haight has graciously arranged for WFF to use the Church's general meeting room throughout 2018. All of the fly tyers and those who attended our 2016 holiday party are already familiar with this location; for those who aren't, St. Augustine is located just a few doors south of Wilshire Blvd. on the east side of 4th Street. When you enter the gate, stay to the left and proceed down the stairs to the meeting room. An elevator is also available. Parking is available in the City parking lot directly across from the Church (west side of 4th Street), or immediately north of Wilshire (also on the west side of 4th). Another good option, depending on your place of departure, is to ride the Metro to the western end of the route (5th Street and Colorado Ave.), and then walk a few blocks north on 4th Street to St. Augustine. We analyzed the logistics as part of the move and actually believe that it will be no more difficult, and in most cases considerably easier, to reach St. Augustine than OC for meetings because most members will be able to avoid the heavily trafficked Century City-Santa Monica corridor where OC is located.

Leaving OC was not an easy decision because we have been there for over 20 years, but there were several reasons that led us to the new location. Although OC gave us the grand ballroom, that space was much larger than we needed for average (or even peak) monthly attendance and the cost we were required to charge our members kept increasing; what we didn't charge members was paid out of club reserves which were declining rapidly. In addition, OC proposed to renew our contract for 2018 but only at a much higher individual meal cost while also eliminating certain financial concessions they had provided to us in prior years. The bottom line from the board's standpoint was that remaining at OC was not sustainable and would quickly jeopardize the club's financial stability. At the same time several club members commented that St. Augustine would be a welcome change and more suitable for club meetings.

With the change in location the club is able to also reduce the cost to members. We have been able to hire G&G Catering, with its excellent French chef, to provide dinners for us at a very reasonable rate. This is the same caterer that the Daltons used for this year's Holiday Party; those who were there will testify to all the good tastes. Finally, even with providing our own wine, cheese, and crackers at no additional cost to members, we can keep the cost to members at \$30 per meeting, down from \$37 (hard liquor folks, BYO). In addition, on a trial basis, we are also offering a “speaker program only” option (no dinner) for the cost of \$10. If you want to just come and see the program and not eat dinner, you can do so. Each speaker program will commence at 8:00 p.m.

By making these changes the board believes we will enhance the viability of the club long term. It's a little like tying on a new fly when the fish stop biting after you have had good success on that fly earlier – let's give it a run through the river and see how it works!

