

## Bay Area IWW Literature Tabling - A Guide for Members (this can be applied to other IWW branches)

I. **Introduction:** For over two decades, the Bay Area IWW has set up literature / merchandise tables at various events. This guide has been developed through experience, mostly trial and error) and observation.

### II. Why Table? Goals:

- (A) Grow the IWW by doing the following:
  - (1) Interest perspective members in joining the IWW;
  - (2) Serve as a contact point for organizing leads;
  - (3) Build Bay Area IWW network of support contacts;
  - (4) Increase our visibility (plants the seeds for future growth);
  - (5) Network with other, similar organizations.
- (B) Raise funds for the Bay Area IWW:
  - (1) Sale of IWW merchandise;
  - (2) Collecting donations;
  - (3) Signing up new members;
  - (4) Collecting union dues from current members.
- (C) Educate / Propagandize:
  - (1) Sale of IWW literature;
  - (2) Distribute free IWW literature;
  - (3) Spread news of current campaigns.
- (D) Provide activity / experience for current members.



### III. What typically goes on an IWW Table:

- (A) Merchandise:
  - (1) Apparel: IWW T-shirts and IWW Hats mostly;
  - (2) Books, Pamphlets, and Songbooks;
  - (3) Music (CDs mostly);
  - (4) Posters;
  - (5) Trinkets (buttons, patches, stickers, pennants, etc).
- (B) Free Literature
  - (1) Industrial Worker (cover price \$1, but we usually give them away);
  - (2) Leaflets (especially about current campaigns).
- (C) Networking Tools
  - (1) IWW Business Cards (crucial - helps others contact us later);
  - (2) Bay Area IWW Contact Signup Form (on a clipboard with pens; also crucial). **[Attached at the End]**

IV. **Tabling Equipment** - These are the essential tools for setting up an IWW literature table. Sometimes one or more pieces of this equipment are available at the tabling site and we needn't supply them ourselves. It is useful to know in advance what may or may not be available on site:

- (A) Tables - the Bay Area IWW has at least three easy to set up / dismantle, compact roll-up tables that measure 4-feet square;
- (B) Tablecloth - the table tops get dirty and dusty, plus the table cloth makes the merchandise look more appealing;
- (C) IWW Banner(s) - Helps people identify us up close and from a distance;
- (D) Clipboards and Pens (for the signup sheets, people who wish to sign up, people who wish to pay dues, or people who wish to pay by personal check);
- (E) Canopy (optional) - For events that take place outside, the Bay Area IWW has a camping tent that is 10 feet square and is easy to set-up and take down (it takes two people to make that process easy, but one can do it alone). This is useful in both sun (it provides shade) and rain (it provides /some/ shelter). There are also tent stakes for windy sites with soft ground;
- (F) Rubber Bands (helps if there is wind);
- (G) Poster Frames - for displaying posters;
- (H) Storage Containers for merchandise;

- (I) Modular Cube System (optional) - easy to set up / take down, compact, provides additional surface area and can enhance the display;
- (J) Bungee Cords - useful for hanging IWW banners and, or holding the legs of the canopy to a tree or other permanent object;
- (K) Chairs (optional) for seating;
- (L) About \$25 in small bills - many of our items cost between \$10-\$15, some cost less. Most people have \$20 bills, because those are (still) what ATMs usually dispense;
- (M) Price List - There should be a price list with the merchandise. Books range in price. There are a variety of prices for the books. T-shirts and hats usually retail for \$15 (though we usually sell them to dues paying members for \$12).

## V. **Preparation for Tabling:**

- (A) Research the Event:
  - (1) WHAT - Know what the event is, and if the IWW can table at the event; contact the event organizers and ask permission if uncertain. Sometimes there is a tabling fee, either payable in advance or at the event itself;
  - (2) WHERE - Research the location, including exactly where the tables will go;
  - (3) WHEN - Know the time and date as well as the duration of the event;
  - (4) WHO - Try to figure how many people might attend (it is usually not worth the effort if the event will be small, unless it is directly related to the IWW);
  - (5) WHY - Determine whether or not it is worth the effort; usually, if the event is likely to draw 100 or more and last an hour or more, it is.
- (B) Line Up Volunteers to Assist (you can table on your own, but it is always better to have at least another person for several reasons: safety, logistics, bathroom / food breaks, company, busy periods):
  - (1) Announce the event in advance (on the Bay Area IWW email lists, Facebook page, iww.org web calendar);
  - (2) Contact your perspective volunteers;
  - (3) Arrange to pick up the merchandise or have it delivered;
  - (4) Arrange transportation of the merchandise / equipment;
  - (5) Ensure that you have all of your necessary equipment / merchandise.
- (C) Scout the Location if unfamiliar:
  - (1) Note potential table location sites;
  - (2) Be aware of parking availability, regulations, and/or fees.
- (D) Plan your day in advance (including meal breaks if necessary).

## VI. **Set Up:**

- (A) Gather Equipment / Merchandise in advance - Currently FW Bruce Valde stores the supplies / merchandise at his house in Oakland. Contact him with plenty of advance notice. It is advisable to pick up the equipment at least a day in advance of the event. Sometimes, FW Valde will participate in the event himself and will bring the equipment / supplies with him or at least deliver it to you, but don't assume this will be the case. He, like all of us is a busy IWW member with his own schedule. :-)
- (B) Arrive at the event site early - Make sure your fellow tabling volunteers do so too (at least those assisting with the set up). Set up usually takes about 30 - 60 minutes. Be ready by the official start time of the event.
- (C) Be prepared - Anything can happen. Parking may be less available than expected; weather can change suddenly (especially in the Bay Area); tabling sites may be scarce.

## VII. **Tabling Itself (the good stuff!) - This is where the fun begins!**

- (A) Layout - Make sure the merchandise / literature / outreach tools are neat, organized, and well displayed. For T-shirts, keep them stacked neatly and organized by size (small on top is best) This makes a huge difference;
- (B) Entropy - Throughout the event, especially busy events, the display gets disorganized. Periodically straighten it up;
- (C) Interaction - Of course, be friendly, energetic, engaging with people who approach us.
- (D) Network - Encourage people to put their contact information on our signup list. This helps build the IWW's network of support and can potentially result in new members / organizing leads.
- (E) Keep track of the money - Keep it organized and safe. Be prepared to get change if needed. Sometimes this means you have to go to a bank, store, or eatery and ask for change.
- (F) Avoid Confrontation - political events attract no shortage of people with strong opinions or people who may be, for lack of a better word, crazy. Friendly debate is useful; energy sucking confrontation is not and it drives others away from the table.

- (G) Watch Out for Theft - it rarely happens, but sometimes people do take things without paying. More often than that, sometimes people walk away with an item without thinking about it (an honest mistake).
- (H) Weather - Outdoor events are subject to changes in weather. Heavy rain is pretty rare (usually outdoor events don't take place in the rainy season), but it can happen. Rain can destroy books and paper. Wind is more of a problem. Sometimes sudden gusts of wind can blow paper, books, t-shirts, money, even whole camping canopies several feet away. Be prepared for this.
- (I) Space on the Table - Occasionally people will walk by the table and ask us to let them leave leaflets for their event, organization, cause at our table. Use your judgment in deciding this. Usually it's okay if their literature is small, like a quarter-sheet and the event somewhat relevant to the IWW, but don't sacrifice our own display for this. Also, it can become inundating if large numbers of people ask for this.

VIII. **Extra Good Ideas** - This can really help make the most of tabling:

- (A) Delegates - It is ideal if at least one member of the tabling crew is a delegate (in fact, if you are taking this training seriously, you should consider being a delegate; it will allow you to collect dues from current members as well as sign up new members);
- (B) Work the Crowd - If you have an especially large crew and it is an especially large event (such as a book fair, large demonstration, say 10,000 or more), it might be useful to have some volunteers stand near the table, distributing a leaflet or postcard relevant to current IWW activity and have them draw people to our table (this is something we rarely do, but should try more often).
- (C) Write a brief report of the experience when finished - These can be useful as news items, for the IWW website, Industrial Worker, and/or branch reports, and it will inspire others to get involved. Be sure to note how much money was raised.
- (D) Look for the Union Label - Make note of the fact that much of what we sell is union made / printed. People appreciate this.
- (E) Be Familiar with the Merchandise / Literature - This helps sell it.

IX. **Acceptable Forms of Payment:**

- (A) Cash - US Currency Only. Check \$50 / \$100 bills for authenticity
- (B) Checks - Must be from a US financial institution, have the payees name & address on it, must be made out to "IWW" or "Industrial Workers of the World", and must be in blue or black ink.

X. **Not Acceptable Forms of Payment:**

- (A) Credit Cards / Debit Cards - We do not have the means to process them yet (we may develop this in the future);
- (B) Travelers Checks - Too risky;
- (C) Money Orders - Not likely, but certainly a scam if attempted;
- (D) Non Us Currency - Too complicated to process and costs us for the exchange;
- (E) Local Currency (like "hours") - No way for us to benefit directly;
- (F) Food stamps - Illegal;
- (G) Barter - Doesn't help the IWW.
- (H) Anything else - See (G).

XI. **Takedown** - As the event winds down, be sure to dismantle and store all equipment / merchandise carefully and neatly.

- (A) Merchandise / Literature / Networking Equipment - Stow all of these things neatly in their storage containers;
- (B) Equipment - Dismantle everything carefully and methodically. We want our equipment to last a long time;
- (C) Money - Count the money and Checks and make note of this.
- (D) Sign Up Sheets - Collect and keep track of these.

XII. **Return and Process:**

- (A) Return Tabling Equipment / Merchandise or have it Picked up by FW Valde;
- (B) Deliver Money to the Bay Area IWW Treasurer
- (C) Deliver Outreach / Contact Sheets to Bay Area IWW Outreach Coordinator;
- (D) Relax - Good Job Fellow Workers!

**Event:** \_\_\_\_\_