

An Introduction to Chemin de Fer

This Chemin de Fer guide is provided for our newer parents to answer questions you may have about the Academy of the Sacred Heart's annual dinner auction and to refresh the memories of our returning parents. Should you need additional information, please don't hesitate to contact the Advancement Office or one of the chairs, or check our website at www.ash1818.org or the auction website—coming soon!

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What is Chemin de Fer?

Chemin de Fer [shuh-men duh fair] is our annual benefit auction, held this year on May 6. Chemin de Fer, the French word for "railroad," got its name 43 years ago when a parent of alumni set our fundraising train in motion. The idea of a casino auction was a bold new venture. Chemin de Fer was also the name of a casino game played on the French Riviera.

Our train has transported us to events such as the Academy Awards and the Kentucky Derby, as well as exciting locales like New York, Las Vegas, Africa, India and Japan. This year our Chemin de Fer train speeds toward our roots; on May 6, we will arrive in France where the Academy's story begins.

What was once an evening of casino games and a lavish hors d'oeuvres buffet in the old gymnasium has grown to an event with many oral auction items, hundreds of silent auction items in the White Center, and a fabulous sit-down dinner in Rauch Memorial. Chemin de Fer has become the Academy's major fundraiser.

How Does It Work?

Again this year, we are excited that Chemin de Fer guests will participate in the Academy's bidding experience using BidPal.

With the use of BidPal, your iPhone/Android smartphone or handheld bidding devices eliminate paper bid sheets for easy and fun bidding. During registration, guests will receive a text message to their iPhone/Android or a handheld device pre-loaded with every auction item — item description, bid increments, photo and donor information. Guests can browse the silent auction area and view items on their personal BidPal device. Guests can bid from anywhere at any time during the event.

With Bidpal, you will be able to:

- Bid from anywhere at any time
- Receive outbid alerts and notification of items won
- Place maximum bid amounts
- View items with no bids and watch favorite items

Before auction excitement gets underway, a Mass is offered at 5:00 p.m. in the Shrine for the convenience of our guests and volunteers. The silent auction, located in the White Center, begins at 5:30 p.m. Guests stroll from table to table looking at the variety of items. When you decide to place a bid, simply look up the item on your phone or BidPal device and place a bid. As the auction continues, you will be automatically notified if you are outbid.

Our oral auction features approximately 50 items and takes place after dinner in Rauch Memorial (the gym). Items will be auctioned from the stage. To bid, simply hold up your paddle number. Spotters will be in the audience to help the auctioneer recognize your bid.

(turn over)

How do you get so many items for the auction?

Donations, donations and more donations! We have a committee of individuals who solicit local businesses. Each class also solicits a small amount from each family and the room parents select a gift. Groups of parents, such as subdivisions, professionals or employees of one company, also join together and donate auction items. In addition, we hold gift gathering events, the proceeds of which go to Chemin.

You may also send in a donation anytime you wish. A donation contract is included in this Chemin packet. Complete the contract and send it to school along with your donation. All items are greatly appreciated—including any talents or services you can provide! If it is something you would like, more than likely, others will want to bid on it, too! Take a look at the enclosed “Wish List” for suggestions. Cash donations are always welcome. All donations are tax deductible.

What is ASH 300?

Three hundred raffle tickets will be sold at \$100 each. Each Academy family is asked to be responsible for one ticket – to buy one or to sell one. Families may purchase their ASH 300 ticket themselves and sell another ticket to a family member, friend or co-worker, or split it among several people. The winning ticket holder (drawn the night of Chemin de Fer) receives \$5,000. This year, there will be Early Bird winners on February 23, March 16, and April 13. The lucky winners on February 23 and March 16 will receive \$500 each. The lucky winner on April 13 will receive \$250. There are also two drawings, February 23 and March 16, for all sellors of three or more ASH 300 tickets. Winners need not be present.

What about Raffle Tickets?

The children sell raffle tickets every year for Chemin. Tickets cost \$1 each for the chance to win great prizes. Prizes will be announced at a later date.

Do I need to organize my own table?

You may, but it’s not required. We will do our best to honor your request to sit with parents from your child’s class. Smaller parties will be seated together as reservations are received. We are requiring that payment for your group be paid in full when sending in your RSVP. *We cannot hold seats based on partial payments.* You will also be able to purchase your seats on the auction website—coming soon.

What do people wear to Chemin?

The evening will feature an elegant dinner and decorations. Cocktail or theme inspired attire is suggested.

How can I volunteer?

There are several areas in which you can contribute your time and talent. You are sure to find at least one committee that suits your interests. In addition to helping with the preparations of Chemin de Fer, you have the opportunity to serve as an auction volunteer the night of the big event. For more information on how you can support Chemin de Fer through volunteering, see the enclosed volunteer form.

Are there other ways I can show my support?

Absolutely! We count on the support of businesses, parents, family and friends to help defray the expenses incurred. A variety of options exists, such as sponsorships and auction program advertising.

We hope this helps to explain some of our Chemin lingo. It’s a special night that is filled with great food, an open bar and fabulous shopping opportunities. Most importantly, all money raised goes to support the education of our children, and that is cause for celebration!

thank you!