

FCCJ F&B Committee 2024-25

Annual Report for the BOD

July 2024 to June 2025

Active Members (@ end of May 2025): Shuri Fukunaga*, Michiyo Nakamoto*, Steve Romaine, Machiko Romaine, Peter Tyksinski, Wayne Hunter (*co-chairs)

Over the year, the Food and Beverage Committee identified various issues facing the Club with regard to its food and beverage offerings. To hasten fact-finding and resolution, the Committee invited representatives of ANAC, our core caterer serving the Main Bar, Pen & Quill and Banquets, to be present at specific Committee meetings so 1) complaints can be addressed and to 2) collaborate on idea-generation to enhance food quality and service.

1. The quality of the food, if poor, discourages members from using the Main Bar and makes the Club vulnerable to losing members. The Committee consensus is the food served in the Main Bar is not always up to the standards expected by many members of the Club. Our current caterer, ANA Catering (ANAC), has agreed to make improvements but we have come to see its lack of experience in restaurant and club hospitality puts the caterer on a slow learning curve.
2. Moreover ANAC's business procedures is built along its core service, inflight meals. This does not totally align with the flexibility and customer-friendliness that that members of a private club expect. While ANAC is sincere in listening to Committee requests and recommendations, decision-making and action are sluggish. This derives, not from the on-site staff's work ethics and attitude, but more to ANAC's corporate structure and direction they need to follow. Culinary processes and procedures at ANAC are controlled and purchasing centralized.
3. Over the year, we received a number of complaints from members about the hamburger, which many Club members perceive as signature food. Complaints were received on other menu items also, for example the pasta dishes. Based on our recommendations, ANAC has made improvements to the hamburger patty. ANAC has also changed its pasta to be less soft. We are working together as well to make improvements also to the salad dressing, bread, set menus ("Correspondents' Lunch"), and other dishes.
4. The Committee has also assessed the lunch menu in the Main Bar is not appealing and we have asked ANAC to review the lunch menu and suggest alternative dishes. Dishes that people do not necessarily choose for lunch -- lamb chops, pork spare ribs and cajun chicken, for example -- will likely be taken off the lunch menu.
5. Given the current increase in commodity prices overall, ANAC has asked to raise its prices in the Main Bar and the Club has agreed to the price increases. As a result, dishes priced under JPY1,000 are now up by JPY100, those from JPY1,000 to JPY1,500 by JPY150 and those over JPY1,500 will by JPY200. The "Correspondents' Lunch" will remain under JPY1,500 but will come with one pour of coffee instead of two.
6. The "bar counter area" in the Main Bar is underutilized. Optimized use of this space is an item the 2025-26 F&B Committee might put on its agenda for review and ideas to implement.

7. Service in the Main Bar is another issue that members have complained about. The dining room staff, with the exception of a few old-timers, are perceived as unfriendly. In fact there have been cases of several complaints about rude treatment. We have communicated to ANAC the paramount need of friendliness and hospitality at a private club and the caterer agreed to work on training staff to be more customer friendly.
8. Pen & Quill is not being utilized due in large part to the inconvenient requirements imposed by our caterer, such as the need to reserve at least 3 days in advance. The lack of an à la carte menu is also an inconvenience, particularly as many of our members prefer a lighter more than a heavier full course meal. Additionally, the decor in Pen & Quill is unattractive, making the dining experience less than appealing. Changing this will require an investment, but the Club lacks funds at this time. Interim, the caterer is considering allocation of the Pen & Quill space, on days when reservations are nil, to additional floor space for Main Bar guests to use.
9. ANAC has agreed to organize events to increase traffic, such as a family buffet that is planned for the Main Bar in August. Specifics are pending.
10. ANAC has also agreed to provide food and beverages in the early hours before staff come in, but this will cost extra to cover staff costs. For example, in addition to JPY1,500 per person for coffee and pastries for Deep Dive, the cost for presence of a staff to serve will need to be shared. Rough estimation of having a staff on site will be in the range of JPY10,000-plus.
11. One problem the Club is encountering is the early closing of the Main Bar. Members and guests attending the film screenings, which sometimes go on past 20:30, find it difficult to gather in the Main Bar after the event not only because last orders are due at 21:00, when staff frequently start to clean up.
12. ANAC is losing money and the Committee is concerned that it may not decide to continue serving the club after their contract expires in September 2026. The contract comes up for review in March 2026. ANAC has informed us that their new CEO is not happy about the loss-making business and has sent a manager to oversee the business full-time. ANAC also replaced the dining room manager, presumably, after complaints that he was unpleasant. More recently, ANAC has requested via the Management that the Club forfeit the 8 percent share of its F&B revenue, which we assess the Club will decline to do given the need for Club revenue. The Club needs to have a "Plan B" in case ANAC leaves.

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Below is a recommended list of items to include in next term (2025-26)'s Committee mandate:

- ✓ "Plan B" recommendations
- ✓ F&B facilities usage optimization (including the bar counter, Pen & Quill)
- ✓ Routine food quality review
- ✓ Routine menu review

May 30, 2025-