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Have bachelorette, will arrange party

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CONTRIBUTOR

What does a bride-to-be do for a last hurrah before her wedding?

She might call Angela Burdick, owner of VIP Bachelorette in Franklin Park.

Bridegrooms seem to have a lot of choices of a celebration before they get married. Burdick said. But, "we noticed there weren't a lot of services for bachelorette parties."

She started the business in 2004 in an office connected to her home in the 2500 block of Sheila Street in Franklin Park. She meets with potential clients in the nightclubs where the parties are held or through the Internet or telephone calls.

The business is expected to relocate in May to a 680-square-foot storefront on 25th Avenue.

What's offered

Her company offers transportation to downtown/Near North nightclubs, in-home parties or will arrange a no-cover, no-wait admission to bars with a period of free drinks.

She also will arrange bachelor parties.

Carol Morgenstern and Gail Peters have used Burdick's bachelorette service for their daughters. Both said they would recommend the company to others.

Morgenstern, who lives near Peterson and California in Chicago, said, "It was a very good experience." Added Peters, of St. Charles, "It was really fun."

Peters said facing big cover charges and long waits at downtown clubs were avoided by booking through Burdick's firm.

Burdick, who formerly lived near Devon and Milwaukee in Chicago, can offer packages to "almost every club downtown." She mentions Bar Chicago on Division Street; Transit on Lake; Coyote Ugly Chicago on Erie; and Hogs & Honeys on Sheffield.

Several packages

Burdick said when she gets a call, usually from the maid of honor, she will provide several packages from which to choose. Prices range from \$25 to \$125 per person. The women can choose two or three nightclubs at which to party.

Burdick can meet with the person booking the party in the nightclub to give a tour, but noted, "A lot of girls are familiar with them."

Most packages include transportation - a limousine or party bus depending on the price. The vehicle will pick up party members usually at the home of the bride or maid of honor.

Besides the driver, the party can have a host, usually a male, for the evening who will walk them into the club.

Burdick has 12 employees.

"Sometimes the host also is a male stripper who does an act for them," she said.

Two hours a club

The party usually spends about two hours in each club and returns to the pickup point about 2 a.m.

"They pay for everything (beforehand)," she said about party members. "They don't have to spend any money.

"It's always no cover, no wait at every club through each package," she said. The company will arrange for free champagne, drinks or shots of liquor.

Party members are guaranteed seats and given a VIP section. A disc jockey will make an announcement about the bachelorette party, and the bars will provide special games or try to get the girls onto the dance floor. If the bar has a mechanical bull, party members get free rides.

The women "drink, have fun," Burdick said. Her firm also can arrange belly dancers or male strippers. About 40 percent of her customers will arrange with her to go to male revue shows.

Asked how customers hear of her company, Burdick replied, "A lot come through the Internet. We get a lot of referrals (and from) ads in nightclubs downtown and in magazines."

Home parties

For a party in a home, Burdick also offers a variety of services such as massages; manicures and makeovers; psychic readings; belly dancing or strip-tease lessons; and naughty-toy demonstrations. Her company also can cater food for a home party.

Peters said she heard about the business through a friend. She booked a home party for September for about 20 women. She arranged with Burdick, who hosted the party, for a psychic and stripper in the home.

"Angela was really sweet," Peters said.

Five or six party members went out afterward to two bars in Chicago.

"We got our own ride," Peters said. "It was very nice, no wait, no cover. They treated us very

nice."

Morgenstern said Burdick was "real easy to work with."

Bus trip

For her daughter's bachelorette party in November, a lot of the women were from out of town and stayed in a hotel near O'Hare Airport. A bus picked them up at the hotel and brought them to three nightclubs.

"Everything really went like clockwork," she said.

Fifteen women were in the Morgenstern party.

Burdick said there is no minimum amount of women for a bachelorette party. "It could be five or 50."

The lowest cost is \$25 per woman for three nightclubs, but no transportation. The highest of \$125 per person includes a limousine for seven hours, drinks and a male stripper.

The most popular package, she said, is \$55 per person for a party bus for seven hours, three clubs, drinks and champagne.

In-home parties start at \$25 per person. The women can pick any combination they want. "Psychic readings, belly dancing and massages is a popular package," Burdick noted.

Prices for bachelor parties range from \$25 per person for a nightclub or gentlemen's club to \$55 for a bus with three clubs.

More information is available by calling (847) 288-9398 or visiting the Web site of vipbachelorette.net.