

The Canadian Association of Aquarium Clubs

30th Annual Convention

hosted by

The Kitchener/Waterloo Aquarium Society

Intro

The 30th annual CAOAC convention was held on May 19,20,21 at the Waterloo Inn, Waterloo, Ontario and was hosted by the Kitchener/Waterloo Aquarium Society. Our club decided to host this year's convention to help show that a club need not have a large bank-roll nor a great number of workers to host such an event. Throughout our many meetings we were determined to create a workable format for any club large or small to copy, which allowed our members to also enjoy parts of the weekend. Our goals were to host a relaxing, informative, affordable and entertaining weekend.

Format Change

To do this we decided to change the format of the convention from those in the past. Our first decision was to eliminate the fish show. Although the traditional fish show is nice to have and see and can draw the public to the convention and to the auction, we felt it was not worth the effort and expense. In manpower alone we saved 4-5 people by not running a show, plus the man hours required to persue sponsors for all the costly trophies.

We also heard from many hobbyists that they were disappointed in having to choose between speakers scheduled opposite each other. In scheduling our speakers we reduced the number of talks and placed them one after the other, allowing the delegates the opportunity to see them all, if they wished. We also decided to go with a mixure of familiar speakers and topics along with some new faces and new topics, to give the hobbyist, a broader view of the fish hobby. Our speakers dealt with fish pathology, marine fishes, herptology, plants and our area's favorite Cichlids. All our speakers were well received and went over their allotted times with questions from the audience, which was most encouraging and gratifying.

We decided against tradition again on Saturday evening. Due to the increasing cost of meals, which in turn force the weekend ticket cost up, we dropped the meal in favour of dessert and coffee alone. It left us a very relaxed atmosphere which then allowed the opportunity to bring in an entertaining guest speaker to lead us in a great dance. The reason we decided to maintain the banquet on Sunday was to allow C.A.O.A.C. proper and formal recognition of it's new executive elect and to publicly congratulate the annual awards winners. We also felt that it created a ending to the convention, a bringing together of friends old and new.

Having Mary Kay come in on both Saturday and Sunday to give free demonstrations and helpful hints was a great idea. It gave the women something to do on Sunday when the stores were closed and their husbands were otherwise occupied. Many said that it gave them the opportunity to ask questions, get personalized explanations of products they would not have tried on their own. All who attended the Saturday facial and make-over session, definitely looked ready to party that night.

Financial Statement

In trying to format the financial statement for this report I decided to explain how we organized our money, instead of listing the credits and debits. We first created a budget to determine where our money would be coming from and where we were going to spend it. Each committee was looked at to decide what expenses they would incur and what income they could expect. Once this was completed we then tried to match up those committees which would require money to support it to one which would make money. The following list was what we came up with:

Revenue

booklet advertizing

registration

sponsorship

raffle

auction

Cover Cost

booklet printing
convention ticket printing
raffle ticket printing

meals

speakers

prizes
D.J.
hotel misc charges
other misc expenses

auctioneer
auction room expenses

As you can see this budget told us how much booklet advertizing we needed to sell, what price we should set for our convention tickets, how many sponsors were needed, and how many raffle tickets needed to be sold. Using this format we needed no upfront money, as the revenue from the booklet advertizing was received before it was necessary to pay any bills. Furthermore, if we adhered to our budget the auction would be almost all profit.

In the end we had to pay for our meeting and auction rooms because free rooms meant a certain number of guest rooms needed to be rented, which were not. Since our revenue however in each category comfortably covered it's budgetted costs we were able to realize a total profit for the weekend, roughly equal to our auction revenue.

Because of the facilities required throughout a convention we were still compelled to go to a large hotel, therefore the hotel room rates remained higher than we would have liked to see them. We chose the Waterloo Inn, for its size and facilities its location which was close to our annual show location, and its friendliness. We were able to reduce the cost of the weekend ticket price by offering dessert and coffee before the dance, instead of a full meal. We thought this might make the weekend more affordable to more people and therefore attract more hobbyists.

Our weekend ticket price was \$35.00 per person
dessert and dance only was \$10.00 per person

Our hotel room rate was \$70.00 single/double
\$80.00 triple/quad

Conclusion

Our best efforts and planning however were rewarded with a significant drop in attendance over last year. This was in many ways a puzzle to us since we had:

- 1) dropped the convention ticket prices
- 2) maintained a quality speaker format
- 3) maintained the hotel room rates
- 4) promoted the many positive aspects throughout C.A.O.A.C.
- 5) offered a central, easily accessible location in Kitchener/Waterloo

Clearly the convention package did not appeal to some of C.A.O.A.C.'s regulars and sadly some nearby clubs were entirely unrepresented.

The following points are worth considering since we are able to answer yes to them all.

- 1) Were we on time, on budget and co-ordinated in our efforts as hosts?
- 2) Was there a good balance of scheduling to allow conventioners the time to learn and share?
- 3) Were the speakers unique, interesting and educational?
- 4) Was the hotel clean and well managed?
- 5) Was everything as it was promised in the convention bulletin?
- 6) Were there surprise extras thrown in?
- 7) Did the average conventioner have fun, learn something new, share something already known and make a new friend?
- 8) Did our own club members have time to have fun and enjoy the convention atmosphere and events?
- 9) Did we make a profit for the club treasurer for our efforts?
- 10) Was it a successful convention?

YOU BET!!!

Thank you C.A.O.A.C.