

Hosting a CAOAC Convention

The following suggestions/guidelines have been compiled to give assistance to societies/clubs wishing to host a CAOAC convention. Certain protocol should be followed and committees have been suggested, but CAOAC does not wish to stifle creativity by overly restricting societies/clubs. We hope that this summary will help societies/clubs decide if they are ready to commit to this task and whether they have the people power needed. Please remember the executive is there to offer assistance and/or suggestions to help you run a smooth and (hopefully) profitable convention.

Convention Chairperson

The convention chairperson is the person responsible for overall convention planning.

1. The chairperson should set up committee heads, call meetings, set up deadlines, then enforce them.
2. The chairperson should allow and expect committee heads to do their work and to make sure it is being done; to be there for support, but not to take over.
3. The chairperson however, should possess tact and diplomacy which are extremely important. Remember all your helpers are volunteers and could quit at any time.
4. The chairperson should make a list of required positions and members to volunteer for the position which interests them and which you feel most suits them.
5. The chairperson should attend CAOAC general meetings as convention liaison person and continuously issue updates.
6. The chairperson is the host and must be positive, gracious and highly visible at the convention. A frazzled chairperson who has rushed around trying to do everyone's job will do little to make convention guests feel at ease and comfortable.
7. The chairperson should also remember to give credit where credit is due.

Sponsorship Chairperson

The main functions of the sponsorship chairperson are to solicit and co-ordinate the soliciting of (1) advertising for the convention booklet, (2) trophy sponsorship, (3) product donations

1. The chairperson could have a list of prospective donors compiled then divide it into groups for specific types of sponsorship (i.e.. large companies for underwriting and advertizing; medium companies for trophy sponsorship; smaller companies for product donations). An alternative (and perhaps the easiest/best) is to produce one standard letter including all types of sponsorships and letting the addressee choose the type or types. Remember they would not appreciate receiving more than one letter requesting support. An all-inclusive letter can sometimes be successful where a sponsor is amenable to supporting more than one area.
2. The chairperson should compose this letter by including all the good points of the convention, its speakers, hobbyists etc. Make the proposed sponsors aware that their

name will be mentioned several times throughout the convention and the number of people the advertizing is expected to reach.

3. The areas needing donations are a) money to cover speakers, publication and trophies; b) raffle; c) auction; and d) welcoming grab bag usually given at registration.
4. The chairperson should make donors aware that you will accept anything and give the company the name, address and telephone number of the person who has agreed to accept the donations so there is a contact for the companies once the items start arriving. You can then determine where they will be best suited and allot them accordingly.
5. The chairperson should ensure advertizing in the convention booklet is sold as full pages, ½ pages and ¼ pages. The cover is usually sold for more, inside front and back cover and outside back cover for a lesser amount. Discount should be considered for hobby related companies/pet stores and CAOAC members.
6. Check with the Chamber of Commerce in your area, banks and any convention bureaus for a list of co-operative companies.
7. The chairperson should contact pet stores, order houses, manufacturers of aquatic supplies for donations. Check local manufacturers, retail stores etc. for sponsorship.
8. The chairperson should acknowledge sponsors when ever possible (auction, show bulletins, club newsletters etc).
9. The chairperson should not forget to send out thank you letters as this will be a positive last impression, very helpful the next time you approach them.

Auction Chairperson

The auction is the one event at a show, and convention is no exception, that makes money. The auction typically has two general formats that have been used in the past (1) a mini auction of dry goods on one day and the main auction (fish etc) on a different day (2) one giant auction.

1. The chairperson should find a treasurer and recorders as required to keep track of sold goods.
2. The chairperson should find two auctioneers to make the auction go much faster.
3. The chairperson will need manpower right through to the close of the auction when bidders have to pay for their purchases.
4. The chairperson should make sure the room is large enough, with a good supply of display tables for the auction lots and plenty of chairs for the bidders.
5. The chairperson should allow ample time for your auction. This is very important.
6. The chairperson should have all show fish to be auctioned tagged before judging so they can be easily removed.
7. The chairperson should provide a refreshment table if at all possible; this is a good way to keep people from wandering off and is another good revenue generator.
8. The chairperson has several ways to run the auction:
 - Cash & carry system: where several runners deliver the purchase and receive payment
 - Computer program for tabulating totals of won items so bidders can get a printout and payfor their items at the conclusion of the auction.
9. The chairperson should display posters thanking donors and sponsors in the auction room.

10. The chairperson should set up a sales table (where consignors specify a price for each item). This is another way of reducing pressure on the main auction.
11. The chairperson should decide how large of an auction the club can accommodate or want given basic facilities and time restraints and what can reasonably be expected.
12. The chairperson should consider varying the split (i.e. club/consignor) which may increase or decrease the number of items the club receives.
13. The chairperson should make sure regardless of the order in which they are submitted, all live consignments are auctioned. Conventioneers do not like to get unsold fish returned.

Accommodation Chairperson

The accommodation chairperson is the person responsible for matters involving hotel/motel accommodations.

1. The chairperson should have one person deal directly with the venue, keeping all correspondence and getting everything in writing. This will help keep problems to a minimum. Watch out for hidden costs by trying to anticipate every need.
2. The chairperson should begin by making a list of suitable venues in your area, suitable meaning, large enough, convenient by plane, train, bus etc and having a good reputation.
3. The chairperson should send a letter to each venue on your list stating your requirements and requesting a quote from them. **State the date by which these tenders are needed and that from your response you will be making a shorter list.** These will be contacted by phone to arrange an inspection of the facilities. Also state the date of final decision.
4. The chairperson should determine what the requirements are, by reading over previous convention reports to help get an idea of the number of people attending and the number of entries for the fish show.
5. The chairperson should try to get a price that will allow as many people to a room as desired.
6. The chairperson should try to arrange for all the conventioneers to be located in the same area of the venue where possible.
7. The chairperson should request the venue provide registration information which can be dispersed to prospective attendees.
8. The chairperson should let the venue take care of all room registrations. Check for free parking.
9. The chairperson should try to get the venue to give you as many free rooms (for speakers) as possible or to a sponsor as an early bird draw, or anything else you can think of.
10. The chairperson should request a menu selection well in advance, so you have an idea what is available. Obtain a menu before making a final decision on the venue. Menu prices at venues differ, sometimes substantially.
11. The chairperson should set a per-person budget (including taxes & gratuities) but do not decide upon and confirm the menu until the venue is prepared to guarantee the price.
12. The chairperson should remember the auction room will need to be large enough to accommodate several large tables and plenty of seating. Remember the audio equipment that will be needed.
13. The chairperson should determine the size of your fish-show room. It must be secure after everyone leaves for the night, have 24 hour temperature control, have easy access

to water supply and have easy access for entries to be brought in. The room must be large enough to accommodate a medium group of people walking around looking at the entries.

14. The chairperson should determine the size of the speaker-room required. It also should be secure after use, and have access to projection equipment and a sound system. Can the venue provide these?
15. The chairperson should remember a banquet hall will be needed for Saturday and Sunday with ample room to set up awards tables and have a cash bar close by.
16. The chairperson should take these requirements in hand with a few people to each hotel on your short list noting each ones good and bad points, so a decision can be made which is the most suitable. Eliminate immediately any that do not meet your minimum standards.

PR Chairperson

1. The chairperson should contact local newspapers, radio stations and possibly television stations (which sometimes grant interviews to be taped and run several times) by letter a few months before the convention. The chairperson should follow-up by telephone or person a week before on any positive responses.
2. The chairperson should print small flyers for pet shops, schools, libraries, etc.
3. The chairperson should contact magazines, periodicals with an ad promoting the convention.
4. The chairperson should approach other CAOAC club editors to include in their publications one of your flyers.
5. The chairperson should visit local societies/clubs and send as much information as possible to out-lying societies/clubs to generate more enthusiasm. This includes advertising the convention on as many other club forums etc as possible.
6. The chairperson should prepare a powerpoint presentation to be given or sent to other
7. CAOAC societies/clubs. This will encourage regular club members to attend.
8. The chairperson should have a hospitality suite organised. This helps to break the ice and gives newcomers a place to go to meet other hobbyists. Use one large room for entertaining and consider a free bar or small cash bar. Set out munchies and set a reasonable time limit on this room as they can sometimes go on forever if allowed to.
9. The chairperson should give your raffle general appeal since not everyone is interested in fish. Have tickets available early and promote them heavily. Promote the sale by giving a free ticket for each book sold or a prize for the most tickets sold. Cut cost by printing them yourselves but be sure to keep the quality good as this helps sell tickets. Some have small raffles throughout the convention but beware not to flood the market. You may need a license so check out local and provincial/state regulations.
10. The chairperson should try some time on the Friday night to help get any newcomers introduced around, not to mention the old timers catching up on their gossip.
11. The chairperson should consider a disc jockey instead of a band – less formal – less expensive and more variety, if there is going to be live entertainment.
12. The chairperson should, for those people not interested in fish, consider a tour or shopping expedition. Make sure it has general appeal and try scheduling it when most are at loose ends.

13. The chairperson should supply complimentary water and coffee during the CAOAC annual meeting.

Program Chairperson

Speakers are frequently very busy and are booked many months in advance if they are popular. Plenty of time (up to a year) should be allowed to ensure you can book the speakers you want for the convention.

The host society/club usually pays each speaker:

- a convention ticket
 - a hotel room
 - gas or airfare (gas mileage should be paid before they leave).
1. The chairperson should, if using speakers who are travelling a great distance, try to use them in other capacities (i.e. as a judge, etc).
 2. The chairperson should have email contact initially. Follow-up with a telephone call after details are worked out and request they book early for air reservations as there may be a savings.
 3. The chairperson should, after a speaker has confirmed, keep them informed of the convention schedule and send them a convention booklet.
 4. The chairperson should make sure the speakers and judges are aware of the terms of their agreement, in writing (email) prior to the convention.
 5. The chairperson should keep informed of the speaker's arrival and departure times, picking the speakers up if necessary and making sure they get settled in and they know where and when they are to present their talk.
 6. The chairperson should get a list in advance of any speaker requirements. Request well in advance if possible so arrangements can be made to have it all available when it is needed.
 7. The chairperson should be prepared to give a brief introduction before each speaker's presentation and remember to check all equipment for malfunctions before the presentation begins. Request well in advance, curriculum vitae for the convention bulletin and/or the introduction.

Publication Chairperson

1. The chairperson should seek advertising early, working closely with other committees.
2. The chairperson should estimate the number of copies required the number of pages and the amount of advertising needed/wanted.
3. The chairperson should consider a contest amongst society/club members for a design cover. It may spark enthusiasm and you may find some hidden talent which you can use later.
4. The chairperson should set a deadline for all input for your committees and stick to it!
5. The chairperson should check around for the best prices for printing your booklet (a

- local school, which teaches this might give you a better price).
6. The chairperson should stress that the advertizing received must be camera ready and in approximate size and format required (reducing/enlarging can be costly).
 7. The chairperson should keep all sizes of print to the printers standard, it's cheaper.
 8. The chairperson should quote advertizing prices by portion of page and give dimensions of each size.
 9. The chairperson should format all material for the booklet on the same computer to be assured of page spacing.
 10. The chairperson should arrange with the hotel chairperson to get the hotel registration information early enough to include in the booklet.
 11. The chairperson should have the layout done in several nights of cutting and pasting if you need to save money. For this job, two or three people is better than five (5) or six (6). Block in convention material and fill in with ads etc.
 12. The chairperson could also save money by doing your own folding and stapling.
 13. The chairperson should ensure any material to be printed, be proof-ready by at least three (3) people as many errors can be done by the printers, so proof-read the booklet when it is returned to you.
 14. The chairperson should have the booklet back from the printers in January, so distribution can be done as soon as possible.

Registration Chairperson

1. The chairperson should work with the advertizing chairperson to make sure your flyers, etc are being pushed.
2. The chairperson should let the hotel look after all room registrations. Mention the cut-off date frequently if there is a discount or special price for early birds.
3. The chairperson should set the price to make it appealing and economical. If held outside Canada, remember the exchange rate.
4. The chairperson should talk to the booklet printer if you are getting tickets printed up as well. Doing both tickets and booklets at the same time and place may save you money.
5. The chairperson should keep records straight, by not accepting any registrations from people not booked using the online form or filled out on a printed form. If it is taken at a meeting or over the phone, still fill a form out or write all the information down. This will cut down on errors or duplications. This information is very important.
6. The chairperson should, if tickets are being given out on consignment, be numbered and have them signed out. This will help keep track of them. We do not recommend this.
7. The chairperson should maintain a tight control by holding all tickets until they are picked up at the convention. Receipts can be mailed
8. The chairperson should expect many last minute sales. The last week you will need to stay by the phone.
9. The chairperson should set the convention registration table in a prominent location (near the hotel front desk).
10. The chairperson should have information about the hotel layout, convention events and local area close at hand.

11. The chairperson should have a small card file at the registration desk to place information as guests sign in (room number, who's with them etc). It is very handy to have this accessible by event staff.
12. The chairperson should organise a combination name-tag for all attendees. Having this include the person's name, event tickets, auction bidder number and schedule of events is a good idea.

Show Chairperson

1. The chairperson should maintain strict control over the fish room.
2. The chairperson should set times for setting up and tearing down the fish room and enforce them.
3. The chairperson should try to arrange setting up of the equipment Thursday if possible and try to have the fish room available till Monday noon. This will make tear down easier for those leaving a day later and on the host society/club to get a good night sleep.
4. The chairperson should have several tanks available for out of towners who have requested them.
5. The chairperson should be prepared for large tanks, have a good supply of aged water available and air supply to all tanks. If substantial amounts of aged water is unavailable, a suitable water conditioner should be available to be used.
6. The chairperson should confirm all classes have been displayed properly.
7. The chairperson should confirm after all entries are in that all tanks are marked correctly and in the right class.
8. The chairperson should work with the judges to decide if a fish should be disqualified or changed to a different class. All this should be done before judging begins.
9. The chairperson should confirm after judging that all tanks have been properly marked.
10. The chairperson should consider coffee, snacks possibly lunch free of charge as part of a thank you to the judges.
11. The chairperson should check with the program chairperson to see if any of the speakers can be used as judges. This will help share the cost.
12. The chairperson should arrange for sufficient time for the judging. Ensure judging sheets/cards are made up ahead of time.

Awards Chairperson

1. The chairperson should consider an alternative to trophies as they tend to be expensive. Do a lot of research into prices if you are planning a large show. Alternatives can be plaques, ribbons, certificates and/or cash.
2. The chairperson should select a clear speaking person to announce the winners, another person to present the awards (usually the CAOAC president) and one or two people to hand the awards to the presenter.
3. The chairperson should have the show results and the awards listed properly and clearly. This will help make the presentation go more smoothly.
4. The chairperson should track down the CAOAC rotating trophies early. The CAOAC

executive should be contacted for the status of these awards. Do this well in advance.

Show Registration Chairperson

1. The chairperson should maintain a record sheet for each class to be completed as entry forms are submitted. Each record sheet should include: a) class number; b) class name; c) class sponsor; d) table assigned.
2. The following information derived from the entry forms: a) entrant name; b) fish species; c) entry number; and d) club affiliation.