

# HOW TO HOST A QCWA NATIONAL CONVENTION



Quarter Century Wireless Association, Inc.

Website <http://www.qcwa.org>

## ***QCWA NATIONAL CONVENTION GUIDELINES***

Prepared under the direction of the QCWA Chapter Relations Committee and seasoned convention organizers.

The QCWA Board of Directors have endorsed these guidelines.

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## **PURPOSE**

Planning a national convention is exciting and rewarding. It provides the chapter, as the host, with the opportunity to make worthwhile and lasting contacts which can remain strong for years after the convention event has finished. As host of a national convention, the chapter may also achieve significant recognition and prestige at the national level.

The main purpose of hosting a QCWA National Convention is to bring together like-minded folks under one venue, providing for fellowship in meeting new and old friends alike. A QCWA National Convention specifically invites and gathers the QCWA general membership, and those who may be interested in QCWA, to attend scheduled programs, presentations and the QCWA Forum, wherein the Annual General Meeting of the members is held. After the Officers and Board of Directors give their annual reports, the members can then direct their questions to the QCWA Board of Directors.

The planning for a QCWA National Convention is a little less complicated than the planning for the usual ham convention, in that a QCWA National Convention should have no commercial vendors, flea markets or other types of booths or tables selling equipment, books, magazines, etc. The aforementioned may be modified if the commercial aspect is QCWA oriented, offered by QCWA members, and approved by the convention planning committee.

All activities should be planned for the maximum enjoyment of all that attend. This will be covered fully under 'Convention Activities'.

## **WHEN TO HAVE A CONVENTION**

On recommendation of the QCWA Board of Directors, the QCWA National Convention is usually held on a weekend sometime during the month of September or October.

For the success of a convention, it is important that you check with all possible sources to be sure you are avoiding other major hamfests or conventions. It is also important that the date picked avoids Religious days or special events. (example: Yom Kippur, Columbus Day).

## **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

When a bid for a QCWA National Convention has been received and approved by the QCWA Board of Directors, an initial sum of money to assist the host chapter will be available up to 18 months prior to the convention event. After completing and signing the loan agreement, send with a request for funds to the QCWA Treasurer. Up to \$1,000 will be provided to the host chapter. This initial sum of money must be returned in full, as per agreement, (Appendix A), to the General Manager at QCWA Headquarters no later than 60 days following the convention.

# COMMITTEES

After the chapter has been designated as host chapter for a QCWA National Convention, the next most important step is to select a convention chair. The selection of a co-chair should be the decision of the chair together with the chapter officials. The remaining committee chair members should be appointed by the chair and co-chair.

It would be beneficial to make copies of this Manual so each committee chair has a copy.

The duties may be divided up any way you wish and as many committees appointed as you think necessary to do the job. You will need a minimum of the following; Secretary, Treasurer, Facilities (Hotel), Convention Activities (Programs), Publicity, Tours, Transportation, Door Prizes and Registration.

It is important that the treasurer make up an estimated budget as soon as the hotel fee and food function prices have been determined. After this is established - registration fees can then be determined to arrive at a balanced or surplus budget. This will ensure that all committees know how much they will have to work with. If you have firm contracts with the hotel and each member of the committee stays within their budget, the convention is bound to be a financial success.

This sample budget may be used as a guideline.

## SAMPLE BUDGET GUIDELINE

In order to determine the working capital you should substitute with your numbers.

This guideline is based on a registration of 125 members, spouses and guests. It is better to budget for a lower number of registrants than to budget too high. If more register than has been budgeted for - the easier it will be to break even or have a surplus.

### INCOME

QCWA Advance - \$1000.00

#### **Registration:**

85 Members @ \$25.00 \$2125.00

16 Spouses @ \$5.00 \$80.00

8 Guest/Friend @ \$15.00 \$120.00

Breakfast - 80 @ \$15.00 \$1200.00

Friday Meet & Greet - 110 @ \$30.00 \$3300.00

Saturday Banquet - 110 @ \$40.00 \$4400.00

## **Tours**

Friday - Aero Space Museum - 40 @ \$25.00 (includes shuttle & passes)	\$1000.00	
Saturday - Our City Attractions - 45 @ \$35.00 (includes shuttle & lunch)	\$1575.00	
Sunday - Dinner Theatre - 45 @ \$65.00 (includes shuttle)	\$2925.00	
Lapel Pins - 100 @ \$5.00 each	\$500.00	
50/50 Ticket Sales	\$400.00	
Total	\$18,625.00	\$18,625.00

## **EXPENSES**

QCWA Advance Pay Back	\$1000.00	
Hotel Seminar Rooms (includes a room for QCWA Board Meeting)	\$500.00	
Breakfast - 80 @ \$14.00	\$1120.00	
Friday Meet & Greet - 110 @ 26.00	\$2860.00	
Saturday Banquet - 110 @ \$37.00	\$4070.00	
Friday - Aero Space Museum - 40 @ \$20.00 (includes shuttle & passes)	\$800.00	
Saturday - Our City Attractions - 45 @ \$30.00 (includes shuttle & lunch)	\$1350.00	
Sunday - Dinner Theatre - 45 @ \$55.00 (includes shuttle)	\$2475.00	
Tour Bus Fees	\$300.00	
Lapel Pins - 125 @ \$4.00 (includes Set Up Charges)	\$500.00	
50/50 Ticket Sales (to winner)	\$200.00	
Registration Expenses	\$300.00	
Publicity	\$200.00	
Hospitality Room (Food and Drinks)	\$800.00	
Other Door Prizes	\$250.00	
Printing (Dinner Menu & Program Book)	\$200.00	
Film & Developing (Convention Album)	\$150.00	
Total	\$17,075.00	\$17,075.00
Profit (Loss)		\$1550.00

A surplus budget is desirable, in case other unforeseen expenses or cost over runs occur.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

From the start, the convention chair, secretary and treasurer must keep complete and accurate accounts and records. The secretary must keep minutes of each committee meeting.

While the host convention committee is in charge of all plans for the convention, the host chapter is ultimately responsible. It is most important that the host chapter president be invited to all committee meetings and given copies of all contracts, and be kept informed of all plans.

The host convention committee should work closely with the QCWA National Convention Advisor. *As a courtesy he should receive a copy of all committee meeting minutes.* He will be available to assist you with the needs of the QCWA Board of Directors during the convention, as well for any other questions you may have concerning convention planning.

The host convention treasurer must send a complete financial report to the QCWA National Convention Advisor and QCWA Treasurer at QCWA Headquarters - as soon as possible after completion of the convention event.

The chair of the convention committee will be expected to give a summary report to the QCWA Board of Directors at the National Convention Board of Director's meeting.

## HOTEL

The convention committee should check all hotels in the convention area that have the proper accommodations for the best possible rates. Do not overlook the fact that one of the host chapter members may have a valuable connection with one of the local hotels. This has happened in the past and was an asset in making the convention a success.

It is common practice for hotels to offer complimentary hotel room accommodations to conventions based on the number of room nights sold. A common ratio seen across the industry is 1 complimentary room for every 50 room nights sold. While this ratio may differ in each particular case, the availability of complimentary rooms for the convention should be discussed with the hotel sales manager.

You should be aware that the hotel may ask if you have liability insurance coverage. The host chapter will have to give this matter further consideration. An event liability insurance policy can be purchased through most insurance agencies. Premium rates do vary from one insurance company to another, so shopping around for the best rate is always advisable.

Many times members attending a QCWA National Convention spend extra time in the area. The hotel contract should cover special rates for those that may arrive early or stay later than the convention period. There may be many sights to see. It may be an area they have never visited before.

If the convention area offers something special, it might be worthwhile to plan a special event for the Sunday. For example; The Yankee Chapter planned a clambake for the Sunday noon following the 1984 convention. The St. Petersburg – Clearwater convention had a seafood brunch (with plenty of entrees other than seafood) following the 1993 convention. A Sunday breakfast can also be scheduled. This Sunday activity is not necessary, but it does add a little something extra for those who might be staying over a few extra days in the area.

## YOU WILL NEED...

Ample rooms reserved for the QCWA Board of Directors, and possibly a few others (for exact numbers, contact the QCWA National Convention Advisor), for two nights before the start of the convention. The QCWA Board of Directors meet one full day before the start of the convention.

There should be a guarantee of enough rooms for the expected Board of Directors (usually 12 to 14), and other convention attendees.

From past experience you will need a block of approximately 75 rooms, which includes 12 to 14 rooms for the QCWA Board of Directors.

You will need a smaller meeting room for the QCWA Board of Director's meeting, (consisting of 12 to 14 people). This room will be needed all day Thursday. The QCWA National Convention Advisor can assist you in how the room should be set up for the board meeting.

You will need a room (usually the same room as used for the programs) for the QCWA Forum. The number attending is hard to predict and depends on how the tour activities are arranged. The QCWA Forum could be held late Friday morning or first thing Saturday morning before tour activities begin.

You will need a room for the Saturday evening banquet. Past experience has shown that a total attendance for recent QCWA National Conventions has run approximately 110 to 125 for the banquet. It may also be desirable to have a Friday evening 'meet & greet' reception that can be held at the same location.

Most QCWA National Conventions have scheduled a Friday evening reception, with a cash bar and some form of entertainment. This is a most welcomed activity as it gives all attendees a chance to meet, renew old acquaintances, or make new ones. If you decide on this activity be sure that you make arrangements with the hotel.

**Hospitality Room** – this is not essential; however, there have been conventions where this was a welcomed addition. If you do have a hospitality room it should be open each morning and afternoon for coffee and cold drinks. This room probably would require a special committee, and in some chapters the wives are willing to take this committee.

For the hospitality room to be successful there should be enough members on the committee to maintain the room at all hours except during breakfast, the QCWA Forum, meet & greet reception and banquet. This committee could set nominal charges for the refreshments provided. Some convention planners set out a donation jar.

Some hotels charge for meeting rooms, and some include meeting rooms as part of the package when you book for the convention. Be sure you know what is included and what you will be paying for. When the planning committee goes to the hotel, be sure you have a list of exactly what you are going to need in the way of rooms for the convention activities.

It is wise to have at least two members of the committee in attendance when making arrangements with the hotel. It is suggested that prior to signing any contract with the hotel, certain issues should be *clearly* spelled out. For example, the contract should state whether or not there will be bartender fees if an open bar is set up. The cost of meeting and seminar rooms, provided by the hotel, should be specifically spelled out as to whether they hinge on the number of hotel room nights sold. If audio-visual equipment is to be supplied by the hotel - be sure to establish if there will be additional fees for equipment rental and union labor.

It is *highly* recommended that a copy of the completed contract be advanced to the QCWA National Convention Advisor for his review, prior to being signed by the host chapter. He may be able to pick up on something you may have overlooked, which could jeopardize the convention budget.

## **REGISTRATION TRACKING**

Keeping track of the registrations, and pre-registrations, can be a real task. This task is greatly simplified by the use of a computer. When questions arise, it is a simple matter to look at the database to answer questions on registration information, functions attending and food selection for meals. Do not overlook the advantages of this important tool as it can simplify the task immeasurably.

Registration tracking can be done in various formats, including Microsoft Excel™ and convention registration databases, available through office supply outlets.

## **FOOD FUNCTIONS**

It is up to the committee to decide what meal functions they wish to have. This could be determined by the other activities. The one meal function that is expected is a banquet. A banquet is the place where honored guests are noted, special awards are made, prizes are drawn and all assembled enjoy the keynote speaker. The speaker's topic should be one that can be enjoyed by members, as well as spouses and guests.

To help prevent a lengthy time for prize draws during the banquet, you should consider awarding some prizes on an hourly basis during Friday and Saturday. Consider announcing and awarding any recognition to the people organizing the convention to a simple reading of the names during the banquet. As an alternative you might print a list in the convention program. The people attending appreciate the efforts on their behalf, but a lengthy chapter award ceremony will not be very interesting to the majority.

It is wise to be aware of the final date for giving the hotel the number of reservations for meals. Most hotels will give you until the last couple days for the final meal count, if they had an approximate count earlier. You should also be aware, in advance, as to how the hotel is going to count the number attending the meal function. You should insist that this be counted by the number of tickets, not by the number of plates or any other method.



# SEATING PROTOCOL

Experience with many QCWA National Convention banquets has shown that a head table can get very large and cumbersome. If a head table is selected – try to keep the seating numbers to 6 or 8 people.

If a head table is not selected - there should be a podium with a microphone. Seated at the nearest table to the podium should be the master of ceremonies, the host chapter president, the QCWA President, the keynote speaker and spouses.

The remaining QCWA Officers, Board of Directors and General Manager should be seated at various tables, along with other members. Seating assignments should use signs on the tables for the QCWA Officers and Board of Directors. This will insure that the officers will be spread out among the people attending the banquet.

# REGISTRATION

One of the first responsibilities should be, to make sure you have the convention treasurer handle all convention funds.

A registration fee is necessary for budget planning. An appropriate fee can be determined when establishing a convention budget. Seeking input from the QCWA National Convention Advisor is recommended, and once the overall budget is established, should then be agreed upon by the convention planning committee.

Guests must pay their own way, but perhaps at an amount that is less than the QCWA member registrant fee. (NOTE: Part of this determination will be whether or not the 'guest' participates in prize drawings)

The guest registration fee can be determined when the convention planning committee, with input from the QCWA National Convention Advisor, establishes the overall convention budget.

The person handling registration should be one who has ample time to acknowledge all registration fees received. This can be handled in any way you see fit, but all fees, and what they cover, should be acknowledged as soon as they are received.

On the registration form have a place for an e-mail address. This can save a lot of postage and results in quick answers to any questions that you might have.

Try to have the hotel provide a free phone at the registration desk and a secure over-night storage space in the registration area.

# CONVENTION ACTIVITIES

In most cases the convention will be held on Friday and Saturday. The QCWA Board of Directors hold the Board of Director's meeting on Thursday during the day. The convention committee should plan tours or activities of general interest for all attendees. The type of tours or activities depends entirely on what your city or area has to offer.

The QCWA Forum could be held late Friday morning, or first thing Saturday morning, before tour activities begin. This meeting provides the QCWA Board of Directors an opportunity to report to all attending members and address any questions the members might have.

The convention program committee should use a little imagination in offering something unique to the area, and these attractions should be looked into.

The keynote speaker for the banquet should be selected with just as much thought and consideration as all other aspects of the convention. Remember the banquet speaker is going to be speaking to guests, as well as QCWA members.

Try to find a speaker who is not so technical in where the guests will be bored, yet one who will be of the greatest interest to the majority.

When you select the speaker, be sure you find out what aids might be needed, such as a projector and screen for the presentation.

# PUBLICITY

The chapter will know in advance, at least a year and a half, or more, prior to hosting the convention. The publicity committee should start planning at once. If the plans are properly set up, you will be able to have flyers to hand out at the QCWA National Convention, before yours, so that those in attendance will know a full year in advance when and where the next QCWA National Convention will be held. This also gives the host chapter a head start on advance publicity.

Another suggestion for publicity; have your chapter make a formal request for permission to use Headquarters station W2MM during the year prior to the convention date. This can be made a QCWA National Convention Special Event Station throughout the year, as well during the spring and fall QCWA QSO Parties. This station is very popular during the QCWA QSO Parties, since making a contact with W2MM is worth extra points. In that the QCWA QSO Parties are casual in nature, this gives plenty of opportunity to promote the QCWA National Convention on the air.

The publicity committee should be aware of the deadline for all pertinent publications. Have fresh and interesting copy prepared, and in the hands of the various publications in plenty of time to meet all deadlines. The publicity should start immediately after the QCWA National Convention, prior to your convention, and continue right up to the time of the convention. Emphasis should be put on copy to the *QCWA Journal*.

The registration form, with all prices for activities, should be in the spring, summer and fall *QCWA Journal*. Try to get the schedule of events, with day and time, in to the *QCWA Journal* preceding the convention, and as soon as possible on the QCWA web site. If any other publications will carry the registration form, send it to them. At least send all of the interesting facts and plug the QCWA National Convention in every available form you can find.

You should provide information to the QCWA Webmaster about the QCWA National Convention. If there is no one in the host chapter with experience in creating a web page, contact the QCWA Webmaster for assistance. As a minimum, you should have an e-mail address and telephone number to contact the convention committee to answer questions posed by the membership or other interested parties. If available, a fax number may also be useful on the application form and publicity releases.

It is the responsibility of the publicity committee to see that pictures are taken, and as soon as possible after the convention, a few interesting pictures and a write-up of convention activities should be sent to QCWA Headquarters for the Winter issue of the *QCWA Journal*. It will be necessary to check with the QCWA General Manager for the deadline date.

## **DOOR PRIZES**

Door prizes are always an important part of the activities and all final prizes should be drawn last thing at the banquet. Experience has shown that when there are numerous prizes to be awarded, the bulk of them should be awarded hourly during the convention. An endless period of drawing of lesser prizes will do much to dull the good spirits engendered by a successful banquet function. There should be door prizes, both for the ladies and gentlemen.

This committee should start early. There are often members and friends of the chapter who are involved with craft activities, and they often produce very nice items. If approached early you might be surprised at the variety of desirable items that can be had at little or no cost.

It may be possible that it will not be necessary to purchase additional items for the ladies prizes, but do keep in mind that many spouses are also involved in amateur radio and may enjoy the same kinds of operating aids and gadgets the men like.

A tradition that should be encouraged is the donation of prize items by chapters having members attending the convention. Items reflecting the particular states or localities have been popular, e.g., gourmet peanuts from Virginia, wild rice from Minnesota, wines from New York State and California, etc. As well - the QCWA Board of Directors have in the past brought a door prize, representative of their local area, when attending the convention.

The bulk of the door prizes should be given careful consideration. Most of the amateur radio companies have been so besieged with requests for donations, with so little acknowledgment or thanks, that the day of receiving any sort of amateur radio equipment as a donation is practically a thing of the past. In spite of this, contact any or all sources that you think will assist in any way.

Company budgets are usually set by the year and requests for substantial donations may be more easily accommodated if solicited before company budgets are set. All requests for major items should be made early in the convention planning process and should be followed-up periodically.

Prize shoppers should keep in mind that convention attendees may have to carry prizes home via airplane, and heavy bulky items may be difficult (and expensive) to transport.

The convention finance committee should plan on a certain amount of money to be used by the door prize committee to purchase prizes. Be as generous as the budget will permit. Having fewer quality prizes is better than having many inexpensive items. People are thrilled to win substantial prizes and good will toward future QCWA National Conventions will be created by a good selection.

The door prize committee *must* write a thank-you note to all individuals and companies responding to their request for prize donations. All prize donors should be noted in the convention program. Acknowledgment of all donations is of utmost importance.

## **DRAWINGS**

It is illegal to sell lottery tickets of any kind through the mail. Therefore the convention committee should not plan any kind of drawing. Regardless of what you may call them do not send drawing tickets to chapters or individuals across the nation.

It is permissible to have a local drawing at the convention, if the state or province allows such a drawing. Be sure you check with the hotel, and with the local authorities, before you make any decision.

## **FAVORS AND CENTERPIECES**

Table favors for the banquet and centerpieces for the banquet tables are not necessary. However, they do add a very nice touch. If the situation permits, it would be a well-received gesture to give the centerpiece away to someone at each table; this could be easily accomplished by placing a ticket or note under one of the seats prior to the function.

## **SIGNS**

Even though the convention program will give location of various meeting rooms, banquet rooms, etc., it is highly recommended you have signs made up in advance denoting meeting room, banquet room, forum room, etc. These signs do not have to be fancy and should be placed at the entrance to each of the various rooms.

## **CONVENTION PINS**

A distinctive lapel pin has been designed and sold to commemorate our QCWA National Conventions, almost every year, since the 1991 convention in Canton, OH.

There is usually a significant time line in acquiring lapel pins, therefore designing and ordering should begin early. Attractive pins are costly, and the set-up expense must be included in the early budget planning. Set the price for the lapel pins carefully, in case there may be less demand for the pins than you anticipate. Pins make good souvenirs and can be used to offer thanks to anyone rendering service, although this gesture will not help in recovering the incurred costs.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Many hotels, but not all, run a shuttle service to and from the airport. Coordinate this service with the hotel, as pick-up and drop-off practices may vary. Determine if charges apply for the shuttle service. Since this service is important - special arrangements may be made with the hotel. If tours are planned as part of the convention activities, this is another possible source for transportation. The tour company (or ground operator) may be able to have the bus company they work with provide airport shuttle service at considerable savings to the convention budget. Such an arrangement should be discussed when planning the tours.

If it is not practical to provide transportation to and from the airport, you should provide information concerning the transportation services that are available. This information should be on the convention web site or in the registration acknowledgement. Although not necessary, it is a welcome and gracious touch of hospitality if you make arrangements to meet those members who are arriving by plane. The application form can have space for flight number and time of arrival, and those arriving by plane can be asked to notify a specific person if they wish transportation.

There should be several members on the transportation committee so that you do not work a hardship on any one person. There should also be back up for these people in case of delayed planes or a mix-up in reservations.

## **PROGRAMS**

The convention program does not have to be fancy; a copy of a PC printout for a program is very acceptable. The important thing is that it lists all the important events, starting times and locations when needed. List all the meeting rooms and be sure to include the committees and a list of the prize donors.

## **FINAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT**

The host chapter will furnish the QCWA National Convention Advisor, and QCWA Treasurer at QCWA Headquarters, a final financial statement report within 60 days following the convention. The initial sum of money provided by QCWA will be returned to the QCWA General Manager within 60 days following the convention.

## **FINAL REPORT**

The final report is to be submitted by the host chapter, and should consist of any problems found before and during the convention.

The report should include suggestions for future conventions and statistics developed from the convention. This report should be furnished to the QCWA National Convention Advisor within 60 days, following the convention.

## **FINALE**

Most of the content in this manual is meant to be used as a guideline and is based on experience with previous conventions in different locations. Each host chapter, and its convention committee, should develop their own convention plan within these requirements and guidelines. If you are unsure of what constitutes a requirement and what is a guideline – consult with the QCWA National Convention Advisor.

A QCWA National Convention is probably one of the easy conventions to plan and host. The attendance will probably be around 110 to 125 people. Consider an invitation to local non-member Amateurs to ensure the convention is profitable. This will ensure future QCWA members with little extra effort. And the rewards...the host chapter will have the pleasure of meeting and getting to know many other members, as well as the QCWA Officers and Board of Directors. This affords not only the opportunity for fellowship and sociability, but also the opportunity to engage in discussions with QCWA officials to gain a better understanding of the organization. A successful convention does much to increase appreciation for QCWA by those in attendance. Good luck with the convention endeavors.

# QCWA CONTACTS

QCWA General Manager	QCWA National Convention Advisor	QCWA Webmaster	QCWA Treasurer
Tom Loughney, AJ4XM 12967 N Normandy Way West Palm Beach, FL 33410-1412  Phone: 561-667-7665 E:Mail: gm@qcwa.org	George Roach, VE3BNO 104 Strathcona Avenue Ottawa, ON K1S 1X6  groach@storm.ca Phone (613) 234-0885	Bob Roske, NØUF 993 Hassan St. SE Hutchinson, MN 55350-3215  broske@hutchtel.net Phone (320) 587-3890	Charles Tropp, N2SO 2380 Mohansic Ave Yorktown Heights NY 10598  charlestropp@yahoo.com Voice: 347.927.6060 Fax. 718.285.6019

**CONVENTION FUNDS ADVANCE RECORD  
AND REPAYMENT AGREEMENT  
(mm/dd/yyyy)**

(Name of Chapter) - No. \_\_\_ wishes to make application for a temporary loan, interest free from QCWA, Inc., to provide initial seed money to host an approved and sanctioned QCWA National Convention. The QCWA National Convention will be held at (location) on mm/dd/yyyy.

Please sign this agreement and retain a copy for the host chapter records. Upon signing and sending copies of this request form to the QCWA Treasurer, QCWA General Manager and QCWA National Convention Advisor, up to \$1,000 will be provided to the host chapter.

Upon completion of the convention, a written report of convention receipts (income) and expenses, along with copies of all receipts, is to be submitted to the QCWA Treasurer, the QCWA General Manager and the QCWA National Convention Advisor within 60 days after the convention date. A check covering the full advanced amount is to be included.

If the hosting chapter's convention was a financial success, they may wish to consider making a donation, in kind, to the General Funds of QCWA. Both the advanced funds and donation may be included in the same check. All monies should be sent to the General Manager at QCWA Headquarters.

Signed:

Convention Chair

Date

Convention Treasurer

Date

Host Chapter President

Date