

Guidebook for Hosting an NFMS Show

Suggestions and How to Booklet

Revamped to be User Friendly by Judi Allison, February 2025

There was a time when clubs would clamor for the privilege of Hosting the NFMS Convention. At that time, there were many requirements that have since been set aside. Many have become archaic, but most required additional effort and time on the part of the Hosting Society. Those days have gone by the wayside. With the advent of more costly venues and our busier lifestyles, the Federation has come to realize we must change our expectations to have clubs willing to step up and host the NFMS Convention.

- Gone is the specific requirement for the host club to fork over 50% of its net proceeds. Negotiation is now the name of the game.
- Gone is the requirement to host on Labor Day weekend. Keep your normal show schedule and simply add a few things.
- Gone is the onerous Guidebook for Hosting an NFMS Show, as this short “suggestions and how to” booklet will give you all the information you need to successfully host a Federation Show.

Please don't get me wrong: There are extra requirements, but one of the things I have heard most after a club hosted a Federation show is how much they have learned about the Federation and what a positive experience it was to be involved at the Federation level. Why not try it out. You may like it.

(At a Glance) The basic additions to your regular show

- *A third day of the show (Friday) If possible, at your venue. If not, availability of a place for meetings*
- *Accommodation for meetings*
- *Accommodations for meals – Editors' Breakfast, Past President-Committees luncheon*
- *Accommodations for an Awards Banquet – It has been customary for the host club to supply centerpieces and individual favors (But not a requirement)*
- *An advanced registration setup*
- *Coordinating with Executive Board of NFMS*
- *Coordination with Rules and Awards Committee for Competitive Displays*

Creating a Proposal

First: Your club will submit a bid to the Chairman of the Past President's Council. The bid should include information about the venue, date and any possible considerations or negotiations you would like to present. You could discuss possibilities or ideas with the Past President's Council or Executive Officers. When your bid is approved by the Past President's Council, you will be ready to dive into the process of hosting the show. (I personally am willing to talk to any club entertaining the idea of hosting a show. If feasible, I will arrange to speak in person at a meeting-Judi Allison) Before submitting your bid, be sure you have an adequate facility for holding the show. This most likely can be your usual venue and show dates.

Additional considerations: (Following is a checklist that was in the original manual-It may be useful as a reminder.)

- Adequate electricity for displays and dealers.
- Security during set-up and take-down. That is the time major thefts occur.
- Easy access to the show building for dealers and exhibitors. Drive-in is highly desirable.
- If possible, there is camping near the show.
- Adequate parking area during the show.
- Consider having an ATM - make sure it is working and has cash before the start of day

When working on your bid and planning for your show, there are two considerations to be made. You are helping the Federation by putting in the extra work and passing on some of the proceeds. Your second consideration should be that your club will gain new attendees and make a greater profit than at your regular show. That is why you can make proposals to ensure such a thing will occur. Perhaps you are in an area where your show makes a large amount of

money. Write in your proposal that there will be a division of proceeds after a certain base amount is met. Maybe your club is very small and cannot man the Silent Auction. Hand that whole process over to the Federation with the expectation that the Federation will provide all personnel, material and garner all the proceeds. Maybe you want to propose a 50/50 split of the silent auction. Or perhaps that is your big money maker, and you want to retain 70%. Perhaps you need some assistance with providing for the banquet. Write it in your proposal. Most clubs will share proceeds from the gate. Again, you can negotiate to come up with a plan that satisfies all. The Federation will pay the cost of additional meeting rooms for its meetings.

Show Committee Organization

You can pull off a show with a group of core workers as small as 6-12.

A suggestion of Committees might include: Show Chairperson or Co-chairs, Treasurer, Dealers Chair, Exhibits Chair, Advertising Chair, Speaker/Field Trip Chair, Advance Registration Chair, Federation Activities Chair/Coordinator

You probably have most of these people for your regular show. The main difference will be the need for an individual to handle advanced registration and the development and coordination of Federation activities:

- *Competitive Displays*
- *Meetings (Annual meeting, Junior meeting, ALAA meeting),*
- *Banquet,*
- *Editors' Breakfast*
- *Luncheon-for committees, chairpersons, etc.*

Show Chairperson or Co-chair

Oversee the entire operation. Be (a) cooperative contributing leader(s), Perhaps chair one or more subcommittees. Oversee setup and dismantling of the show.

Treasurer

It is recommended that the show and the funds for the show have a treasury separate from the regular club funds. It is much simpler to keep track of expenditures and see your true profit at the end of the project if all monies are kept separate.

*(In 2024 when the Hatrockhounds hosted the show, the Club paid for the facility with its funds [easy to keep track of] and a trusted member opened a second account with her personal banker. The show chairman was also added as a signee, keeping things above board. The account was then closed at the end of the show. This was a simple way of doing things for a small club but might not be suitable for some.)

- You may borrow \$500.00 from the NFMS to get you started.
- An accounting must be made after the show and submitted to the NFMS, along with monies due, within 90 days after close of the convention.

Dealers

- It is your club's decision as to what dealers to invite. A Federation Show might be an opportunity for your regular dealers to make a bit of extra money.
- Perhaps your venue will hold more dealers than your regular show. You can ask other clubs if there are dealers they might suggest; or perhaps, as you were traveling to various shows, there was a dealer you felt would be a good addition.
- Again, you do not have to have additional dealers for a Federation Show.
- It is up to your club to decide for certain, but perhaps your dealer fees could be raised a bit for the show since it is a Federation Show, and as such should bring in more attendance.

Exhibits

There are two types of displays at a Federation Show: Competitive and non-Competitive. NFMS will oversee accepting entries for competition. The host Society will work with the Rules and Awards Committee to develop the entry form which will be sent to said committee. The host Society will create the entry form for non-competitive displays. These forms will be returned to the Host Society's exhibits chair.

Special Displays (Non-Competitive)

Special Exhibits can bring in attendance also. Sometimes there is a charge for an entity to bring something special. Special collections of Tiffany lamp reproductions, a scale model of the Space Needle, Dinosaur exhibits, special mosaic works, and other special displays have been exhibited. The inclusion of displays with high public appeal can enhance the success of the show, both in the local area and amongst our fellow hobbyists. The amount of money you are willing to spend on this will ultimately be the decision of the club. Proper advertising can enhance attendance.

- Remember to use the Newsletter and website as a vehicle for information.
- Up to six months prior to the show, write articles of interest for the Newsletter.
- Link the NFMS website to your website.

Competitive Displays Layout:

- The Rules Committee (NFMS) personnel in charge of exhibits registration will notify you about one week prior to the show of the number of spaces needed for competitive exhibits. (You can check earlier, as there is supposed to be a deadline of one month prior to the show, but, historically, competitive exhibitors have not been turned down for late registration.)
- Most competitive exhibitors have their own case and liner, but you may be asked to provide one.
- The competitive display exhibitor assignment is altogether a Rules Committee duty. Your only obligation is to supply the correct amount of measured display area which the Rules Committee will request. Each display area should be numbered according to arrangements between you and the Rules Committee member in charge of registration and in consultation with him (only he will know the size of each display area needed.) The Rules Committee member will make the actual exhibitor assignments.
- Non-competitive exhibits and Special Displays can be arranged at your discretion.
- Exhibits Registrar for the NFMS Rules Committee will need copies of the layout area. He may request sufficient copies to distribute to the clerks. Check with him for details related to the number needed.

Non-Competitive Displays

- Host society has the discretion of placement of all non-competitive displays.
- Non-competitive displays can be entered at the will of the host society.
- Host society is solely in charge of such displays

Advertising

In the final analysis, the success of the show will depend on good publicity. Unless the public and the rockhounds are inspired to attend the show the purpose of the show will have been defeated and there will not have been any financial profit, nor promotion of the interests of the “rockhounds”.

Ideas:

- Start early with your publicity. Articles in the NFMS Newsletter can be written early on. Add information as the show nears. Tell about activities and/or features of interest in your area that visitors might take in when they travel to your area for the show. Build up the anticipation with mention of special features, if you have any. Most of all, simply communicate.
- Use your own club’s website or FB page and share.
- Look online for free places to add a blip about your show.
- Check with a local newspaper. They might do a special feature.
- Check with the Chamber of Commerce in your area and recruit any help they might give toward publicity.
- Evaluate the possibilities for paid and free publicity on TV and radio.
- Consider the return when deciding on paid advertising.
- Directional signs set out shortly before a show seem to draw several folks-especially if this is a method used for the host club’s regular show.

Printing considerations:

- Federation Shows usually have a program brochure. These can be simple or refined. The key items to include are Dealers, Displays (especially Special Display), Speakers, and Meetings.
- Ask previous hosts if they have samples of their brochures to get an idea of what you wish to develop.
- You will be responsible for creating any copies you wish to provide, you can coordinate with NFMS Board
- Printing should be postponed until as late as possible.
- In lieu of a brochure, some shows have used stands and poster boards to give information. Some venues have electronic means. The key is to inform the attendees of offerings.

Speakers/Field Trips

Neither of these two items is a requirement for a Federation Show, but they each can add something to the show.

Speakers

You may have enough time slots for a half dozen speakers, or perhaps only three or four. It will depend on your venue. If you have only one room for meetings and speakers, it is likely you will only have 2-3 speakers. If your meetings are going to take place away from the show, perhaps you would not want to have any speakers, as they are usually close at hand for attendees to take in while enjoying the show itself. Your speakers can be anyone from the hobby you might think would be interesting for the visitors to hear. It is nice to have a range of speakers from those with more technical expertise to those giving a layman's perspective.

Attendance is usually not more than 15-25, although especially attractive programs may require seating of 30 or more.

Suggestions:

- Check to see if someone appropriate might already be coming as a special exhibitor or demonstrator, etc. Also check with local colleges.
- Seminars have been successful at some past shows, e.g. fossils, faceting, wood identification, etc.
- Set up a program schedule with sufficient time between presentations to give attendees time to ask questions.
- Hopefully, you will have arrangements well toward completion two to three months before the show.
- Arrange for all equipment which might be needed for the speakers.
- Check with the presenters to find out what their needs will be.

Arrangements for programs should be completed well ahead of show time. Hopefully, you will have made your contracts and have arrangements well toward completion three months before the show. About a month before the show you should have completed the arrangements for all equipment which will be needed. This would include microphones, screens for power point presentations, perhaps extension cords, etc. Check with the presenters to find out what their needs will be.

Field Trips

For some individuals the Annual Northwest Federation Show is not the show itself, but rather an opportunity to go on some planned field trips. If possible, the Host Society should try to accommodate them. If your club is one that needs "all hands-on deck" during the show, perhaps you can host a field trip before or after the show. Maybe there is one person that can be spared to lead a trip during the show. The attendees need to know your intent well before show time so they can plan for the additional time. If possible, include the information on the advance registration form.

Suggestions:

- They should be short enough that participants can be back at dinner time, more or less.
- A post show field trip of a couple of days could be scheduled.
- Remember to have a waiver for attendees to sign prior to departure.
- Plan for a method of keeping track of the members on the field trip, especially if it is a large group. Use walkie-talkies or cell phones to keep in contact.
- Use of distinctive markers for each vehicle such as a flags could be an excellent method.

Advance Registration

- ✓ Advance registration is necessary to determine the number of attendees for the paid functions: Awards Banquet, Luncheon, and Breakfast. The registration form usually includes information about the individuals (Directors, Federation Officers or Committee Chairs, Exhibitors, etc.) If they are furnishing a display, If they are attending the Annual meeting, banquet, luncheon and/or breakfast. You can build your own form or ask previous hosts if they have a sample. The key is to have all the information you will need to plan and prepare for your activities. A request for meeting attendance is not necessary unless you intend to provide water, as a snack or other item in the even of a break. (In recent years the assembly has opted to complete their business without a break. If there is a large amount of business or a discussion is drawn out, perhaps a break will be needed.) You can check with the Federation Officers to clarify whether such will be needed. The actual application can usually be condensed to a neat one page form. Information to include: camping, show registration, meeting registration, banquet, Editors breakfast, luncheon, display – non-competitive or competitive, if the applicant is a dignitary, and possibly field trip or other special activity for which a count is needed. This form should also include the prices and an address for return. (This can also be an online feature for the website.) Check with those who have prepared for shows in the past. Perhaps they have a form that can easily be revamped.

Early Preparation

- ✓ Informational packets which can include special interests or information about your area can be prepared for distribution at the Mid-Year or Organizational Meetings. You can include the advance registration forms in the packets. Fifty to seventy-five packets should be sufficient. Some ideas that could be considered for inclusion in the packet: motels, trailer spaces, a map of the show area, locations of conveniences, an invitation letter from the Host Club, field trip information and propaganda for the show itself.
- ✓ All applications will be returned to the advance registrar as well as any money to cover same. It will be your responsibility to properly process each application to get information you need for preparation of advance registration. Clubs have used a variety of methods: wrist bands; tickets put behind name tags; color coding or even simply a list of those paid.
- ✓ As applications are returned you can easily acknowledge their receipt with the inclusion of an email on the registration form.

COURTESY NOTE: When NFMS hosts the AFMS Show, packets, or at least registration forms should be mailed to AFMS Officers, Regional Presidents and Vice Presidents, AFMS and Regional Rules members. In other years, mail to at least AFMS Officers and Regional Presidents. Names can be obtained from AFMS Newsletter. (Email works)

Federation Activities

Banquet Breakfast and Luncheon

The banquet, breakfast and luncheon may be held at the headquarters motel, at the show, or at other restaurants around the city. The biggest item is the awards banquet where attendance may range from 30-70 depending on seating capacity and the price charged. Following is a tentative schedule for a 3-day show. (When the NFMS hosts the AFMS, it becomes a 4-day show, with additional functions.) (These are just ideas. Work with Federation officers for coordination)

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| Set-Up Evening and/or 1 st morning | Volunteers and Dealers Meal (Potluck) |
| Morning 2 nd Day | Editor/Webmaster Breakfast |
| Evening 2 nd Day | Awards Banquet |
| Noon 3 rd Day | Past Presidents, Committee Chair Luncheon |

The Editors/Webmaster and Past president/Committee Chair meals are no host with each individual paying for his own meal. The banquet is paid for by individuals. (Complementary Banquet tickets are generally given to the AFMS Scholarship Honorees-The Federation generally pays for them) Any additional complementary tickets would be at the digression of the Hosting club and paid for by them.

Suggestions:

- ✓ Arrange for the locations of the various functions.

- ✓ Consider a cash bar for the banquet if the venue allows.
- ✓ Consider padding your meal count with 5-10 additional meals for those last minute decision makers.
- ✓ When figuring what to charge the attendee, add in your costs for the centerpieces, favors and extra meals so that you at least break even.
- ✓ The Bulletin Aids Chair can help you with numbers for the breakfast. The Chair generally takes care of any décor or give aways. You simply need to provide the place and meal. (If you have a host hotel with a continental breakfast, you can often ask for a small meeting room and have those who are not staying pay for their meal.)

Table Favors

The banquet will be the function where attendees enjoy receiving favors. Some collect them from year to year.

- ✓ The favors are usually tied to the theme of the show. Each attendee receives a favor.
- ✓ Table decorations can be given away as door prizes.

Optional Entertainment:

Any entertainment for the Annual Show is always limited to the awards banquet. At times the banquet is a long and tedious evening, especially if the show is combined with the AFMS. Any entertainment planned should not be lengthy nor too serious, but of good quality. Ten to fifteen minutes would be ample. The Show Board of Directors will have to approve a budget allotment for this item and your estimate should be made for inclusion in the budget. (It is not mandatory to have entertainment, although there have been times when a light-hearted skit or an audience participation activity has lightened the evening and added good will. Your entertainment, in these cases most likely would not require any budget.)

General checklist of items you most likely do for your regular show.

It is simply included as a reminder.

Snack Bar/Food

Whatever arrangements you have for your regular show should be fine to fulfill the needs of attendees

Camping

- ✓ If you have facilities for camping at your regular show, you are already covered. Just let folks know and handle things as you usually would. If you don't have facilities, you will most likely want to research and let folks know what might be available close to the venue.

Parking

If you are hosting at your usual venue, adequate parking most likely is not an issue. Consider any issues there might be with parking and make a plan for overflow before it is an issue.

Set-up and Dismantle

- ✓ By this time you will have worked out how you will handle advance registration and have the necessary items/information in place
- ✓ The additional thing you will need with set-up is a table for NFMS to use for supplies, PR and the like.

Decorations

- ✓ If possible, cases at the ends of the rows should be dressed up in such a way as to hide the lights and wiring on top of the cases.
- ✓ Dress up idea: You may be able to obtain floral arrangements from a local flower club or even a nursery.
- ✓ Competitive cases should be placed together. (Work with the Rules and Awards committee for input.

Utilities/Lighting

- ✓ Be certain all lighting is working before the show opens.
- ✓ Have extra light bulbs

Security

- ✓ You most likely already have a security group of individuals you work with for your regular show
- ✓ During the night after show hours there should be security available.

- ✓ Security is especially important during the time the dealers and the exhibitors are setting up and taking down their booths and displays.

Ticket Sales

- ✓ Some of the rockhounds will gain admission to the show through advance registration. They will need to be identified in some way.
- ✓ Handle the balance of your ticket sales in your usual way.

First Aid

- ✓ Just a reminder to consider this.
- ✓ The first aid equipment of the building will usually be available, but make certain that is the case, and what there is.
- ✓ Have phone numbers available for contacting a doctor, ambulance or hospital in case of emergency.

Cases

- ✓ Have sufficient cases for your show-borrow from another club, if necessary.
- ✓ Provide liners and lighting

Signs-Indoor and Outdoor (Suggestions)

- ✓ Prepare signs identifying each dealer.
- ✓ Prepare sign identifying the Information Booth.
- ✓ Demonstrations
- ✓ Prepare signs to identify the following activities: Parking, Camping and Ticket sales.

Silent Auction

- ✓ Material is donated by members throughout the Federation, so a variety is usually on hand.
- ✓ Over the last several years, there has been a chairperson who will run the silent auction for the show with the idea that some (generally 50%) of the proceeds go to the Federation. This has taken the burden of setup and manning the tables away from the Host Club so they can concentrate on other aspects of the Show.
- ✓ The Host Club has the option of negotiating with the Federation about the running of the auction and the split of the monies. This is generally done at the time of the bid, but a final decision may be possible much closer to show time.
- ✓ If you have chosen for the Federation to run the auction, they often have the supplies and a method in which they would like to set up the area. You can work with them to facilitate the process.

Demonstrations

- ✓ There are many folks in the Federation who have volunteered to demonstrate for a day or two, or for the entire show. You may also have some people with great expertise who will be glad to give demonstrations.
- ✓ It is nice to have a variety of demonstrations to appeal to a wider base of enthusiasts.

Information from key people involved in setting up many aspects for an NFMS Show.

(It is included here as a quick reference of some duties needing to be performed. By reviewing this list, one can use it as a quick reference to many of the things that need to be in place at the time of the show.)

- *Have plenty of outside signage (for multiple buildings), used a banner near streets, and lots signage inside.
- * Keep the tickets or wristbands as they enter (helps for later cash-ticket reconciliation)
- *Write down starting number of tickets or wristbands for each day, count out the number available to be used for each day (for later ticket-cash reconciliation)
- *Admission coordinator should show up the day before show starts to make sure ALL is set and ready for show start.
- *Need scotch tape, duct tape, pens, markers, blank paper, stapler at admissions
- *List of any who get in free; those with free give-away tickets (promotions), vendors, exhibitors, Federation officers (past and current), volunteers, judges. We used ticket/wristband checkers at all doors in all buildings.
- *Make sure there are PLENTY of \$1's in every in every area where cash is used, such as raffle sales, kids activities, etc.

- *Admissions table needs to be large enough, or use two, to hold programs, schedules (speakers and demonstrations times and place), cash box, tickets/wristbands, shopping bags, and literature for other clubs or upcoming shows. (Some of these things might be on the Federation table.)
- *Make signs for admission prices.
- *Made a map of interior of main building (vendors, auctions, kids activities, restrooms, food vendors, or where to buy show pins.
- *Map of off-site events (if needed) Use consistent building names with map for visitors and station list for volunteers. (This could be included in a printed program)
- *Have 2-3 people + admissions coordinator at admissions.
- *Volunteers at admissions: arrive at assigned station at least 20 minutes before shift time list of volunteers at admissions by day, shift, and station map of volunteer stations.
- *ATM - make sure it is working and has cash before start of day. Have contact info for ATM in case there is a problem
- *Have tickets or a check off list for people attending the banquet.
- *Need lots of space for parking
- *Encourage ALL club members to wear name tags
- *Provisions for trash containers and trash pickup
- *Check the need for any type of fencing or use of people for parking control.
- *It's a good idea to have water, soft drinks, snacks for volunteers
- *Need people responsible for: mobile microphone if used and making announcements of what is going on throughout the day.
- *Order tickets/wristbands for each day (different colors) a year ahead.
- *Federation handles the ordering of awards
- *Made sure club insurance covered show
- *May have potluck for club members/volunteers on evening before show starts.
- *Make sure Start and End times are shown on schedule, in program, and on website
- *Make phone calls to check on hotel room availability for members staying.
- *Check on rooms available for the banquet, contact catering companies for prices and meals to make a decision, and schedule all of the above.
- *Figure on how many might be attending each sit-down meal/meeting by working with a spreadsheet with every registration form that comes in. This was paramount to the success of all the meetings.
- *Create the banquet program (The NFMS Executive Officers can help with information that needs to be included.)
- *Design graphics for a cover of the program
- *We used tickets in pre-registration for the Banquet. Placed a sticky note randomly on the bottom of the chairs in the Banquet so the person sitting in a seat with the note would get something off the table they were sitting at.
- *Two members were delegated to purchase food from Costco only a few weeks ahead of the show and some from a local grocery store four days prior.
- *The doughnuts were purchased the day of use. (This Host Club did its own catering for the Editors' Breakfast and the Luncheon.)
- *Create decorations for the meetings and add the centerpieces at the banquet.
- *Greet the people attending each meeting, making sure that they wanted for nothing.
- *Create the Schedule of Events and draw the map on the back of the buildings.
- *Every building was measured and professional Blue Prints (including electrical outlets) were drawn to scale with copies.