

COORDINATOR'S REPORT FANTASIA FAIR 1986

GENERAL:

Fantasia Fair 1986 was the largest Fair we have had in a number of years. The 105 participants consisted of 60 full time nine day participants, 20 first weekenders, and 25 second weekenders. It is also interesting to note that we had more couples than ever before.

36 participants responded to our questionnaire. For twelve of them this was their first Fair (four girls had never been in public before). Among the respondees the average Fair attendee had been to 3+ Fairs, was in her 40's, is married, belongs to a group, and first heard of the Fair via a direct mailing (but came because a friend urged her to do so).

To my delight, most of our respondents felt that the Fair far exceeded their expectations, and gave it high marks (4-5) through-out their evaluation. I attribute this to the absolutely wonderful jobs done by our program coordinators and our Provincetown hosts.

PRE-FAIR:

The Pre-Fair period of the Fair focuses basically upon marketing and it is paid for from our "early bird" registration since the Outreach always manages to spend what we take in from the previous Fair. The Board is in the process of establishing a better financial planning system so that we shall not be so historically dependent upon earlybird registrations. In this same context I provided a "cash flow" underwriting of the Fair in excess of \$3,000 prior to reimbursement. In prior years this same "cash flow" support was provided by Ariadne, some years without full reimbursement (hence, the Founder's Debt discussed in the *Participant's Guide*).

The general consensus was that the brochures did not provide enough information about the Fair. This has been our historic problem because of the balance cost between production of the brochure and "early bird" registration receipts.

I am considering the preparation of a Fantasia Fair booklet for next year while using *Our Sorority* this year. In fact the current issue of *Our Sorority* has a mini photo album of more than 30 pictures from the Fair, to help others to see the fun you had last year. In past years we only kept track of past Fair participants, but via *Our Sorority* and our Virginia computer we are now tracking all who write for information about the Fair. Via *Our Sorority* we also hope to promote the other national events such as the Chicago Convention, and the various local groups as a service of the Outreach.

The *Participants Guide* will be updated with a hope that we shall be able to get it out earlier to our participants. Since last year was our first effort with this handy guidebook to the Fair, we were delighted by your very positive response. We shall try to get off "military time" this year despite Sargeant-Major Betty Ann's fixation on such scheduling.

REGISTRATION:

Our historic problems with registration have been communications and location. (Although I can remember my first Fair where we registered "by the numbers" for two hours each it seemed in a paper mill.) All felt that Sheila and the girls did a fine job. But, we hope to put up bigger signs marking where the "sign up" is taking place, and we will try to have our own phone numbers so that we will not burden our hosts too much. The "earlybirds" this year have already received their room assignments (with the exception of 3 whom I am trying to juggle about in Hargood House so that they all can be happy). Using the same master board technique we hope to have everybody informed prior to the Fair as to which room they are assigned to. The pink *Pre-Fair Registration Form* will be revised and should speed up our sign-up process. We are also designing a new receipt form to correct some problems noted last year.

The Directory handed out with the three ring binder was also well received and some even suggested that the *Participants Guide* be the same size. The computer software package which puts out this report uses several fonts & sizes and *The Directory* will be set up on this so that we can read it.

Orientation will probably be unchanged although I am thinking that some of the major & minor event coordinators might do their pitch as a part of the Ladies Night meeting to help fill-in that program's context, while reducing the information over-kill of Orientation. This decision will rest with the program coordinator of Ladies Night.

EVENTS:

The Open House Cocktail Party was a stunner. Poor Gene Greene of the Terrace had not quite planned this event to be so large because, based on past years, only thirty or forty came to this early event. (Although, there is a theory that "jammed" cocktail parties increase sociability.) We should have taken over the entire Terrace. Samantha did a nice job as hostess in the face of much confusion.

Ladies Night was a new event, and due to Jenny and the Ladies of S.I.S.T.E.R.S. it was a delight. Some suggested a mid-point "break" of some sort so that the girls could get up and socialize.

Although we skipped the Whale Watch in our questionnaire (it's hard to skip a whale) our reviewers caught it, wanted to thank Cindy, and noted that it should be scheduled later in the week (because the whales missed our fashion models)..

Town & Gown Program was well received but there was a feeling that a social break during the meal might help. (A chance to stretch and mingle prior to dessert and coffee after the terrific meal served by Penny - Flow and family.) Winnie, thinks that the panel format should be changed with greater "townie" involvement. Our evaluaters had the same feelings. The main division was between new & returning attendees. The new-comers rated the program higher.

The Fashion Show is probably the single most popular event, for the participants. There was considerable disappointment over the low town attendance (Red Sox - Mets), however another factor was the lack of pre-fair publicity. (Our poster was a disaster, in fact the Pilgrim House made one of their own to replace it, and we should have placed an ad in the local paper, as we did prior to the Follies and the Fantasy Ball.) Also, some felt greater town involvement (stores, etc.) might help. Eve and Carol received many kudos for a job well done.

The Leadership Banquet Program was a new event in that it incorporated a Fair paid dinner (etc.). To be frank, it was far better received than we expected. It needs a different name because several gals thought that the party was reserved for "leaders" only. The rather long pitch for the Convention and other matters caused some reaction, but this was a first time out and like Ladies Night, it worked well mainly due to the efforts of Linda & Marilyn, the environs of the Mews, and the cocktail party...

The Fan-Fair Follies is a traditional crowd pleaser with a high level of participant involvement. Maureen, Helen, and Naomi received much well deserved praise for their organizational efforts, and the townsfolk loved the new finale where the girls went out into the audience.

For some reason we also forgot to list the Kite Fly. It was well received with some concern about the "cost" of the lost kite. Frankly, JoAnna, we haven't heard about it since...

The Fantasy Ball was a bigger event this year with a growing town involvement. Ramona did a terrific job organizing it. Jenny's new Carol Channing was well received, but the boys from the Oceans suggested that

Betty Ann should loan her a pair of bushy black false eyelashes. The hope is that we can find some way to streamline the judging process. Some felt we should have alerted them earlier on to the fact that it was a costume party.

The Awards Banquet went well. There was some feeling that there should have been a bit more recognition of the program coordinators, but the problem was that it would have been a speakers' "parade" like the Academy Awards involving most of the participants (which, is a wonderful comment about our group's involvement in helping each other, but...) The focus should be upon the major awards. In terms of the awards there was a suggestion that the selection be postponed until after the Fantasy Ball. Much praise was made of our guest speaker and the fine job done by Jane & Louise.

It should be noted that some of the major and minor events (Town & Gown, Whale Watch, Fashion Show, Follies, Fantasy Ball, and Kite Fly) are designed to bring in revenue for the Fair. Last year this revenue was very critical in that it helped to actually pay off some of our bills in Provincetown. In a significant way these events not only cement good will in town, (Town & Gown, Fashion Show, Follies & Ball), they also serve to keep the cost of your attending the Fair as low as it is.

Also, you should be aware of the fact that our principal host (Pilgrim House) donated its space and services (including the Apres Follies Party) to us to help underwrite the Fair. (It also gave us Muriel's and Mariette's space free.) Louie also paid for flyers to replace my goof-up, and the *Advocate* ran our ad at half price.

In fact, I asked the program coordinators to evaluate the contributions made by our various hosts (inns, restuarants, etc.) and their evaluations made the point that the many kindnesses of our hosts have had a very tangible impact upon the true cost of the Fair to you, the participant.

It would be a lovely gesture if you would pause now and write a little thank-you note to those hosts in town that helped you. This lady like gesture would be your very best way to thank Provincetown. This time of the year when business is slow, your note could be a real day brightener for our dear friends who do so much to make the Fair a success.

SEMINARS:

One of the problems noted by several participants was the general lack of space for the conduct of most of the seminars. The most significant cause of this was the fact that we based our seating estimates upon the number of participants who had signed up prior to the event. We took our sites based upon previous years. This gave us an average of 30. In fact we averaged 44 per luncheon seminar, with sign-ups at the door for 15 or more.

The second most general complaint dealt with the problem of interaction time between the speakers and the attendees. Part of the problem is the "sampler" nature of the seminars. Both the range of topics and the number of seminars available are limited by the length of the Fair, not by demand.

The On The Town Seminar was a delight to all and as a new seminar event it accomplished its purpose to help participants to understand and enjoy P'town. Nice job by "Sweetie" Laura and her panel.

The Outreach Seminar had a range of reactions, but the most significant recurring comment was a demand for a more detailed report on what the Outreach had accomplished in the past year, significant trends in professional attitudes towards cross-dressing, and suggestions as to what we can do to help. (God knows how I dread letting Ari loose on this!)

Virginia Prince's Sociological Seminar went well. There appears to be some concern about not allowing enough time for questions. (See above.)

Lifestyles. Dr. Abbas was very popular in the write-ups and her talk was appreciated. The principal complaint dealt with the lack of time for the rest of the panel to talk about their individual "lifestyles". What happened was that two seminars emerged out of one. Well done, Dr. Abbas.

Legal. Very well received. Some conflict between the TS vs TV view of what the seminar should contain. Again a case where the 'sampler' was just not enough for the demand because of time limitations and focus. The bottom line was that our Naomi did a fine job with a complex subject.

The Health Aspects Seminar was, frankly my dear, a flop. The general view was that Dr. Wollman's focus upon "hormones are great" left much to be desired. There was hope that he would deal more with the health evaluation process as used to determine if one should have surgery, etc. His historical account was of some interest. Dr. Sheila Kirk has volunteered to lead this seminar next year and therefore there will be no special fee above the token meal charge.

The most suggested seminar by CD's (& the "partners") was a for CD only seminar on "partners". Any suggestions as to who should lead such a discussion or panel?

WORKSHOPS:

Most of the evaluations were filled with notes throughout the detailed forms; therefore, the stunner was the singular fact that only a few of our evaluations commented upon the workshops. The major reason for this is that: a) most of the evaluaters had had three or more Fairs, and therefore

had taken most of the workshops at earlier Fairs; and, b) the "pay as you go policy". The tip off to this were the exceptions to this lack of evaluations The Beauty Fair and Fashion & Beauty Course workshops.

Our first run at Beauty Fair met mixed reviews: "A great idea, too few evaluaters (hence, too crowded), too much material to hand out, and not enough time. Try it again!" The focus upon individual evaluation was much appreciated. The key suggestion was to reduce the material handout (by sticking most of it in a hand-out book) and limiting the evaluations to a few single page stations. We'll try again.

The Fashion Beauty Course received kudos for Paula's fantastic skills and thoughtful attention to those attending. The video sessions were most appreciated. And the hour of extra sleep was noted by all who liked the ten o'clock time.

Bud Heuer's Basic & Advanced Speech Courses were rated the best by those who took it and submitted evaluations. Some felt a "free" sampler course should be offered to the general participant under the recommendations for new workshops. The popularity of both courses is noted best by the number who "repeat" the course and the fact that it is self-supporting in terms of the "pay as you go" policy. A few thought that a pre-fair handout work book might be useful.

Niela Miller's Personal Growth I & II Workshops received high praise from our evaluaters. Those who took the workshops liked them. The basic problem is that the "pay-as-you-go" policy puts these workshops in the red. It should be noted that the hourly rate for these courses is less than that for the Speech Courses. We value these workshops and feel that there are many who could use these workshops, but our cost analysis indicates a need for a slight fee increase to balance the books as required by our policy. Also, we need to find a way to better explain the benefits of these workshops to increase our attendance.

The Couples Workshop was a new experimental effort. Our evaluaters felt that besides moving it out of Hargood House it should have more time allotted to it. In short they thought it was terrific, but needed more time and space to help the couples. We will have it again! It was not cited on the Registration Form because we need time to reconsider fee structure.

It should be noted that each of the professionals who directed our workshops contributed from their fees and/or services the equivalent to a participant cost known as an "Administrative Fair". Their dedication to serve you is reflected in this gesture, which also keeps the cost of your Fair down. This is a part of the Board's policy to insure that workshops are "self supporting" "on a pay as you go basis" and do not add to the cost of operating the Fair.

PARTNERS:

The three partners who responded to this questionnaire section all liked the improvements in this program. They plan to have a hostess from their group to meet the new "partners" as they arrive in FF87 during registration. Their booklet was distributed at the Chicago Convention.

PROFESSIONAL & ADMINISTRATIVE

Femme Fashions served a useful function especially in its new location. It is clear from the many comments that Muriel (who pays for an administrative fair) is dearly loved and many felt that she should teach an advanced course of some sort. Many of the girls commented upon late arrival, limited stock, and need for a bigger shop. In short, P'town needs a Lane Bryant store.

Mariette's Photo Studio was hard to find and in all probability we shall try to put her studio out front next to Muriel's shop. The girls would love it if she had some sort of bulletin board with photographs taken for the day so that they could order a set for themselves. The problem is that there appears to be no commercial photographic developer in P'town. But, we'll look into it again. (Mariette also pays for an administrative fair.)

Niela Miller's Individual Therapy. We asked for suggestions on how to promote this service (note statement bottom of page 26 in the *Participants Guide*). In general terms the responses summarized as follows: "Most of the participants are at the Fair to have a good time, and perhaps the idea of attending therapy sessions is counter to their purpose. Coupled with this is the doubt that any constructive therapy results could be done in a session or two at the Fair." It was suggested that a separate letter from Niela be included with the *Participants Guide*, which is a good idea. We need to substitute a different term for the word "therapy".

The Newsletter was liked by one and all and Pam's hard work was on the minds of all of the evaluators. However, the feeling was that there was a need for more personal bits of gossip, humor, etc. in the letter. The basic message was "well done, Pam" (and Linda too).

Our House system was a step in the right direction as the sign-ups for this year's Fair indicates. The reviews of the House Counselor and Party varied from House to House, as expected. In general terms there was a feeling that there was a greater need to make people aware of this new service, with the citation of cases where a greater awareness of the help available may have avoided some problems. The fact that these girls were aware and helped themselves is an excellent sign of our progress. In those cases where house parties were held there was a general feeling that they were enjoyable and interesting discussions were held. (Most notably Roomers and Tradewinds where we have already seen a 50% or better return rate to this year's Fair.) A well done to Michelle, Helen, Virginia, Gerri, Paula, Cindy, and Betty Ann from the girls.

The Coordinator's Video Party was a flop mainly because we tried to fit it in at a time after the Fashion Show and the Follies. It was not at all workable after the Ball because the Pilgrim House had to close by law. We want to thank Cindy, Joanie, and Ginger for their efforts to keep all aware of the shifts in this program, and a special thanks to Maxine who had to make it happen. We may find an "off license" site next year, for a special cocktail party.

Scheduling and Communications. Generally high kudoes for our efforts to improve scheduling. Some complaints about "military time" and the lack of time to travel between events. Ah well...In terms of communications I plan to find a way so that each house counselor may have her own phone, and, perhaps, answering machine.

ACCOMODATIONS:

It is unlikely that we can please everybody in this area. It is doubtful whether any facility in Provincetown was ever built with our group in mind (except perhaps Roomers). Most of the inns and apartment complexes are built for summer vacation swingers with a towel and a swim suit (you should hear what they say when I arrive with my own portable dress rack, etc.). The inspection trip in Spring worked well in our selection of inns as reflected in your reviews which were generally quite favorable.

All of our Provincetown innkeepers were loved dearly by the girls, who all indicated service and friendships above the call of duty. These wonderful hosts and their staffs were cited again and again for their many kindnesses.

Hargood House. It is clear that this apartment complex is very popular because of the high rate of returns (80%). Some need to car pool.

Roomers. Andy has created a miracle for us by managing to open by Fair time. Again we have a case where the return rate is exceptionally high. Parking is abit of a problem. My guess is that most of the problems noted in the evaluations will have been solved by the time the renovation is complete.

Chicago House. The new owners of Chicago House were most delighted to have our group and willing to make changes. They dropped the charging of a parking fee for their hill lot last year and hope to find more space this coming year.

Elephant Walk. This is one of the new inns added to our list from the Spring inspection. In all probability it would have had a high return rate, but it was used as a kind of international house and therefore its return rate is reflective of international mail and not facility or host. Highly rated in the evaluations.

Tradewinds. This also was a new inn. Because of its relative lack of closet space we used it primarily as our high turn-over inn for the part time Fair participants. (One room had five separate occupants during the Fair, one after another.) Yet, our sign-ups (50%) for the coming Fair indicate that it probably will need some portable racks.

Oceans Inn. Horace and Mark are trying to sell the Oceans Inn and we have been using it primarily for our Fair support staff and professional personnel. We also use it for transient "non-Fair" assignment, as we do the Twelve Center Inn.

This Spring we shall look for some new inns to add to the list in case we do have the larger fair indicated by interest to date. We also shall sit down and try to address the particular problems raised by your individual evaluations (racks, mirrors, etc.) in our efforts to try and upgrade the quality of the Fair. If any of you plan to be at the Tiffany Spring event I could use your help with this exercise.

MEALS:

One of the severe limitations to the size of Fantasia Fair is the availability of restaurants large enough to serve our group in a meeting format or for a formal meal. There is also the new problem of the growing "extended season" on the Cape which is reaching into Halloween and beyond. Those restaurants open usually want to serve a commercial lunch to the public rather than tie up their place with just our group. We had to beg Flagship to stay open an extra day so that we would have a place for our Orientation Day. (Thank you Ciro!) Because of our switch to the small inns it is almost impossible to get into one of the larger hotel (motel) banquet rooms (they usually prefer a package deal in housing and meals). The Provincetown Inn opened the Mayflower room to us as a gesture of good will. (Thank you Bob Evans.)

In general the ratings for restaurants were high. "Your selection of restaurants makes me think that you just can't find a bad meal in Provincetown!" As in the cast of our innkeeper hosts our restaurant hosts were praised for their service and many kindnesses. Only one meal was panned and that was the lunch served at Franco's for the Health Seminar. In all fairness to Franco, we only had six signed up for the meal while over twenty were served.

The most common complaint was over crowded conditions for the seminars. This problem was touched on previously. It is our hope that the new Pronto's planned for this year will provide the seating space. The boys suggested that it would have 70 places in open space. Frankly it is most important that our girls sign up early so that we can make a better guess as to the number who plan to attend.

POST FAIR:

Most of you would have liked to have received the evaluation forms sooner after the Fair (We'll try) and a more accurate mailing list. So would we, but we had just completed merging three lists containing 2500, 1100, and 500 names respectively with several duplicates {840} and many old addresses {460} which led to returns. The overlapping purging of these lists left some mistakes (the machine dropped the wrong duplicate), and we are still finding stray duplicates due to errors in zip code or individuals living (home address) in one zip code, and having a post box in another.

OVERALL:

I was delighted by your reception of my efforts towards improving the quality of Fantasia Fair. You have been very kind to me, in this first effort, but I must insist that the main reason we had a better Fair in 1986 was the fact that our program coordinators, professionals, and Provincetown hosts all helped to make it a better Fair.

Your evaluations were very valuable because they give us a chance to see the Fair as you see it, away from the myths and administrative games of the day by day efforts. Sitting down and reviewing your evaluations is an amazing process, and a rewarding one. As I said in the *Participants Guide* Fantasia Fair is actually many individual Fairs each created by the individual participant. You all agreed that we had a GREAT FAIR IN 1986, yet each described a different fair! Perhaps that is the reason it was a great fair.

It is my hope that we can build from your evaluations an even better fair in 1987.

COME TO THE FAIR AND SEE!