

**It's Convention Time Again!**  
**Article from Jul - Aug 2004 Buckeye Trapper**  
**by Patti Conrad**

Conventions are a lot of trapping, hard work, and good fun. The OSTA has always had a great response when the call goes out for help and we always have plenty of volunteers to help organize, set up, and take down the convention. This creates more time for everyone to enjoy the weekend and still get the job done properly.

There are so many details to be taken care of before, during, and after the convention that any help is appreciated. It doesn't have to be all day or everyday, it can be a couple of hours or just helping with one task.

Plans for the conventions always start in September at the Board of Directors meeting. At that meeting the board discusses the feedback of problems and successes of the convention that had just closed. They talk about what we need to do the same or differently for the next convention. It is at this post-convention meeting every year that the board with your recommendations attempts to fine tune the convention "checklist" that they will use to guide them towards a successful event.

Invitations are mailed out to Dealers and Tailgaters on or about June 1, along with convention notices with dates and general information to leading publications.

The trappers must be lined up by May 10 and set for the demo schedule as the demo schedule appears in the July/August issue of the BT along with who to contact for general & dealer information. That pre-convention issue also holds hotel, motel, camping information, and details on the auction gun.

The July Board meeting is usually held at the fairgrounds where the convention is to be held. At that meeting all the buildings are measured and a blue print is drawn noting electrical outlets, phones, light and fan controls, exists, doors that lock, etc. At that time a check is made of availability of tables, chairs, a front-end loader to haul dirt, and a supply of dirt.

All the plaques and ribbons must be ordered for the trap setting contest along with the other awards to be presented before September (convention time!). The auction gun is purchased and engraved now and an inventory of all merchandise is taken to see what items we might need to purchase.

Members who are scheduled in 2 to 4 hour shifts man the gate during the weekend. We always need people to help work the gate. This is a popular job of standing and/or sitting at the entry driveway in the hot sun, rain, or whatever the case may be, and collecting admission fees, passing out convention flyers and providing general information to people coming through the gate. (You might even get coffee brought out to you during the early morning shift.) We have some "professional" regulars who work the gate every year; you will see a familiar face of two when you pass through.

Some of the volunteers, Organizers, Directors and Officers arrive early and stay late with their trucks, cars, & trailers, loaded with everything needed to put on a convention. Some carry demo area equipment, some the OSTA merchandise for the booth, and some carry donated auction treasures, while I bring my checkbook for the auction!

By this time a layout exists on paper for the inside dealers and outside tailgaters. Each building is measured and each booth space marked off for the dealers. Tables and chairs are set up. The wiring is strung for the sound system. Larry Williams, former District 7 Director, does this with great pride. Thanks Larry.

Outside, the parking lot is measured and marked for dealer booth and tailgater spaces and the campsites are staked and numbered.

The OSTA booth is set up with tables and merchandise. The OSTA booth is manned throughout the convention and hourly announcements are made to let everyone know what demos are scheduled.

The demo area is put together with a collapsible wood frame, dirt, water and some "special" touches! You need to use a front-end loader to haul the dirt and a hose must be stretched to bring in the water. Everyone helps to shovel and rake the dirt into place. I believe it is the job that everyone has the most fun doing, even though it sounds like work when you describe it this way.

If you have been to a convention you have probably seen members go around and pick up items being donated for the auction from the dealers and tailgaters.

We always need help setting up chairs and tables for the General Business Meeting, and the auction too.

If you don't have a lot of free time to volunteer for any of the jobs that come up at the convention, you should at least take time to attend the meeting. It is an important part of the convention and should not be overlooked. Your participation is encouraged and welcome.

As with any event, there are miscellaneous chores that are just as important as the specific tasks. These need to be done and can not be slighted. They may include anything from running misc. errands, or helping a dealer unload their supplies, to serving sandwiches at the social.

When Sunday rolls around it is time to tear down everything we've put up, clean up everything we've messed up, and pack up everything we've unpacked.

If you think there is nothing you can do to help, think again! Then call any OSTA Officer, Director or County Organizer and volunteer some time at this year's convention!

Editor's Note: This is a remake of a story that appeared in the July/Aug 2001 Buckeye Trapper. Attending the convention and purchasing your supplies from our advertisers and dealers is a nice way to support them. It's also a good way to find out what is happening in the trapping community first hand. ### Patti Conrad, 1244 Abbe Rd., Sheffield, OH 44054