

Planning and Conducting a Swap Meet



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Planning and Conducting a Swap Meet

**Rick Borstein
Greater Chicago Cichlid Association**

Welcome to the FAAS presentation "Planning and Conducting a Swap Meet". My name is Rick Borstein and I am the Swap Meet Chairman for the Greater Chicago Cichlid Association.

It's my great pleasure to tell you how your club can plan and run a swap meet. Swaps have been very successful for our club and can be for yours, too. Let's begin.

Planning and Conducting a Swap Meet



Swap Meets are a great way to generate revenue for your society and a great way to promote the hobby. My club's swap meets attract anywhere from 500 to 800 attendees and between 40 and 50 vendors. We generally clear between \$1500 and \$2500, too!

We have lots of families and their kids, so it is a great way to expose children to the hobby. One of the best aspects of the swap meet is that inexperienced hobbyists can learn from the breeders who are selling their fish. We feel that our swap meets help grow the hobby, and that is in line with our club philosophy.

What You'll Learn

- Swap Meet Definitions
- Getting Support inside Your Society
- Goals
- Securing a Venue and Vendors
- Timeline
- Marketing the Event
- Registering Vendors and Other Preparation
- Operating and Tracking the Swap Meet

I hope to cover pretty much everything you'll need to run a swap meet yourself. Keep in mind that GCCA is one of the larger aquarium clubs in the United States and we operate in a large city. If you are a smaller club with a more limited population, you'll need to scale as appropriate.

Note: During this presentation, I'll mention or show several documents that GCCA uses to track our swap meets. You can download these documents on the same page where you found this presentation.

We also have a PDF version of this presentation available with written notes.

What is a Swap Meet?

- Vendors
 - Fish breeders, pet shops, plant growers, anyone with something to sell
- Attendees
 - Aquarium and pond enthusiasts who want to buy livestock, plants and equipment
- Direct Sales Relationship



Many clubs run regular auctions. Swap meets are a different type of event.

Vendors are the key. They bring product and livestock to sell. They are charged a fee to rent a table.

Attendees are hobbyists who want to buy fish, plants, equipment and so on. Attendees pay a fee to attend. In our case, we charge \$3 for individuals and \$5 dollars per family.

There is a direct sales relationship between the buyer and seller.

The vendors keep all the proceeds from the sales.

The club doesn't take a cut.

The Attendee Perspective

- Buy
 - Browse vendor tables to see what's for sale
 - Make the best deal possible
- Learn
 - Ask questions and learn about the hobby
- Social
 - ▢ Meet other hobbyists
 - ▢ Meet and exchange fish with friends



Attendees come to the swap meet primarily to buy. They walk through the swap room to find the most interesting items to buy and make the best deal possible. Generally, the quality and variety exceeds that of area pet stores.

Since the vendors are knowledgeable breeders of fish and plant specialists, they are a great source of information. So much of the real knowledge in our hobby is not in books, but is found in the community of serious hobbyists. This is a great way to educate newcomers in the hobby..

Swaps are a great time to meet with fellow club members or make new friends in the hobby. Our swap meets have become just like another club meeting and folks plan to meet there to talk and exchange fish.

All this is good for the hobby.

The Seller Perspective

- Sell
 - Make money
 - Clear out inventory
- Market
 - Build mailing lists
 - Circulate flyers and product information



Sellers are at the swap to make money and clear out fish, plants and equipment that they no longer want or need. Interestingly, a lot of vendors sell and buy from each other! Its not unusual to see vendors go home with just as much stuff, but it's different stuff.

On average, vendors sell between \$200 and \$800 at a GCCA Swap Meet. Success depends upon having desirable fish and plants and knowing the market. Discus and angels always sell well, as do good quality guppies, catfish, Amazon swords and fish food.

Vendors who have good signage and pictures of adult fish sell more at higher prices.

Smart vendors also use this opportunity to market themselves. They might ask attendees for their email or home address so that they can market to them directly in the future. We have several vendors who email their customers to let them know they'll be at the swap meet.

Pet shops, rep firms and manufacturers pass out literature and flyers for their product.

Planning and Conducting a Swap Meet

How does the club benefit?

- Generate Revenue
 - Entry fees from attendees
 - \$5 per family
 - \$3 per individual
 - Table Fees from Sellers
 - \$30 per table
 - Raffles, Silent Auctions
- Easy to Run
 - Fast—over in 6 hours
 - 10AM to 2PM
 - Set-up at 8AM
 - Only 3 to 4 people needed
- Obtain new members



Of course, the reason your club should take the time to run a swap meet is to make some money. Our average swap meets generate about \$1500 for our club after expenses. A really good swap might generate close to \$2500.

GCCA charges fees to attendees to enter. Individuals are \$3 and families are \$5.

We charge vendors a flat fee of \$30 for an 8 foot by 30" table. That's the standard size table you find at most hotels . On an 8-foot table, a vendor can easily display thirty to fifty bags of fish.

Your club can also make money running silent auctions. We ask vendors to donate a bag of fish to the silent auction. If we have any manufacturer donations, we put those out, too. Silent auctions generate an additional \$100 to \$200 in revenue.

One of the best aspects of the swap meet is that it is easy to run, especially compared to an auction. From set-up to finish, it's only six hours. We currently run our swap meets from 10AM to 2PM on a Sunday. We used to end at 3PM, but found that vendors were consistently sold out by then. Also, for our Winter swaps, it allows everyone to get home in time for a late NFL football game!

If you are looking for new members, a swap meet is a great place to get them.

Getting Support for the Swap

- Societies are resistant to new ideas
- Counter with . . .
 - Successes in other clubs
 - Revenue Projections
 - Swap as a Member Service
 - Nothing ventured, nothing gained
- Build support *before* your board meeting



If your society has never done a swap meet before, you might encounter some resistance to doing one. It's been my experience that many people are resistant to change.

There certainly are a lot of good arguments that you can use to move the idea forward. More and more clubs are doing swap meets and being successful. Take the time to put together some revenue projections. Put them on paper and pass them around. Swaps serve your members in a different way than an auction. At a swap, attendees can go in and buy the fish they want, make new friends, and circulate. An auction is a more rigid system that requires people to wait to buy the item they are interested in. Swaps bring experienced hobbyists together with inexperienced hobbyists so knowledge transfer can take place. How many times have you seen folks drop off fish at an auction and take off? In our club, we've had success proposing new ideas as experiments. Say, "Let's just try this once or twice and see if it works."

If you need approval from your club board, don't ambush everyone with the new idea and expect unbridled enthusiasm. Call each board member or meet with them to explain your idea first. That way, when you go into your meeting, you'll likely already know who is behind you.

Goals for Swap

- Happy Vendors
- Happy Attendees
- Generate Revenue
- Measure your performance
- Have some fun!



The goals for a swap are simple.

Vendors are the most important. You want them to be happy, so you'll need to get as many attendees to the swap as you can. If they don't sell anything, they won't come back.

Your attendees need to have a great experience at the swap. Be friendly to everyone and thank them for coming.

Of course, you want to make some money for your club. The amount you can make is up to you. If you market your event, you can do really well!

Finally, have some fun! Enjoy yourself at your own swap. It is certainly gratifying to see attendees walk out with fish and plants more excited about the hobby than when they walked in.

Initial Goals

- Set goals for:
 - Number of Vendors
 - Number of Attendees
- GCCA's Average Swap Meet
 - 550-600 attendees
 - 45-50 vendors
- Breakeven Analysis
 - Expected Revenue vs Anticipated Cost



If you've never done a swap, you'll need to set some goals. How many vendors can you get?

How many folks typically attend your auctions or other club events? That's a good initial goal. Auctions attendance can be low compared to a swap meet.

GCCA typically gets three times as many folks attending one of our swap meets.

A typical GCCA swap meet has between 500 and 600 attendees and 45 or more vendors. If you are in a smaller market, you might do one-half to two-thirds of that.

I suggest you do a breakeven analysis. It's easy to do.

Estimate the revenue from admissions and table sales and then back out room rental and advertising costs.

Vendors and Venue

- Finding Vendors
 - Auction Sellers
 - Club Members
 - Pet Shops
 - Your Forum or Classifieds
- Venue
 - Scale to number of vendor tables needed
 - 8 Foot by 30" tables
 - 6 Foot by 30" tables
 - ┌ Walk the venue and map it!
 - Note electrical outlets



To be successful, you'll need to find vendors. Call the top sellers at your auctions and talk to fellow club members. Local pet shops may want to come, so ask them. If your club has a web forum, that is a good way to find prospective vendors. Initially, you will need to explain how a swap meet works. Level set expectations with vendors, especially if you've never done a swap meet before. You'll also need to advise prospective sellers on how to be successful.

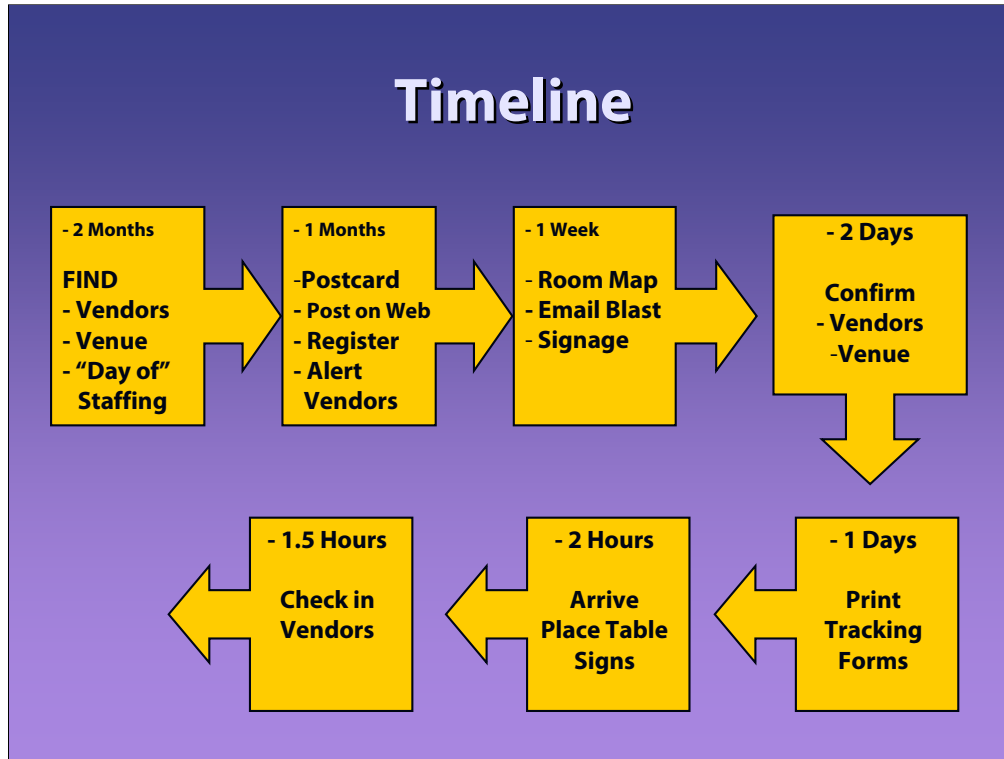
Of course, you need to find a location– or venue– for the event. GCCA's venue is a 5500 square foot hotel banquet room that can accommodate 58 vendor tables. However, I've been to swap meets run by smaller clubs in the local Moose Lodge with twenty tables that were terrific. You'll need to scale to your market.

Wherever you decide to hold the swap meet, you'll need tables. Know the size of the table provided by the venue and make sure they have enough of them. The two typical sizes are 8 foot and 6 foot tables. Vendors sometimes build displays to size, so it's important to communicate the exact size.

If you do your swap in a hotel, the sales department can usually map out the room for you and tell you how many tables can be conveniently fit in. If you are not using a hotel, carefully measure the room and map it out. Make sure you leave adequate aisle space. You'll also need at least three to four feet behind each table for the vendor and a couple chairs per table.

Some vendors may need electrical access. That will help draw in vendors of discus and marine fish who have more perishable stock. Our experience has been that only 15-20% of vendors require electrical access.

Planning and Conducting a Swap Meet



I've put together a brief timeline to help you understand what needs to happen when. After you do a couple of swaps, you can condense this somewhat.

Two months prior, you'll need to start finding vendors and securing people to help you run the swap. If this is your first swap, you may want to start a bit earlier.

One month prior, marketing activities begin. Ads for the swap are posted on our website and a postcard is prepared. We also email blast all the vendors to let them know that the swap is coming soon. About 3-4 weeks prior to the swap meet, we open registration to vendors. More on registration later in the presentation.

Seven to ten days prior to the event, you'll want to email blast prospective attendees. I hope you have an email marketing list and listserve on your web site! At this time, you'll also want to start preparing your room map and getting any onsite signage ready.

Two days prior, we send out a confirmation email to vendors. I use Excel and Outlook to do a personalized email to each vendor. It's a nice touch, but not required. Don't forget to call the venue to make sure that they know you're coming and to confirm the room set-up. Who needs surprises?

The day before, I print out tracking forms, table signs, badges and other documents necessary for the swap. There are samples on the same web page where you found this presentation.

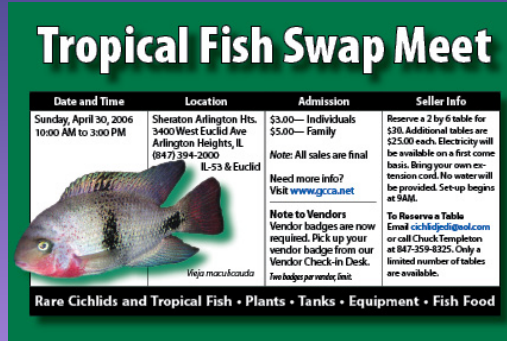
The day of the swap meet, I arrive a couple hours early and place "Table Reserved Signs" that are personalized for each vendor. I do not recommend that you let vendors select their own tables unless you have a very small swap meet. In our case, it would be chaos.

Our swap meets start at 10AM and vendors start arriving at 8:30AM. You'll need to check in each of the vendors and point them to their table. Make sure you welcome each vendor and thank them for coming. Expect new vendors to have a lot of questions. If this your first swap or you have a new vendor, expect a lot of questions.

Planning and Conducting a Swap Meet

Marketing the Swap Meet

- GCCA uses a combination of:
 - Direct Mail
 - Email
 - Website
 - Signage
 - Trading Times



<http://www.postcardservices.com>

500 color postcards
mailed for about \$275

Marketing the swap meet— or any club event really— is vital to success.

GCCA direct mails about 900 postcards and drops about 600 emails for each event.

Of course, we post the event to our website.

Don't underestimate the value of signage. One of our members Tom Christiansen created about a dozen 18" by 24" signs that he placed at busy intersections around the city and we got probably close to 50 attendees just from that.

We also advertise in a local trader newspaper, the *Trading Times*.

Sending out postcards is a lot of work, but we found a great service that can do a COLOR postcard for only a bit more than we could send out a black and white version. Postcardservices.com is an online printer we use that is fast and efficient.

You can either design the postcard yourself in a page layout program, or use the online design tools to create the postcards, so no experience is necessary.

At the time you design the postcard, you can upload your mailing list and they take care of everything. The color postcards are really impressive and make our club look professional.

Registering Vendors

- Registering Vendors
 - GCCA uses a web database
 - PHP Application
 - Can be purchased and installed from www.bosdev.com
 - Web visitors can see expected inventory
 - Manually
 - Phone & Email
- Tables are limited
 - GCCA has to turn away vendors occasionally
 - All tables are \$30
 - Electricity available on a first-come, first-served basis
 - Vendors sometimes split tables

One thing I try to do in our club is to automate the functions that are no fun to do. Early on, we found that registering over the phone and email was cumbersome and prone to error. If you have only a few vendors, it's not a problem, but with close to fifty, it was driving me crazy.

We now use a web-based vendor registration that has been a godsend to us. Anybody with a web connection can register online. We don't ask for any money upfront, by the way.

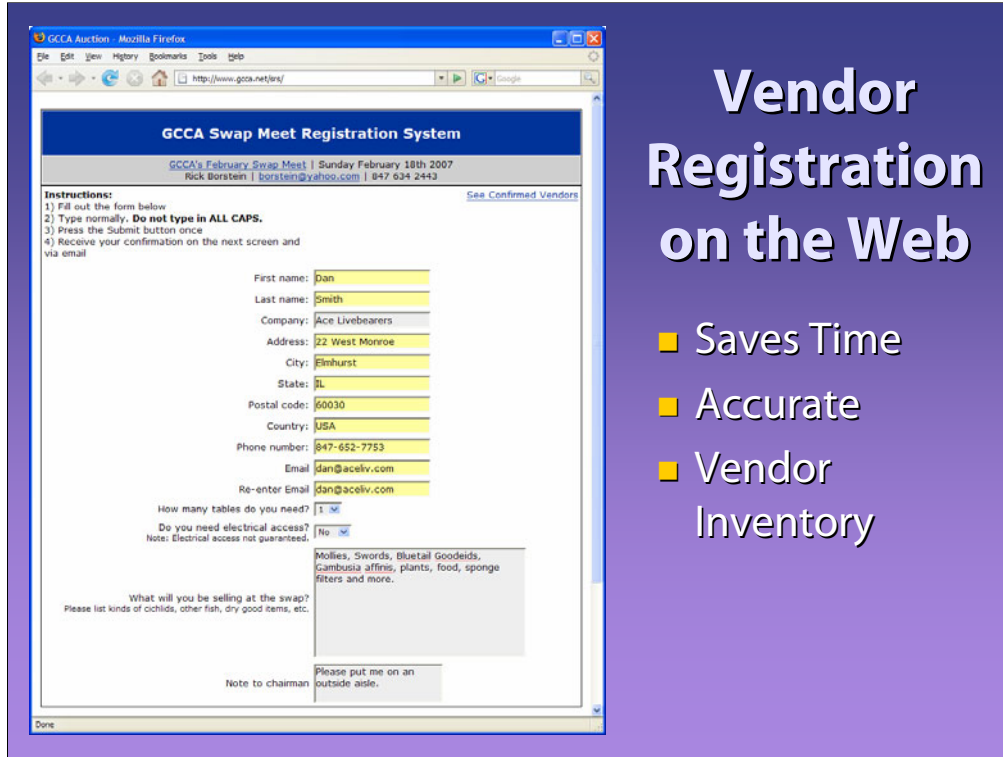
The application is PHP based and can be run on almost any web server. If you'd like to try it for your club, you can contact our developer Don Boston at www.bosdev.com. He can customized it for your club. One nice aspect of the system is the vendors can also enter the inventory they expect to bring. Your site visitors can then see all the great fish and other items that will be available.

You'll still have some vendors without web connection want to register over the phone, but we've trained them to go to the website for the most part.

Make sure vendors know that tables are limited. That is a good incentive to register early and we sometimes have to turn away vendors. All tables are \$30, although you may want to adjust that number depending on your market area. Electricity can be requested, but not guaranteed.

Note that vendors sometimes split tables. We allow this to take place, but hold the vendor who registers responsible for paying for the table.

Planning and Conducting a Swap Meet



The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the 'GCCA Swap Meet Registration System'. The page title is 'GCCA Swap Meet Registration System' and the URL is 'http://www.gcca.net/bw/'. The page content includes instructions for registration, a form with fields for personal and company information, and a list of items to be sold.

Instructions:

- 1) Fill out the form below.
- 2) Type normally. **Do not type in ALL CAPS.**
- 3) Press the Submit button once.
- 4) Receive your confirmation on the next screen and via email.

See [Confirmed Vendors](#)

First name:
Last name:
Company:
Address:
City:
State:
Postal code:
Country:
Phone number:
Email:
Re-enter Email:

How many tables do you need?
Do you need electrical access?
Note: Electrical access not guaranteed.

What will you be selling at the swap?
Please list kinds of cichlids, other fish, dry good items, etc.

Mollies, Swords, blue-tail Goodeids, Gambusia affinis, plants, food, sponge filters and more.

Note to chairman:

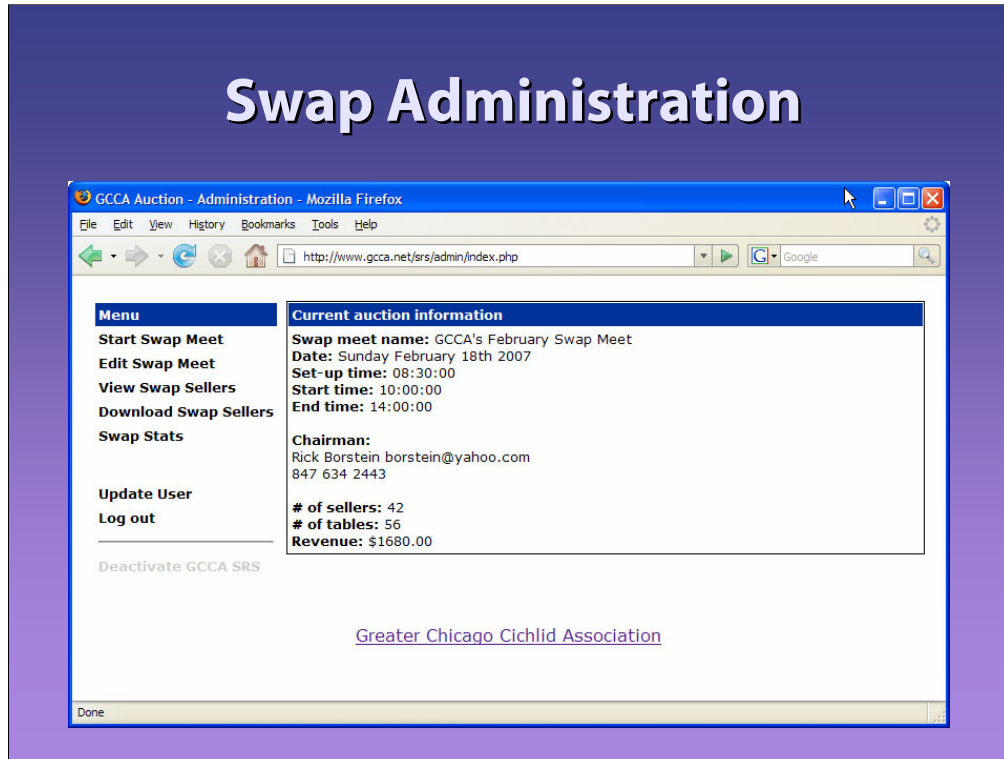
Vendor Registration on the Web

- Saves Time
- Accurate
- Vendor Inventory

Here's a screenshot of the vendor registration system that runs on GCCA's website.

Vendors just fill out a simple web form with their information. It captures the name of the vendor, how many tables they need, electrical access requirements and the fish and other items the vendor plans to bring.

Planning and Conducting a Swap Meet



This is the screen shot for the Administrator side of our Swap Meet Reservation system.

The admin logs in with a username and password, and then has access to:

- Swap Stats such as total tables and revenue generated
- Manually adding or changing vendor entries
- Downloading the vendor list so it can be opened in a spreadsheet. We use the data to create vendor check-in lists, table signs and so on.

Vendor Rules

- Two people per table
- Badges Required
- No water supplied
- Electrical access is not guaranteed
- Payment is cash or check only
- Pay between Noon and 1PM
- Cancellation Policy

•As you secure vendors, and in your email and phone conversations with them, you should let them know about the rules you have.

•GCCA has developed these rules over the years and they've worked for us.

•Vendors are allowed two people per table. If they need additional folks for set-up, we charge them an admission. Early on, we found that vendors would invite all their friends to set-up and we'd lose money on the admissions for the extra people.

•We only allow vendors with badges to enter the swap room prior to the start time. Again, early on, we found that vendors would pre-sell fish to customers who would pick them up prior to our start time and not pay an admission.

•GCCA doesn't supply water. If your venue has a sink available, be careful about making it available. I'd worry about slips and falls or flooding from a vendor who forgot to turn off the water.

•This bears repeating, do not guarantee electrical access. Vendors are responsible for bringing their own extension cords.

•We accept cash or check only. I don't know about your club, but processing credit cards is a pain in the neck.

•We considered getting table fees prior to the start of the event, but set-up is chaotic. 95% of vendors pay you with money they made at the swap, so expect a lot of cash.

•We circulate starting at noon to collect table fees.

•You'll need to think about your cancellation policy. We've been pretty lenient. As long as they call a few hours ahead of time, we don't penalize anybody. Occasionally, a vendor will be a no show. Unless they have a good reason, we ask them to pay for the table or they cannot vend at future swaps.

Planning and Conducting a Swap Meet

Items You'll Need

- Forms, etc.
 - Vendor Table Map
 - Vendor Check-in Form
 - Cashout Form
 - Attendance Tracking Form
 - Silent Auction Bid Sheets
 - Silent Auction Tracking Form
 - Table Reserved Signs
 - Vendor Letters
- Cash Box and Starting Cash
 - \$250
 - 50 1's
 - 20 5's
 - 10 10's
- Red & Blue Entry Tickets
- Signage
- Pens, Paper, Markers
- Vendor & Staff Badges
- Refreshments

What kind of stuff will you need to have at the swap?

Here's a list of all the items I could think of . . .

Firstly, there are a number of tracking forms that will help you measure and cash out the swap. Copies of GCCA's forms are available on the same page you found this presentation.

You will need a cashbox and starting cash. If you forget this, you're in for a stressful swap meet. We use a starting kitty of 50 1's, 20 5's and ten 10's. Sometimes even that isn't enough, so make sure you ask for exact change.

You'll need one roll each of red and blue entry tickets. Unlike raffle tickets, these are single numbered tickets. You'll use these to track admissions. Also, attendees must show the ticket for re-entry to the swap.

Depending on your venue, you'll need direction signage. Don't forget your club signs.

Of course, pens, paper and markers and other office supplies are good to have on hand.

We require vendors and staff to wear disposable adhesive badges. Don't forget them.

Finally, you and your staff will be busy during the swap. Bring along a cooler and some soft drinks, water and snacks. A well-fed staff is a happy one!

Planning and Conducting a Swap Meet

Table Reserved Signs

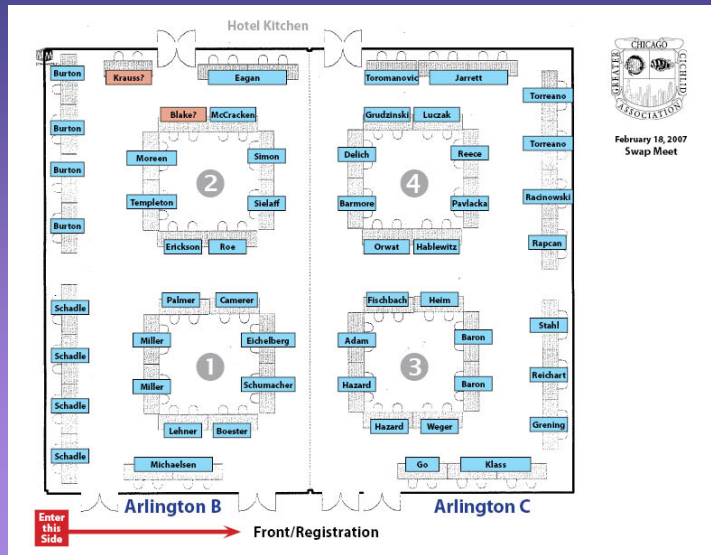
*Table
Reserved
for*
Bob Smith

Next, let's talk about some of the different signage and tracking sheets you'll need.

A couple days prior to the swap, I print out Table Reserved signs on plain old letter paper. I mail merge this using Word, but you can be just as effective with a black marker!

Planning and Conducting a Swap Meet

Room Map



Make sure you have your room layout map ready. The hotel we sends me a copy via email and I add names to it on my computer.

You can do this using a pen just as well, so it doesn't have to be fancy.

Room Layout

- Vendors who need electrical access
- Competitive vendors
- Requests for specific location
- Advice
 - Don't guarantee any vendor a specific spot
 - Switch up vendor locations to avoid perceived favoritism

When laying out the room, you'll need to consider the following:

- Vendors who need to be by an electrical outlet
- Competitive vendors or those that don't get along
- Requests for a specific location
- I like to mix up the vendor table assignments to avoid playing favorites and I never guarantee a specific location. Often, vendors will ask to be placed near another vendor. I try to honor these requests if possible.

Planning and Conducting a Swap Meet

Vendor Check-in List

Attended?	Last	First	Company	Notes
	Adam	Ray		
	Barmore	Dan		
	Baron	Blake	Darmall's Dragonfish	
	Boester	Rick		
	Barton	Barbara	Botts Group	
	Camereer	Doug		
	Delich	Mike	Mly Fabrications	
	Eagan	Bill	Absolutely Discus	
	Eichelsberg	Soren		
	Erickson	Kevin		
	Fischbach	Thomas		
	Go	Ladi		
	Grening	Larry		
	Gruozinski	Donald		
	Hablewitz	Mike		
	Hazard	Chris		
	Heim	Tom		
	Jarrett	Jack	J&J Discus-chicago	
	Klass	Tim	Classic Hobbies	
	Lehner	Jim & Mary		
	Luszcak	Keith		
	McCaiken	Keith		
	Michaelsen	James	Rac Corp.	
	Miller	Sam		
	Morson	Scott		
	Orwat	Tom	Uncle Tom's Cabin	
	Palmer	David		
	Pavlacka	Myron & Karen	Somerset Angels	
	Rachowski	Dan		
	Rapcan	Tom		
	Reece	Dennis	Lbc Inc.	
	Reichart	Michael	Lbc Inc.	
	Roe	John		
	Schadle	Mike	The Fish Factory	
	Schumacher	Kurt	Rort's Aquaturns & Elite Cichlids	
	Sielaff	David		
	Simon	Gerry	None	
	Stahl	Joshua	Tac	
	Templeton	Chuck		
	Toromanovic	Mario		
	Torreano	Brian	Btdarters	
	Weger	Don		

GCCA February 18 Swap Meet

Here are a few of the tracking documents we use at GCCA.

First of all, I should mention that our web-based registration outputs data that I bring into a spreadsheet. That allows me to sort the vendor list by last name.

You will need a vendor check-in list. You'll want to know who has checked in and be able to collect from them.

Planning and Conducting a Swap Meet

Swap Meet Attendance Log

Date:

Family				Individual			
Time	Starting Ticket Number	Ending Ticket Number	Attendees	Time	Starting Ticket Number	Ending Ticket Number	Attendees
10 to 11				10 to 11			
11 to 12				11 to 12			
12 to 1				12 to 1			
1 to 2				1 to 2			
2 to 3				2 to 3			
Total				Total			

Another very important document is the Swap Meet Attendance log. This allows you to measure attendance and is critical. Prior to start, record the starting red and starting blue ticket numbers. Individual attendees receive one red ticket. For families, we give one blue ticket to each member of the family. Each hour, you record the ending ticket number which allows you to see how many folks attended each hour. At GCCA's February 2007 swap meet, we had 540 attendees in the first hour. As your attendees get wise to the swap meets, they quickly learn that the best stuff goes early.

By tracking attendance, we can note trends. Our early winter swap meets tend to be the most successful, followed by early Spring and late Fall. Our early Fall swap meet- generally in September- is the most lightly attended.

Planning and Conducting a Swap Meet

GCCA Swap Meet Cash Revenue Detail

Admissions, Memberships, Silent Auction		Notes
Ending Cash in Box	\$ <input style="width: 50px;" type="text"/>	
Starting Cash in Box	\$ <input style="width: 50px;" type="text" value="200.00"/>	
Total Cash Generated	\$ <input style="width: 50px;" type="text"/>	
Sources of Income		
Memberships		
Individual- \$20 each	Number <input style="width: 30px;" type="text"/>	Extension \$ <input style="width: 30px;" type="text"/>
Family - \$23 each	Number <input style="width: 30px;" type="text"/>	Extension \$ <input style="width: 30px;" type="text"/>
Total Memberships		\$ <input style="width: 50px;" type="text"/>
Silent Auction		
Total Bags		\$ <input style="width: 50px;" type="text"/>
Other		
Other Sales (e.g. tank sales)		\$ <input style="width: 50px;" type="text"/>
Table Sales		
Number of Tables		\$ <input style="width: 50px;" type="text"/>
Total Collected		\$ <input style="width: 50px;" type="text"/>
Admissions		
Individual- \$3 each	Number <input style="width: 30px;" type="text"/>	Extension \$ <input style="width: 30px;" type="text"/>
Family - \$5 each	Number <input style="width: 30px;" type="text"/>	Extension \$ <input style="width: 30px;" type="text"/>
Total Admissions		\$ <input style="width: 50px;" type="text"/>
Note: Admissions is Total Cash less all other sources of income		

Next is our Swap Cash Out form. This form allows you to separately record where your money is coming from. It breaks out table fees, admissions, membership and silent auctions. We maintain a GCCA board-only page on our website where we keep these statistics. That is really helpful in planning for the future.

Planning and Conducting a Swap Meet



As I mentioned earlier, we print out badges both for vendors and staff.

I like to color key them. I use standard label templates in Microsoft Word to print these out. You can buy a box of 100 adhesive Avery badges for about \$12 at any office supply store.

Planning and Conducting a Swap Meet

Vendor Letter

Dear Swap Meet Vendor,

Thanks for selling at the GCCA's February 2007 Swap Meet. Good luck with your sales!

Please look over the information below. If you need me during the swap meet, call my cell phone at 847-732-5237 or find me in my red KCA shirt.

Best regards,

Rick Borstein
GCCA Swap Meet Chairman

Fee Collection

- We will start collecting table fees at Noon today
- Cash or check only, please
- Make checks out to Greater Chicago Cichlid Association

Next Swap Meet
GCCA's next swap meet will be April 22, 2007

Table Reservations for the Next Swap Meet

- Online registration opens on April 1, 2007
- Registration closes on April 18, 2007
- Go to <http://www.gcca.net> to register
- If you don't have the web, leave a message with the following information on my voicemail at 847-634-2443:
 - First and Last Name
 - Address, City, State, Zip
 - Phone Number
 - Number of tables needed
 - Electrical needed (or not)
 - What you'll be bringing to the swap meet (kinds of fish, plants, supplies, etc.)

We need your Email Address
If you supply an email address, we will mail you information about upcoming swaps well in advance. Please check your email with us when we collect your table fee.

Other Notes

- Lots of beginners attend our swap meets. Please encourage these folks as much as you can about our hobby.
- GCCA's next auction is Sunday, May 27
Holiday Inn Express in Palatine, IL | IL-53 and Dundee Roads
Cichlid-only Auction

While I'm placing the table reserved signs, each vendor receives a vendor letter.

I'm not sure these are absolutely necessary— and I've got a pretty good notion that many vendors don't read them, but it covers fee collection, details about the next swap meet and other details.

The vendor letter also lists my mobile phone number so if a vendor needs something, they can get in touch with me. I've only been called a couple of times.

Planning and Conducting a Swap Meet

Running the Swap Meet

- 7 to 8 AM
 - Check room layout
 - Put out *Table Reserved* Signs
 - Set-up Check-in Area
 - Put out directional and club signage
- 8:30 AM
 - Check-in vendors on reg list
- 9:30 AM
 - Record Starting Ticket #'s
 - Begin selling entry tickets
 - **Red** ticket to individuals \$3 each
 - One **Blue** ticket to each family attendee \$5 per family
- 9:50 AM
 - 10-minute warning
- 10:00 AM: Start!
- Noon: Collect Table Fees
- 2:00 PM: Swap Ends

Assuming a 10AM start, arrive between 7:30AM and 8AM to get set-up.

Make sure you check the room layout and put out your table reserved signs. This is also a good time to post all of your directional signage. As soon as the vendors start arriving, things can get a little crazy, so make sure you have your check-in area set-up early.

At 8:30AM vendors start to arrive. You'll need to check them in and show them to their table.

We start selling tickets at 9:30AM Crowd control can be an issue at our swap meets. It is not unusual for us to have 300 or 400 people waiting to get in.

Remember that your Red and Blue tickets are important to help you gauge attendance. Give one ticket to an individual and collect \$3. Charge each family \$5 for admission and give each member of the family a blue ticket. We give kids tickets too. That makes them feel important.

By the way, if we have food samples, etc., a lot of times we give those to the kids. We feel this encourages kids in the hobby.

Inside the swap room, vendors will be frantically setting up. Give the vendors a 10-minute warning at ten minutes to ten AM then at 10AM let everybody in.

At noon, you should start collecting table fees. Make sure you check them off on a list as you go. We usually print out invoices per vendor and wrap the money or checks in each one as we go. I think this makes it easier to reconcile later.

GCCA Swap Meets conclude at 2PM. Most vendors will be packed up and on their way between 2:30PM and 3:00 PM.

During the Swap

- Continue Selling Tickets
- Run other activities
 - Silent Auction
 - BAP Fish
 - Raffle
- Check in with vendors to see how they're doing



During the swap, you will continue to sell tickets. 75% of all attendees arrive in the first hour.

We also run a silent auction during the swap which closes on the half hour. Our members like that they can bring their Breeders Award Program fish to our swaps.

You might also consider doing a raffle. We've done better with silent auctions for donated items.

Make sure you check in with your vendors to see how they're doing. Take a digital camera and take some pictures for your club publication or website. Ask how things are going. THANK the vendor for coming!

Concluding the Swap

- Count cash and table fees
- Complete the tracking forms
- *Thank your vendors and staff*



Happy Vendors!

At the end of the swap, you should find another person and count up all the cash. Find a secure place to do so. It is nerve wracking to be all alone with thousands of dollars in the open. I find the largest, most intimidating club member and ask them to stand guard while I'm counting.

Your club treasurer or other board member should be there to verify the count. Make up a deposit slip and make sure it goes to the bank.

Complete the tracking forms and report the results to your board members.

Finally, thank everyone for attending. A big smile and heartfelt thanks let folks know you care.

Conclusions

- Swap Meets produce revenue
- Swap Meets are easier to run than an auction
- Focus on making the vendors happy
- Market your event!
 - Build your mailing list
 - Build your email list
- Questions?
Rick Borstein, borstein@yahoo.com

So, summing up . . . GCCA has found that swap meets are great at generating cash for us

Swaps are easier to run than an auction, take less time and staff, and are less likely to burn out your core staffers

Make your vendors happy. Treat them well.

Most importantly, market your event so a lot of people will attend. It's great to see vendors sell out and go home with thick wallets.

Use all your events to build your mailing and email list. Each person on the list is worth a lot of money to your club.

Finally, if you have a question, don't hesitate to email me. My email address is borstein@yahoo.com.

I hope you found this presentation informative and helpful. Most of all, I hope this encourages you to run your own swap meet.

Good luck!