

THE PLAINS ANTHROPOLOGICAL SOCIETY CONFERENCE

A Guidebook for Hosts and Organizers

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It takes a lot of doing to organize a conference like this, and that in itself reflects the passage of professional time. In 1949 or 1950, I think it was, there was a snafu and no one sent out an announcement of the Plains Conference, nor was a Call For Papers issued. Nothing whatsoever was done. Everyone came to Lincoln just the same, forty or so people, and we had a good conference. Don't you wish it was as simple as that now?

E. Mott Davis, letter to F.A. Calabrese, September 4, 1992
(reprinted from 50th Plains Conference Program, Lincoln)

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INTRODUCTION TO THE PLAINS CONFERENCE

This guide was assembled in response to a need for organizers to have a document assisting them in sponsoring a productive and well-organized Plains Conference. The guide is certainly not intended to be the final word on how to carry off a conference. Rather, it represents the observations and suggestions of several people who have organized Plains Conferences and in doing so made many mistakes and carries what may be a useful degree of 20/20 hindsight. The guide is viewed as a "work in progress" and the intent is for future hosts to modify it. With the guide being posted on the Plains Anthropological Society web site, it will serve this purpose even better, as suggestions about upgrading the guide can be taken from anyone viewing the document on the web. Authors of the original guide were Mary Adair (University of Kansas), Rob Bozell (Nebraska State Historical Society), Mary Lou Larson (University of Wyoming), and Bill Lees (Oklahoma Historical Society). Mary Lou Larson and Mike Metcalf (Metcalf Archaeological Consultants) (1999-2001), and Lauren Ritterbush (Kansas State University) with substantial input from Tom Thiessen (Midwest Archaeological Center, NPS) (2002) completed subsequent revisions and additions.

History of the Conference

The first Plains Conference was held in Vermillion, South Dakota in August of 1931. The meeting took place only three additional times (1932, 1936, and 1940) over the next 16 years. It became an annual conference in 1947. From 1947 through 1959, the meeting was held in Lincoln, Nebraska, the Missouri Basin Project headquarters of the Smithsonian Institution - River Basin Surveys. Since the early 1960s, The Plains Conference has been held in all Great Plains U. S. States and Canadian provinces. It has grown from a small, informal gathering of scholars to a major regional three-day conference with attendance generally over 500 people. The Plains Conference and the journal *Plains Anthropologist* have always been linked under the same organization that was formally named the Plains Anthropological Society in August of 1982. The conference and the journal are operated under the auspices of the Plains Anthropological Society board of directors.

Purpose and General Organization of the Conference

The Plains Conference is designed as a forum for scholars and students to share information in the form of formal presentations and informal workshops, tours, and social events. The Board conducts most of its annual business at the conference as well as holding the annual meeting. The Society by-laws state the meeting is to be held in October or November and a rather standardized format has been developed. The meetings normal begin on Wednesday with the traditional Early Bird Party. Papers, tours, and meetings take place all day on Thursday and Friday and Saturday morning. Occasionally the conference lasts through Saturday afternoon. A few recent conferences extended the conference through till Sunday morning. Because the Plains cover a large area and airline transportation is indirect at best, conference participants may drive as long as a day and a half to reach the conference site. As a result, every effort should be made to allow Saturday afternoon and Sunday for travel. A

meeting extending into Sunday presents a departure from the norm and should be done in *only most unusual circumstances*.

PLANNING SCHEDULE AND STAFFING

The success of a grouping the size of the Plains Conference begins with good planning several years prior to the event. Planning ahead gives the conference coordinators time to secure meeting space, make arrangements with local hotels, secure financing or donated services, create committees and delegate responsibilities, and identify any particular features of the conference (i.e., plenary session, themes, or special symposia). Since the conference is organized and planned entirely by the conference coordinators (the Plains Anthropological Society does not have a separate Conference Committee), the following is a breakdown or checklist of *major* decisions that should be made up to 3 years before the proposed conference. Each of these decisions is defined in greater detail in following sections.

Three Years Prior to Conference

A proposal or invitation to host the conference should be made by the conference coordinator(s) at the general business meeting of the Plains Anthropological Society held at the annual Plains Conference. An acceptance of this invitation is generally made by the membership present at the meeting. When multiple proposals exist, scheduling each for different years accommodates them. According to the by-laws, the location of the annual conference should be scheduled at least two years in advance. A tentative date for the conference should be included in the invitation at the initial conference presentation.

Two Years Prior to Conference

Since the annual conference is often scheduled to take place at a hotel, the selection of the facility should be made on the basis of the number of available guest and meeting rooms, cost, general appearance of the facility, and location. If the conference is scheduled to take place at the coordinator's institution, arrangements should be made with area hotels to block rooms and set rates. Confirm dates of the conference with the hotels and the Plains Anthropological Society Board of Directors.

Look for all available financial support, either cash donations, volunteer help, or in-kind services. Suggestions include working with your local Visitors and Convention Bureau, amateur archaeological societies, brewery, or distributor. Future organizers should contact past conference hosts to obtain recent budgets and expenditure lists.

One Year Prior to Conference

Past organizers stress the need to **delegate authority** to various hard-working and trustworthy individuals well in advance of the conference (i.e. audio-visual, book room, field trips) and set an agenda for the completion of important tasks. It may be useful to have regularly scheduled meetings during the planning stages and more often as conference time approaches.

Make specific arrangements with the hotel. Room costs were probably arranged the year before, so work with the hotel on such items as extended bar hours, ordering lots of extra

beer, availability of back-up equipment, number of free rooms, etc.

Prepare a preliminary budget based on financial data supplied by the previous year's conference. Factor in any support and set registration fees. Conference chair can request a start-up loan from the Treasurer of the Plains Anthropological Society.

Place announcements of conference in newsletters and journals. This should occur as a full page announcement in the *Plains Anthropologist*; shorter announcements should be sent to the Society for Historical Archaeology, Society for American Archaeology, and Southeastern Archaeological Conference for inclusion in national and regional newsletters.

Year of Conference

Abstract forms and conference information. Two ways exist to distribute this information, through a "piggy-back" with the *Plains Anthropologist*, or through a direct mailing paid for by the organizers. Ideally, the hard copy abstract forms and conference information sheets can be included with the **May** issue of the *Plains Anthropologist*, reducing the cost of a mailing for the conference organizers. The conference organizers **MUST** coordinate this early in the spring (January or February) with the editor of the journal to determine the journal deadlines. If for some reason, the organizers cannot meet the *Plains Anthropologist* deadline, then mailing labels may be requested from the Treasurer of the Plains Anthropological Society, with the cost for mailing borne by the organizers.

Meeting Announcements. Announcements of the meeting time, dates, and deadlines, should be placed in the February, May, and September issues of the *Plains Anthropologist*. As above, organizers will need to work with the P.A. editor. Examples of past announcements can be seen in previous years of the journal.

Work with staff on A-V, field trips, plenary session or invited symposia, book sales, and checking agenda for completion of various tasks.

Staffing Assembling a dedicated conference organizational team is essential to a successful meeting. More often than not multiple institutions in (or near) the host city host the conference. These include universities, state historical societies, federal agencies, avocational or professional societies, CRM firms, and others. One representative from each institution should serve as a conference co-chair. Co-chairs are generally responsible for assigning various tasks to staff and volunteers. It is not unreasonable to expect anywhere from five to ten persons working on conference arrangements intermittently for a couple of years.

At least 10-20 additional people will be required during the conference to run audio-visual equipment and staff registration tables and so forth. This may involve, for instance, one room monitor per session and two roaming troubleshooters and several registration table staff. Advance hands-on training sessions should be used to prepare volunteers for their assigned tasks (e.g., how to handle lighting, sound, and audiovisual equipment, troubleshooting).

Typically, one of the host institutions is a university and anthropology students traditionally provide much of the organizational labor particularly during the conference and the several months leading up to it. In some instances, conference organizers from universities have employed the services of campus conference offices. Such an option is not without expense (usually a percentage of the total cost of the conference), and the choice is up to the organizers.

FINANCES

A successful conference requires thoughtful and accurate financial planning. This involves conservative estimation of attendance, anticipation of budget needs, and accurate cost estimation. The conference will require a substantial amount of money to operate, and improper fiscal planning could result in major financial liability for the Society. To avoid this, income should be estimated on the conservative side, and expenses should be estimated as accurately as possible. A reserve of 5 to 10 percent over estimated expenses should be included as a budget item to safeguard against inflation, unforeseen expenses, and cost overruns. If not expended, this reserve will provide revenue for the Society. Conference organizers shall return profits after all expenses are paid from Plains Conference to the Plains Anthropological Society. A financial statement must be submitted to the PAS President within six (6) months of the conference.

Income

The conference can be entirely self-supporting in the sense that no outside cash contributions are necessary. Typically, however, the conference is partially supported by the hosting institution(s) through the donation of staff time, equipment, and some postage and phone costs, and by volunteers who help with pre-conference work and on-site efforts during the conference. Cash costs of the conference are met with registration fees paid by participants. Cash and in-kind donations may, of course, be pursued to underwrite enhancements to the conference over and above what is normally expected.

The primary source of conference funding comes from participant registration fees. Registration fees should include advance and regular rates and should include a reduced rate for students. These fees should be kept within a reasonable level comparable to those of previous years. (See previous conference announcements and speak with past organizers.) Complimentary registrations are usually offered to conference volunteers who provide at least two sessions of their time (about eight hours).

Registration fees should be established well in advance and, with other sources of cash income, should be sufficient to fund the proposed budget. Other standard sources of income derive from sale of banquet and luncheon tickets, tour tickets, and commemorative items such as T-shirts. Banquet and luncheon tickets are often priced at cost to keep these as affordable as possible. Luncheon tickets, however, may include a slight surcharge to provide for a complementary meal for luncheon chairs.

Estimation of income will require an accurate but conservative projection of conference attendance. The attendance rate over the past 15 years has ranged from 300 to 600 people. This should be based on a consideration of the registration breakdown for several immediately prior conferences and should also take into consideration the geographic location of the conference. Typically, about half of the participants preregister. The accuracy of the attendance estimate should be reviewed about one week after the preregistration deadline and, if necessary, the budget should be revised accordingly. Any needs to increase

or decrease expenditures should be passed along to the appropriate members of the conference planning team.

During the conference, a considerable amount of cash and numerous checks will be received from participants registering on-site. A safe deposit box should be retained at the hotel to hold receipts until they can be safely deposited in the conference account.

Expenses

Expenses include a wide range of items, most of which will be incurred in the months immediately prior to the conference and during the conference. Most of the major expenses will be incurred after funds are available from advance registrations. However, if necessary, a start-up loan can be obtained from the Society to underwrite early expenses before conference income is available. This loan must be repaid within 4 months of the conference. A more detailed listing of potential expenses is presented in the following section on the budget. For hotel charges, a master account should be established that allows all approved conference expenses to be charged and paid at the conclusion of the conference. Authority to approve charges, especially those that represent changes from the hotel contract, should be limited and the hotel should be made aware of who has this authority.

Budget

The budget should consist of projected income and expenses. A sample budget, without cost figures, is included below. Once the budget is established, it should be revised periodically and should be used as a primary management tool by the entire conference planning team.

Sample Budget: Plains Anthropological Conference

Conference team

- Travel prior to conference
- Lodging during conference if required*

Printing

- Call for papers (abstract form)
- Name tags
- Miscellaneous registration materials
- Program and abstracts book

Hotel

- Coffee and soda/juice breaks
- Complimentary kegs for early bird reception/other functions
- Banquet
 - Meal costs
 - Speaker costs (transportation, lodging, meals, honorarium)
- Band for dance
- Luncheons
- AV equipment rentals**

Tours

- Transportation
- Admission fees
- Meals
- Tour guides
- Commemorative items
 - Design
 - Printing/production
- Miscellaneous
 - Office supplies
 - Computer rental

* a number of complementary rooms will be provided by the hotel

** AV equipment may be rented elsewhere, usually at a lesser rate, or may be available at no charge from hosting or sponsoring institutions.

Accounting

The finances of the conference must be carefully managed and records kept in good order. Delegating a single individual for this task is a good idea. It is advisable to utilize the talents of someone on your staff with some practical or formal accounting experience. A financial account through the hosting institution can be used to handle conference funds. Funds deposited in such accounts must be restricted to use on approved conference expenses. **Any balance remaining at the end of the conference must be payable to the Plains Anthropological Society.** We have found that a conference checking account established at a local financial institution is probably more convenient.

One issue that will need to be investigated is sales tax. The conference financial officer is responsible for understanding tax laws in the state in which the conference is held and organized as applicable to the Plains Conference. These should be discussed with the PAS Treasurer. Some of the questions that may arise include:

As an extension of the Plains Anthropological Society, is the conference tax exempt in that state? (This might apply, for instance, to purchases of conference supplies.)

Must sales tax be collected? If so, what does it apply to? How will it be collected?

Regardless of how the finances are handled, a paper or electronic ledger or spreadsheet must be kept that accounts for all income and all expenses. Expenses must be documented by receipts. These records and any remaining balance must be turned over to the PAS treasurer after the accounts are finally closed and no later than six months following the end of the Conference.

FACILITIES

The Conference Center

Although certainly not a requirement, centralization of all activities within a single facility is desirable. Early selection, at least two years in advance, of a large and well staffed hotel and conference center is strongly suggested. Major events at these type of facilities are typically booked well in advance. Although hotel managers will not tell you this, they generally have a fair amount of negotiating flexibility with respect to costs and services provided. If your community has more than one such facility, shop around and seek the optimum situation. (Check with previous organizers to determine if it may be advisable during the negotiation stage for potential hotel hosts to contact hotels where recent conferences were held in order to see how many rooms were booked and the level of bar and food revenues. This usually works to the advantage of the Plains Conference due to the past liberal bar trade and few troublesome incidents.)

Although cost is important, services, meeting room space, and proximity to bars, restaurants, shops, etc. are equally important. It is not worth saving money in exchange for settling for an understaffed hotel with poor service and cramped meeting rooms and social spaces. When discussing the conference with prospective facilities, make certain you tell them exactly what you need and what they should expect. Get a written estimate with **all** costs schedules, and when payments are due.

Once a facility is selected, have them designate **at least two people** to work closely with you. These will likely include a conference or sales manager, catering manager, and facility maintenance supervisors. The maintenance person typically knows significantly more about the physical facility and its procedures and staff than does the conference liaison. By several weeks in advance of the conference, secure the maintenance supervisor's pager number. You **will** need it! It is also advisable to become acquainted with the individual in charge of room reservations. This is an area in which, for some reason, problems **always** seem to arise.

If the facility does not provide planning forms for each meeting room and session, develop these to aid in advance organization of the meeting and for clear communication with the facility staff.

Lodging

It is best to have the hotel book a block of rooms and there is some advantage to having all rooms in the same area of the hotel. Note that hotels typically reserve a block of rooms until a specified date (specified in the conference announcement). After that date, unreserved rooms are let out on a first-come, first-served basis and negotiated rates are no longer valid. Be sure to discuss this with the hotel before the contract is signed. Make sure that a maximum rate is set for having as many people crammed in a room as possible. They may not like this, but it is a real advantage and incentive to attend, for students on a tight budget. The conference center needs to be reminded that better room rates will ultimately equate to

more attendees, more rooms occupied, and increased lounge revenue!

In certain instances it may be desirable to arrange in advance for “overflow” rooms if the host hotel fills to capacity. The host hotel may be willing to assist with this.

Generally meeting rooms, registration space, book exhibit rooms, and several hotel rooms will be provided free of charge if the negotiated number of rooms are booked and bar revenues from the early bird party, dance, and banquet meet certain amounts.

Food, Beverages, and Social Events

The food and beverage arrangements should be well hashed out prior to signing a contract with the hotel. These issues can get a bit confusing with respect to percentage versus fixed rates on food/beverage bills. A list of issues you will need to confront are: 1) diverse menu of good food at the banquet, 2) large room for the early bird party which can stay open late with significant noise and lots of beer, 3) extended closing hours for the lounge, 4) adequate coffee, donuts, juice etc. for morning and afternoon meeting breaks, 5) adequate room and surplus beer for the dance if it is held in the hotel, 6) a suite or two, away from other guests, for late night parties after the lounge is closed.

Meeting Rooms

The facility must have sufficient space and equipment for concurrent activities at all times. A large ballroom will be required for the banquet, dance, and early bird party. Paper sessions normally occur in at least four to six rooms, one of which is quite large. Each room should be well ventilated and equipped with a microphone, overhead projector, slide projector, projector platforms, screen, a spare carousel, podium, podium light, table with a couple of extra chairs, pointer, extension cord(s), ample seating, water, and session schedules posted outside the door. Variable lighting suitable for presentations on a screen at the front of the room is also required. Some participants may require a VCR or computer monitor.

A decision over whether PowerPoint presentations will be allowed or not must be made in advance of advertising the conference so that attendees know how to prepare their presentations. PowerPoint presentations require expensive equipment and technical know-how, but are increasingly in demand. The organizers of the 2001 conference accepted PowerPoint presentations but only allowed use of the equipment they supplied. They also required that all PowerPoint presentations be put on a DC that could be simply handed to the room monitor to load onto the computer at the beginning of the session. These requirements helped avoid disruptions caused by individual presenters changing hardware, fumbling with unfamiliar computers, etc.

The security of equipment in the meeting rooms must be considered. It may be necessary to post a room monitor in each room between sessions (e.g., over the lunch hour). (Do not expect the facility staff to provide security for equipment in unmanned rooms.) Arrange to have a secure room available for overnight storage of equipment. (Remember that this requires additional set-up and take-down time each day.)

Prior arrangements should be made to post large-print session schedules every morning and afternoon outside each meeting room. This may involve printing session schedules in large print and posting them on an easel or attaching them to the wall or other surface where they can be easily read outside each room. Last minute changes (e.g., paper cancellations) can be noted on these.

Other spaces that are required include: a book sales/exhibit area, slide preview space with extra 35 mm slide projector and screen, registration and information area, poster paper room, round-table luncheon facility, and space for the Board of Director's meetings and the annual business meeting.

Special Needs for Organizers in Smaller Communities

Conferences held in smaller communities without the benefit of a conference hotel and attached conference facility will be confronted with a number of unique problems. Such conferences have been pulled off very successfully but they require additional planning and effort. Because of the extra logistics needed for a smaller town conference, it is advisable to, if possible, use the services of a University Conferences and Institutes office. These departments efficiently handle conferences and non-profit programs for the university and state, even though they may cost additional money. They normally have the infrastructure for desktop publishing of announcements, bulk mailing, conference planning and scheduling, and know the ins and outs of their community. However, there are certainly some things that the organizers are better suited to -- such as contacting individuals and organizations for cash and in-kind donations and knowing how the Plains Conference is organized. Below is a list of considerations for the small community organizer.

1. Do not attempt to compete with a home football game weekend. Typically all motels are booked and innkeepers are unwilling to offer conference rates during these weekends knowing that football fans will pay more.
2. Rather than being able to block rooms in one hotel, you will be faced with contacting several hotels. Get price quotes, phone numbers, and confirmation of blocked rooms from them. Motels rooms should be blocked at least one year in advance. Try to get the motels as near the conference headquarters as possible and arrange for efficient shuttle service.
3. The most successful small community conferences have used local University Unions for meetings. If possible, reserve **all** of the Union meeting space -- you will need it. You may have to pay for use of these facilities, as would no doubt be true with any conference center not associated with a conference hotel. This can run into several thousand dollars. In much the same way that hotels operate, Unions typically have staff dedicated to facilitating conferences, although a staff member from Conferences and Institutes and one of the conference organizers should be on hand throughout the conference to handle problems. You also may be paying the University audio-visual department for slide projectors, VCRs, etc.

4. A large expense will come in the form of shuttles to and from motels, conference headquarters, conference events, airport, and tours. Reserve many vans for the week of the conference a year in advance. Arrange for and schedule safe drivers for the vans. Many extra costs can be covered by donations from local businesses.

5. Schedule the Early Bird Party at a bar in a motel in town rather than at the University, because of most University's restrictions on hard-liquor. Try to select the most centrally located hotel. Arrange to have many kegs (6-8 kegs is one rough estimate) on reserve and keep it open as late as local law allows. The worst possible disaster at a Plains Conference is an Early Bird Party that runs dry. People do not forget such an infraction easily!

6. The conference facility, because it is not a hotel, needs to have certain amenities. These include places to sit and chat, rooms for breaks, in addition to room for 4-6 concurrent sessions holding 50-150 people, plus rooms for books, posters, and meetings of other groups.

7. One problem that may be encountered in a University setting is the availability of parking. Because the Plains Conference is in the fall when school is in session, obtain visitor parking permits and try to get parking spaces reserved on campus by the campus police.

PROGRAM

Notification, Abstracts and Symposia

At least two calls for papers and overall conference announcement need to be issued. The first typically is in the first issue of the *Plains Anthropologist* (February). That call should minimally list: conference dates and location (city, state/province, conference facility and host hotel), length of abstracts, due dates for paper and symposia abstracts, chairs with addresses and telephone numbers, and reminders about student papers, the Native American Student Award and the Distinguished Service Award.

The deadlines for submission of abstracts and symposia vary with conference date. It is good to set dates several weeks prior to when you absolutely feel you need to have things in hand. Typically symposia proposals should be in hand by early to mid-August with paper abstracts due about a month later. Remember that many potential participants are unable to prepare and submit abstracts and recruit student participants during the fieldwork season or before the start of the academic year. Abstract lengths vary from 100 to 250 words maximum. They are normally requested as e-mail attachments or on disk along with a paper copy.

A second notice should be issued in late spring. This notice will need to be accompanied by all conference and hotel registration forms, abstract forms, and more specific information about the conference and accommodations. These are normally mailed with the spring issue of the journal but can go out as a special mailing if your schedule is not compatible with the editor's publication schedule.

Paper Types and Acceptance

Presentations fall into several categories: contributed and symposia papers, research reports, and poster papers. Contributed and symposia papers are usually longer (20 minutes) than the research reports (10 minutes). The length of poster sessions varies but posters should be up for at least a half day. Very rarely does a situation arise when all papers cannot be included at the conference. If it should become apparent that the conference simply has too many papers, fair and objective criteria will need to be developed for rejection.

Sessions and Session Chairs

The number of sessions will vary with the number of papers. It is not uncommon to have 25-30 sessions divided into five or six concurrent sessions over the two and a half days of the conference. Most symposium organizers chair their own sessions or provide chairs and discussants. Other sessions will need to be organized by the conference team. Sessions are best organized by topic, temporal period or geographic region. You will need to arrange for session chairs. Although it is not entirely possible, attempt to avoid having related or similar topical sessions run concurrently. Sessions usually run from 8 to 5 on Thursday and Friday and 8 until noon on Saturday with a 10-15 minute break at mid-session.

Developing the Program Schedule and Program Booklet

The Plains Conference meetings should consist of several morning and afternoon sessions. Four to six concurrent sessions are normally scheduled for both the morning and afternoon for Thursday and Friday. Morning sessions only are scheduled for Saturday. On occasion, evening sessions can be scheduled, especially if it is a single session and does not conflict with other events. An average number of papers for the conference is around 150. To date, no submissions have been rejected. To help with the production of the program, the following suggestions should be considered.

Determine how the abstracts should be submitted (e-mail attachment or disk, format) and the layout of the program. Abstracts are mandatory for all symposia, papers, and posters. The abstract for papers and posters should include title, author(s), author's institutional affiliation, address, and should not exceed 100 - 250 words in length. All abstracts should be submitted on a common form (or facsimile of that form), which is sent to all members via the May issue of the *Plains Anthropologist* or a separate mailing. Symposia abstracts should provide a symposium title, list of contributors, names of discussant(s), and an abstract.

Take the size of the program and font point size into consideration - printing small might save costs by reducing the total number of pages but may be difficult for conference attendees to read, especially if one is in a dimly lit room.

Suggest someone to chair the general sessions and make sure that there is no conflict with their time. Do not schedule the session against a symposium of the chair's primary research interest.

Provide guidelines for each session chair, such as how to monitor time, how to work the lights, etc. General session and symposium papers should not exceed 20 minutes in length. The 20 minutes includes the chair's introduction, the talk, and relinquishing the podium for the next speaker. Be sure that the hotel provides water and glasses for each session.

List all meetings, their location and time. Meetings of the Board of Directors are typically scheduled for Wednesday evening and Thursday evening following the open Business Meeting. During the Business meeting early Thursday evening Treasurer and Editor reports are presented, results of board elections are announced, invitations to host future conferences are delivered, and other open business is conducted.

One conference program is provided for each registered attendee. Additional programs may be purchased, depending on availability, at a cost determined by the conference coordinators.

EVENTS

Without a conference guide, previous organizers found their best guide to be past conference experiences and the announcements from previous conferences. Even with the conference guide, these two items provide useful information. All of the following with a [**] need to be set by late winter/early spring before the conference to be ready for announcement in the May issue or in the mailing that arrives before the deadline for paper abstracts. Organizers must work closely with the journal editor to keep up with deadlines.

*Banquet [**]*

The banquet is almost always held on Friday evening of the conference. Judging from the numbers at past conferences, anywhere from 25 - 50% of the registrants attend the banquet. This no doubt depends on the speaker, the topic, the restaurant or hotel banquet room, menu and cost. The banquet needs to be planned well in advance of the summer deadline -- perhaps shortly after booking the hotel. This includes notifying the speaker. One problem that some conference hotels might present is limited banquet room capacity and limited ability to serve several hundred people. Another facility issue to resolve is the ability for a speaker to use slides or PowerPoint and the presence of a public address system. A precedent set by many conferences has been the presence of wine (red and white) in carafes on the table -- this raises the price of the dinner, but has become an established practice. The choice and quality of the meal is an important one, as is the decision about whether or not to have a buffet style or table serving. Sometimes, much of this will be at the whim of the hotel or other banquet facility, but should be negotiated early on so all parties involved understand what they are getting. Menu diversity is desirable with options for beef, chicken, fish, and vegetarian entrees. Color coded tickets that can be displayed on the table help the servers. It is important to learn from the banquet facility when they need a final count to determine when to stop selling banquet tickets at the registration desk.

Over the past several years, banquet costs have included an honorarium and travel for the speaker. As of 1996 at least \$1,000 should be budgeted based on travel costs and honoraria. Other costs will include dinner for the speaker, award winners, and others, such as the conference organizers (if possible). Seating at the head table always seems to present some immediate pre-banquet jitters. Typically the speaker, the conference host(s), honorees, Board officers and spouses/dates are seated at the head table. It is a good idea to work these specifics out by early Thursday.

*Roundtable Luncheons [**]*

Conference roundtable discussions have been a permanent fixture of conferences for about ten years. Roundtable luncheon sessions are either on Thursday or Friday. Some conferences have held two sets, one on Thursday and one on Friday. Table topics can either be selected by the hosts or solicited during various conference announcements. Individuals that you wish to moderate the table need to be contacted. The roundtables need either a separate room with the capacity for the number of tables or an area that will be away from the crowd. Depending on the topic(s) selected, anticipate needing one or two people to moderate the lunches. Secure

a quote from the facility (restaurant, hotel, etc.) for a set luncheon or buffet price. The price for the luncheon needs to also include the price of each of the roundtable moderators' lunches **and** the meals of the staff at the lunch. Off-site lunches at local restaurants on a pay-as-you-go basis has also been arranged more informally.

*Tours [**]*

Many hosts schedule tours of local sites, museums, labs, and other places of interest to participants. Most tours are to local attractions a short distance from the conference headquarters. Open houses are often scheduled at various facilities around town. Conference organizers need to begin talking to facilities and site managers no later than the spring before the conference. You may need to start notifying possible tour sites/people once you've been selected as a conference site. Work with each place to find out their requirements and arrange transportation and other logistics (e.g., drinks, lunch or snack).

Depending on the distance that a given tour is from the conference headquarters, and on the nature of the tour, you may need to have someone on hand to answer questions, handle emergencies, find lost children and make head counts for buses coming and going. Transportation for the tour will be a major cost unless you have access to free tour buses. If you do not already have sufficient transportation available, you will need to reserve this well in advance (the previous year) -- and get a cost estimate or contract early on.

*Pre and Post Conference Workshops and Tours [**]*

Occasionally, Plains Conferences will sponsor pre- or post-conference workshops. The activities that are pre- and post- conference can be done in such a way that people provide their own transportation and lodging and do the workshop on the way to or from the conference.

The workshop organizers should do the planning and provide cost estimates to the conference organizers so that they can be included in the summer/early fall announcement. Workshop organizers should also be responsible for seeing that conference organizers have sufficient lead time to put information in conference registration materials. Plains Conference organizers, unless they are the ones doing the workshop/tour, need not provide staff for these workshops.

*Poster Sessions [**]*

Poster sessions also need to have sufficient space. These are usually placed on display boards (available at most conference hotels), easels, walls, or tables for a half or full day session. The conference call for abstracts will need to specify the size of the display boards. They are set up and dismantled by the paper presenters although simple supplies may need to be provided by the conference organizers. Purchase of supplies and hiring a security guard may be necessary. Organizers will need to have a person assigned as a trouble-shooter for the poster sessions to make sure that participants have what they need.

There is no additional charge, beyond registration, for poster presenters. Perhaps the most important thing to remember for both the poster sessions and the book display room, is that they are usually loud and crowded at times. Try to place them away from ongoing sessions.

*Other Exhibits/Book Displays [**]*

Organizers need to contact publishers (e.g., regional university presses and other major publishers) and anyone else that might want to exhibit at the Plains Conference (e.g., state archaeological societies, quality used book dealers, equipment sales, specialized laboratories) in advance of the conference. A letter should be sent to all potential exhibitors early to encourage them to participate and provide information on cost, dates, time, location and so forth. Publishers often need a year's advance notice to plan their attendance. Obtain lists of exhibitions from the previous one or two conferences. An announcement should also be included in the conference call for papers along with contact information for potential exhibitors.

Cost to exhibitors commonly has been \$ 20.00 to \$ 30.00 per four to eight foot space (half or full table). Organizers will need to secure a room that can be locked or somehow guarded while the materials are on display. Displays/exhibitions have traditionally been open from Thursday morning through Saturday noon. In some cases, publishers have sent fliers and display copies of books, but not attended the meetings. Plan in advance how these will be displayed and what will become of display copies (e.g., present to volunteer assistants). Some organizations will also plan to jointly share a space. Be sure to find out in advance how much space each exhibitor will need. It is useful to place large-print placards for each exhibitor at their space/table prior to set-up early Thursday morning. Be sure one of the conference staff is available during the conference to answer questions and check in on the book/exhibit space.

*Registration [**]*

In order to determine registration cost, estimate all costs and figure a projected budget based on various configurations of student on-site, student advance, regular on-site and regular advance registration. In addition, the registration cost needs to incorporate free registration given to volunteers if desired. Announcement of registration costs and the registration form need to be sent out with the Conference Announcement that appears in the May issue or a separate summer mailing. Be sure that registration forms and instructions are clear regarding different rates and cut-off dates for advance vs. on-site (full) registration fees. Registration should begin with the arrival of the Conference announcement, with the deadline for pre-registration set by the organizers.

The registration desk needs to be set for the Early Bird Party -- and all packets stuffed before then. Times for the desk are usually Wednesday from 5-8 p.m. and 8-5 p.m. on Thursday and Friday. The organizers will need to have two sets of lines, one for people who have preregistered and another for those wishing to register on-site. Contact the PAS Treasurer and Board President in advance to inquire whether the PAS will require a table near the registration area or in the book/exhibit room for membership renewals and sale of back issues

of the journal. A bulletin board for posting messages is also useful.

Registration staff will vary depending on organization but at least four to six people are normally required. At least one person who is knowledgeable about the facilities and conference organization should be present at the registration desk at all times for troubleshooting.

Conference Packet

Packets will need to be stuffed prior to the conference with material for all participants, as well as specific items for the individual pre-registrants, such as banquet tickets, tour information and tickets, roundtable luncheon tickets, lists (and reviews) of nearby restaurants and bars, freebies from local merchants, and so on. For on-site registrants, generic packets can be prepared prior to the conference, but will have to be added to depending on what the individual registers for. Equipment for making nametags for on-site registrants must be present at the registration table. Formal itemized receipts for registration and other conference expenses (e.g., banquet and tour tickets; not lodging or food unless part of the banquet or roundtable luncheons).

T-shirts and other Promotional Items

Some organizers have people on-site to produce and sell conference t-shirts and other items (sweatshirts, mugs, pins, sleepshirts, hats), and can therefore dispense with putting order forms in the conference announcement. However, should organizers decide to have people order t-shirts, they will have to select a logo, find a company to do the t-shirts, and get cost estimates. T-shirt sales run probably less than 50% of the number of conference participants. (Check with previous organizers for estimates.) If the organizers are having t-shirts made before the conference, there should be a contract to have the shirts ready at the conference, given approximately one-month's notice on the order.

Board Meetings

The Plains Anthropological Society, Board of Directors meets Wednesday night during the Early Bird Party and again immediately following the Business meeting on Thursday. Some organizers have provided board members with drinks and hors d'oeuvres. (This is especially appreciated during the typically long Wednesday evening meeting.) The second meeting is commonly shorter than the first and simply allows the newly composed board to get acquainted, select officers and appoint committee chairs. Both of these meetings need to have rooms reserved for them that will comfortably seat about 15 people. Coordinate with the president for specific details. Information on the board meetings need to be finalized in time to go out with the Conference Announcement.

Annual Business Meeting

This meeting is usually scheduled for early Thursday evening. The business meeting can last anywhere from an hour to three hours depending on the amount of material to cover and the

need to discuss controversial subjects. The president moderates the meeting and sets the agenda. Business meeting attendance is quite variable but it is wise to have it in a room large enough to accommodate 300 people. A podium, microphone, and a chalk or white board, overhead projector and screen, or large flipchart will be needed.

Dance

The dance is held Thursday night usually beginning at 8 or 9 p.m. and continuing as long as the hotel or local law permits. Some conferences have contracted with a local bar that already have a band hired with the guarantee that they will sell enough beverages to make it worthwhile to them to close the facility to the public and not charge cover. The 1996 conference promoted several local entertainment options. More frequently, though, a band is hired to perform at the hotel conference center. The type of band is a difficult issue. A good dance band is a must and one that plays a variety of music -- blues, rock, country is probably a safe bet. It is a good idea to consult with students. They normally have a better handle on the local music scene than do middle-aged conference chairs!

AWARDS

Student Paper Award

The Student Paper Award is intended to provide encouragement and recognition for students to present and publish professional quality papers. The award carries a \$100 cash prize and sometimes publication of the article in *Plains Anthropologist*. The editor of the journal chairs the selection committee. Students must provide a written copy of their paper to the editor by a submission deadline set by the editor. The editor will handle distribution of copies to the selection committee. The papers must be presented orally at the conference and heard by the selection committee. Therefore they must not be scheduled at the same time or in conflict with other activities that members of the selection committee are involved with. Most recently the student papers in the competition have been scheduled as a single session. This facilitates the judging and avoids many conflicts. Coordinate with the PA Editor in advance of the conference. If the committee wishes to award, a formal presentation is made at the banquet. Award is only made if a suitable paper is submitted.

Distinguished Service Award

The Plains Anthropological Society, Distinguished Service Award recognizes lifetime achievement in Plains-related anthropological research, teaching, and scholarship. A Board committee solicits and reviews nominations for this award. The recipient is selected one year in advance of the actual presentation. Presentation of the award is at the banquet. The Board may ask that the conference organizers arrange for a free room and banquet ticket for the honoree (and their partner). Historically the person or persons who nominate the recipient or the Board committee make arrangements for the presentation. Be sure to allow adequate time on the banquet agenda. The award does not need to be given annually. Contact the Distinguished Service Award committee Chair in advance of the conference to make necessary arrangements.

Native American Student Award

The Native American Student Award provides financial support to Native American students in anthropology. It is not necessarily an annual award but the intent is to make at least one award per year. The award consists of a \$ 1000 grant to be used for books, tuition, room, or board and the money is administered by the student's department. The recipient is announced at the banquet.

HOSTS' REPORT

Bookkeeping

A final duty of the conference chair(s) is to provide a written account of income and expenses associated with the conference to the Treasurer and Board of Directors of the Plains Anthropological Society. Since the Society has a non-profit status, it is important to remember that all income is collected for a professional purpose and that the funds are spent for a designated purpose. While it is not required or always expected, most conferences make a modest profit. This profit is used by the Society to help with other expenses, such as the journal. The final accounting by the conference chair(s), therefore, may indicate a profit. Preparing a summary budget is also very helpful for anyone planning on hosting the conference in the future, as the relative and actual costs of the various parts of the conference can be used to prepare a working budget.

At a minimum, the accounting of the conference should provide an itemized list of all income (actual cash - do not include in-kind contributions or donated contributions) and expenditures. A clear bookkeeping system must be established during the early planning stages and maintained until all bills related to the Conference are paid. The designated bookkeeper should be authorized to write checks, provide receipts, and issue refunds. If you are using a computerized system for your bookkeeping, most of these tasks can easily be handled by your software package.

An itemized list of income should include the following:

- number of pre-registered students and regular conference attendees
- number of on-site registered students and regular conference attendees
- cash contributions and donations
- number of banquet and round-table lunch tickets
- T-shirt sales
- tour tickets
- book room reservations

A list of the expenses should include the following:

- Guest speaker expenses, such as travel costs and honorarium fee
- Hotel costs (the hotel will normally itemize a master bill for you, however, to make sure of this, request it early in the negotiations), which include;
rooms billed to the master account
banquet costs
roundtable lunch costs
restaurant or bar bill (excluding the Early Bird party)
complementary kegs for Early Bird party
conference breaks and coffee
A-V rental
phone calls

misc.

- Audio-visual rental if not included with the hotel
- Office expenses (e.g. phone bill, postage, supplies, name tags)
- T-shirts
- Program preparation (including any artwork) and printing
- Pre-conference expenses (e.g. travel for conference chairs, phone calls, etc.)
- Band for the dance
- Commemorative items
- Misc. (anything else not included above)

While it is not necessary to include donated time and services in the final budget, it is very helpful to all future conference chairs to account for these in the summary budget. It is also helpful to note the number of volunteers and the approximate number of hours of donated time. Many of the volunteers receive free registration for a specified amount of donated time.

Receipts

All conference attendees should receive a receipt of their registration fee, banquet, lunch, tour, T-shirt, or any other fee paid to the conference. Many people deduct the expenses of attending the conference when filing their income tax or request reimbursement from their institution, so it is necessary for these receipts to be as specific as possible.

All expenses must be documented with a receipt. Do *not* rely on canceled checks as appropriate receipts, since checks to the hotel, for example, may include more than one type of expense. Request itemized receipts for all expenses. If you are using a University Endowment Association as your “bank”, they often require original receipts to prepare checks. It is therefore necessary to make a copy of each receipt so that you can retain this information for the summary budget.

Refunds

This category includes two types of refunds: those that the conference is responsible for giving and those due to the conference or to the chairs. The first type of refund includes primarily refunds to pre-registered attendees who must cancel their trip to the conference. Determine a deadline for refunds due to cancellations before the conference announcements are made, and try to enforce this deadline. A handling fee may be assessed for cancellations after a specified date. Remember that the main income for the conference comes from registration fees, so you cannot afford to make many last minute refunds. However, there may be exceptions to the deadline and each conference chair should use their best judgment in determining the exceptions. Exceptions of course should be made in situations such as family emergencies.

Refunds due to the conference or to the chair may be more difficult to determine. However, it is important to stipulate, in writing, a delivery date or quality of a product when ordering important items such as the program, the T-shirts, the number of kegs at the Early Bird party, or the menu for the banquet. For example, when you order the T-shirts, come to terms with

the company on the number of shirts, colors, sizes, and the date when your order will be completed. If the company does not deliver per your agreement, you should be due a refund. It may make things stressful for you as a conference chair, but at least the conference is not being charged for something, which is not available.

Archival Documents

Upon completion of the conference, the organizer shall send one copy of the Program and Abstracts and other significant documents (e.g., conference announcements, hosts report, etc) to the PAS Archives housed at the USD Library, Special Collections and Archives of the I.D. Weeks Library (see PAS webpage for address).

Plains Anthropological Conferences, 1931-2001

No.	Date	Place	Chair(s)
1	Aug 1931	Vermillion, SD	W. H. Over
2	Sep 1932	Lincoln, NE	E. H. Bell
3	Sep 1936	Mt. Vernon, IA	C. R. Keyes
4	Sep 1940	Norman, OK	F. E. Clements
5	Nov 1947	Lincoln, NE	J. L. Champe
6	Nov 1948	Lincoln, NE	J. D. Jennings
7	Nov 1949	Lincoln, NE	M. F. Kivett
8	Nov 1950	Lincoln, NE	A. C. Spaulding
9	Apr 1951	Lincoln, NE	P. L. Cooper
10	Nov 1952	Lincoln, NE	C. S. Smith
11	Nov 1953	Lincoln, NE	E. M. Davis
12	Nov 1954	Lincoln, NE	W. Mulloy
13	Nov 1955	Lincoln, NE	D. J. Lehmer
14	Nov 1956	Lincoln, NE	R. P. Wheeler
15	Nov 1957	Lincoln, NE	W. R. Hurt, Jr.
16	Nov 1958	Lincoln, NE	H. W. Hamilton
17	Nov 1959	Lincoln, NE	R. L. Stephenson
18	Nov 1960	Norman, OK	J. B. Wheat
19	Nov 1961	Lawton, OK	M. E. Tong
20	Nov 1962	Lincoln, NE	W. R. Wedel
21	Sep 1963	Ft. Burgwin, NM	P. Holder
22	Nov 1964	Lincoln, NE	W. W. Caldwell
23	Nov 1965	Topeka, KS	T. A. Witty
24	Nov 1966	Lincoln, NE	T. F. Kehoe
25	Nov 1967	St. Paul, MN	E. Johnson
26	Nov 1968	Lincoln, NE	P. Holder
27	Nov 1969	Lawrence, KS	A. E. Johnson
28	Nov 1970	Tulsa, OK	W. F. Weakly
29	Oct 1971	Winnipeg, Man.	W. M. Hlady
30	Nov 1972	Lincoln, NE	D. R. Henning
31	Nov 1973	Columbia, MO	D. R. Evans
32	Nov 1974	Laramie, WY	G. C. Frison, G. & S. Ziemans
33	Nov 1975	Lincoln, NE	F. A. Calabrese
34	Oct 1976	Minneapolis, MN	A. W. Woolworth
35	Nov 1977	Lincoln, NE	C. R. Falk
36	Nov 1978	Denver, CO	I. K. Hagar & B. E. Rippeteau
37	Oct 1979	Kansas City, MO	F. A. Calabrese, A. E. Johnson & W. R. Wood
38	Nov 1980	Iowa City, IA	D. C. Anderson
39	Oct 1981	Bismarck, ND	L. L. Loendorf
40	Nov 1982	Calgary, Alb.	R. G. Forbis
41	Nov 1983	Rapid City, SD	L. J. Zimmerman & R. Alex
42	Oct 1984	Lincoln, NE	F. A. Calabrese
43	Oct 1985	Iowa City, IA	D. Anderson
44	Nov 1986	Denver, CO	A. Johnson & W. Tate
45	Nov 1987	Columbia, MO	W. R. Wood & T. Majewski
46	Nov 1988	Wichita, KS	D. J. Blakeslee
47	Oct 1989	Sioux Falls, SD	L. A. Hannus & R. P. Winham
48	Oct 1990	Oklahoma City, OK	S. C. Vehik, M. W. Foster & J. L. Hofman
49	Nov 1991	Lawrence, KS	M. J. Adair & W. B. Lees

50	Nov 1992	Lincoln, NE	F. A. Calabrese, P. Bleed & J. R. Bozell
51	Oct 1993	Saskatoon, Sask.	H. Epp & Z. Pohorecky
52	Nov 1994	Lubbock, TX	E. Johnson
53	Oct 1995	Laramie, WY	J. Francis, M. Kornfeld, M.L. Larson, M.E. Miller, & C.A. Reher
54	Oct. 1996	Iowa City, IA	W. Green and J. A. Tiffany
55	Nov 1997	Boulder, CO	D. B. Bamforth
56	Oct 1998	Bismarck, ND	F. Swenson & F. Schneider
57	Oct 1999	Sioux Falls, SD	L. A. Hannus & R. P. Winham
58	Nov 2000	St. Paul, MN	(joint with Midwest Archaeological Conference) M. Dudzik, S. Anfinson, R. Clouse, B. Koenen, K. Breakey, P. Emerson
59	Oct 2001	Lincoln, NE	J. R. Bozell, T. Thiessen, P. Bleed, & LA. Wandsnider
60	Oct 2002	Oklahoma City, OK	K. Buehler, R. Drass, and M. Duncan