



Eastern Federation REGION IV NEWS



AFTER THE CLUB SHOW

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A TEMPORARY MINI MUSEUM??

Most often when we attend a club or federation sponsored show we in essence are in the midst of a temporary museum. A temporary museum in the sense that there are cases of exhibits similar to what we might expect to see in a more permanent museum environment but there for only two, three or sometimes four days. Four days, most often the longest time we can expect.

Additionally at these shows, we see a changing array of exhibits from year to year - more changes in the earth science fields than could be expected for most museums given the limitations placed by budgets and staff to prepare these exhibits for the public to see. Some of the larger cities have museums which display earth sciences exhibits such as gems, minerals, fossils and other related items - However, many cities even though sizeable do not have such displays of this nature and it is mostly only through club and federation exhibits that such items are made available for the public to see for this short time.

Here perhaps is a golden opportunity for clubs, especially for local club shows to present their city or town with a temporary mini museum. The exhibits have already been prepared - the owners have worked diligently and with great skill to prepare these exhibits and they will be seen and enjoyed for only a few days each year at the most.

Why not plan to move the exhibits after the show as a group to some place that they will be on exhibit say for a month or six weeks and thereby allow many more people to enjoy the beauty and knowledge from these exhibits.

This may not be as difficult as it may sound. You may have more choices than you may first suspect.

Some of the things to consider are the potential of how many people pass this location, how much space is available, is it a well known place, or must directions be provided.

Also consider the place in terms of the business owner or public agency that might provide space . Will your exhibit be an asset or a burden? An exhibit could bring in extra customers to some types of businesses and hence be very welcome.

Who do you know who might influence someone to provide space for a Temporary Museum

As a group, once you have decided where you want to present your exhibits, consider who you, as a group, collectively know that would be able to help you find the "place" to set up the exhibits. At this time you should tell this person of your choice of location - do not accept any location. Once this person knows of your desires as to location and why you choose such a location, they most likely will be most willing to help.

Best Location - Choices

If you are fortunate enough to have a choice of locations - each being considered a good location you may want to set down as a committee or group and make a list of the benefits derived at each location and then make a decision. For instance, one location may be offered as a one time only arrangement and another may carry an invitation for a repeat exhibit for another year also. Some may have different hours. These are some possibilities that may occur. The local airport, City hall, a bank whose lobby already has a security guard, a local food store or restaurant, a shopping mall, just to name a few. Wherever is selected it should be a place where the general public will be expected to pass by. Consider all.

Benefits to someone or some business who provides a temporary space

There could be advertising benefits to a business who provides you with a temporary "home" for your exhibits. For example they may want to advertise to the public to come to their place of business and see the exhibits in their showroom (and of course while there it may boost their businesses financially as well as their reputation as a civic minded organization).

Ease of Access/Parking

One thing to consider in a venture of this sort is the ease of access to the exhibits. A place with a close parking lot that would accommodate a school bus or large van, should be thought about. This could be a real incentive for the local schools or retirement home to visit the exhibit, as a group.

Does your town know your Club exists?

Along with your club's mini-museum presentation of exhibits for the public to view should be a "printed" flyer telling the public of your Club's existence and purpose.

This flyer could also convey an invitation to visit your club's next regular meeting, or at least tell the time and place of that meeting. Those that might be interested could make a further inquiry. This of course should be as each club decides.

At any rate, the exhibit will be observed and appreciated by most all who see it.

Some things your Club might want to do!

Schedule a "kick off" for your Museum's initiation.

Advertise your Temporary "Museum".

Notify your local school system about your "Museum".

If some business should provide a display cased counter - their name should be displayed prominently.

Display Cases

There are all sorts of display cases. Some plain and simple, some with lights, some with nice finishes on them and some with no finish.

Once you determine where this temporary museum is to be set up, study the space to determine the best arrangement for your cases. Look for electrical outlets and study the natural and overhead lighting that is available then decide which cases to use and where to place them. Have a floor plan of the space if available. Study this ahead of your clubs show.

The cases should be lockable and if the glass is horizontal some sort of notice should be posted saying "please do not lean on or place packages on the cases "on other appropriate signage as each club decides".

Security for the "Museum"

Any type of display on exhibit has some type of risk. Damage in transport or during "set-up" or "take-down" of the exhibit to name some elements of risk. There is also the extreme element, theft. All of these reluctantly must be considered. Hopefully this would not deter a club from an exhibit.

In this respect an area that already has security is a plus. A schedule which included a club member there to answer questions is possibly the best. That member could also answer questions about the exhibit and the club while providing an element of security.

Hours of Operation

Set some specific hours of operation and stick to them. This of course, means setting a schedule for those who will be staffing this temporary museum. Make the schedule realistic, based on where the exhibits will be, what hours of operation the host company observes, and here we say company - the host could be many types of organizations.

Who will tend the Museum

All museums need someone in attendance to do many things. Take tickets, answer questions, explain exhibits and perform a hundred and one other associated tasks.

The question then arises who will perform all these tasks? A club is of course a volunteer organization, usually with a limited number of members, many with limited time. Here, of course, is an area where those club members who are in a retired status might carry the bulk of the assignments.

Hold to the Original Schedule or Extend the "Museum"

Once your club has set a schedule for the exhibits - stick to it. Do not extend it.

Your members have made a schedule & commitment to be present during the exhibit and this should be honored so that if it occurs next year they will know a definite length of time for a commitment and be more willing to respond again.

To Seek or not to seek contributions?

Almost all gem shows charge an admission. Almost all museums request a donation as an admission fee. So where does a "temporary" mini museum fit into this "picture"?

This is a sensitive issue and a club must weight both the positive and negative aspects.

On the seek contributions side there are some expenses associated with moving exhibits from one place to the other. There are supplies such as extension cords for cases and table rentals and table covers. There may be the rental of a trailer and numerous other small expenses to be covered.

If your club has the funds in its treasury and is willing to bear these expenses, that will of course eliminate the need to handle any money during this time

Why Bother?

Most clubs have experienced the visitor or potential new member who shows up at a meeting saying, "How interesting, how long have you been here? What? 15 years?, why I had not heard about you until 3 weeks ago". So publicity is one answer to "Why bother?"

Another and perhaps the an even stronger reason, is that most exhibitors at club shows have worked the entire year to produce items to exhibit at the shows, to be exhibited only for the brief period of about 3 days. So the remaining 362 days these "works of art", be they of nature or shaped by people, most likely will be stored in a box or on a shelf where they are not seen and enjoyed. What a shame.

These are but 2 reasons. I am sure you can think of many more.

Why not plan ahead now and schedule a public exhibit immediately after your next club show?