

1. OVERVIEW

The DTE co-op spent over five months in increasing activity in planning and preparing for ConFest '81. All the work was entirely voluntary, with many people spending nearly full time on various aspects of the ConFest.

The event was for four days: 23 - 26 January 1981. Initial planning was for a crowd of 3 - 5,000 people attending.

The theme of the ConFest: welcoming and exploring a New Age, was made principally by Ray Harris, and with no dissension voiced, the theme was manifested primarily in a wide variety- of workshops.

Negotiations for the site, and with various officials in the Daylesford-Glenlyon area went on for over a year; firstly for the monthly market at Glenlyon, and subsequently for the ConFest itself.

Everyone involved was conscious of past ConFests; their strenghts and weaknesses, and considerable time was spent by Bruce and Ted on analysing documents from these festivals, and attempting to glean out of them all that could be used practically in planning and running ConFest '81. Documents from the Berri ConFest were particularly valuable (thanks, Ted.)

All of the negotiations were successful, with the co-op giving an impression that as a body-, it was capable and disciplined enough to carry out the job.

Overall, ConFest '81 was successful. Peop-le enjoyed themselves, the feed-back has been very gratifying, financially- we made a bit, and the co-op's credibility has been considerably enhanced for the most part.

However, we did make mistakes. This report will go through some of the phases of the ConFest operations, and will indicate problem areas, and offer recommendations for future operations, if the co-op decides to run another ConFest.

From my own personal point of view, I feel that it went well, but at present I wouldn't want to do it again for a long while. The tension, although mostly subliminal, is there, and quite exhausting in its cumulative result.

2. PLANNING.

The co-op members took very seriously the need for good planning, and from this base came a successful ConFest. Two festivals have been well planned, Berri and Glenlyon. Both made money, and both were "highlights" of what alternative festivals can be.

Major problems in the planning area are:

- a. Lack of information about certain systems.

- b. Failure of the co-op to follow through on methods of working.
- c. Non-adherence to agreed upon procedures.
- d. Failure to stick to a time-line.

Discussion.

Every ConFest is unique because of different sites, and different people organising them. Activities change rapidly. During our planning phase we "guestimated" on costs of various things, how they would run, and the effort and energy required to implement our ideas. Instances. The shower plans were beautiful, but when the time came to put them up, they bore little resemblance to the plan. Reasons: lack of personnel and materials at the time they were needed. Vague ideas about films and television programs. This whole area needs much more work in the future. It was one of the most frustrating areas of the whole confest.

Considerable time was spent in meetings discussing the need for coordinators and work groups for each of the major systems of the ConFest, which incidentally, merely follows through on the overall "modus operandi" of the co-op anyway-. In most instances, this simply didn't happen. The end result was some very tired coordinators, and some rather ragged systems. If we put energy- into developing a structure of working, which in the long run will save us from exhaustion, the grumps, etc. then for heaven's sake, let's use it.

We agreed at several meetings, including one at Camp Eureka, that quotes would be obtained for items we needed to buy, in a timely fashion so that we could beat the Christmas break. For the most part this did not happen. This area ties in with the paragraph above. And lastly, this ties in with the time line we agreed on and for the most part squeezed by just within tolerable limits. This of course puts the rush on, and slow panic sets in just when we don't need it.

To summarise specifics:

- a. we need less guesses and more facts about systems and their costs.
- b. The entire A/V system definitely needs a lot of work in the future.
- c. We must have our work groups organised in a much better fashion if we are going to follow through on our plans.
- d. Procedures need to be followed, because if they aren't, then we're the ones to cop the flack; and also if we really stuff it up, the safety and well being of thousands of people are endangered.

Overall, the planning for this ConFest was probably the best ever. But as noted there is considerable room for improvement.

Note that these comments are of a general nature, and not specific; the other coordinators are writing up more detailed accounts of their own systems which will provide specifics.

3. FINANCE.

This is the first ever ConFest that has been financed by the members of DTE exclusively. The raising of money was magnificent. It showed a true cooperative spirit, and without it there would have been no ConFest. My personal thanks to everyone who gave so generously, and I am delighted to be in a position to be able to pay everyone back..

Finance procedures were developed by the finance committee, following those that were proposed and adopted at Berri. There were three signatories for cheques, with any- two to sign. All orders over \$50.00 were to have an order form written out, and approval from the committee. All money was to be banked promptly. Normal cash flow procedures were to be carried out. For further reference refer to financial procedures notes in "Finance file" for ConFest.

A budget was prepared by Ray and myself, using Berri guidelines for some idea. The idea was to adhere to the budget as much as possible, with various quotes from various committees coming to the committee for approval.

Problems.

- a. Failure to get prices and quotes on various services and items.
- b. Failure to use committee; arbitrary decisions.
- c. During festival, failure to insure that all money was banked before spending.
- d. Failure to get order forms out as per procedures.

Recommendations.

- a. Tighter control by finance committee. Although I consider myself a nice guy and very honest in terms of handling dollars, it would be real easy to skip the country

In the future, the site coordinator (me this time) should have gone to the site with a wad of dollars- and cheques that were signed for and that I was accountable for. As it was, I took twelve cheques, and what cash was spent was straight out of the till, because there was no bank close by where I could make out a cash cheque (Kyneton was the closest). Records of expenses were kept however, but it's still a risky business.

- b. As above in the planning section, we need to follow through on our own procedures; if they don't work, make new procedures that do; just don't be arbitrary-.

- c. Written authorities will need to be given to people in the field with an allocated amount to spend. These should be kept at office.

CO-ORDINATION.

What in effect we were carrying out was an amalgam of a military operation and a survival operation. There was a loose hierarchy, with me in the drivers seat. Various people were responsible for the systems that we planned (See systems list at the end of this report). These people took responsibility to

insure their systems worked, and were budgeted. Reports and problems were raised at meetings, and additional assistance was requested, and in some cases, received.

During the planning phase this was not much of a problem area, but during the preparation phase when some of us were on site, it became a problem. Coordinators who were taking charge of various systems were not on site when they were needed; and thus I or someone else had to make decisions about where things were to go, or what they were to be built out of.

Materials and personnel were not there when needed; thank God for the law of Manifestation.

Another thing we agreed on was to have apprentices, or partners, so that no one person had to take the whole load of a system or systems. In effect what happened was that oftentimes one person had two or three systems, no partners, and consequently, as in other festivals, suffered from total exhaustion, and the systems did not work as well as they could have.

The only recommendation I can make here is that we follow though on our own procedures..

Incidentally, I asked several times for a partner, and all I saw was dust over the horizon.... In the final time, Ted and James took on part of the load, allowing me to sleep, go to an odd workshop, and for that I am most grateful.

SITE DEVELOPMENT.

Two weeks or so before the ConFest a few of us moved onto the site to begin site works. This included earthworks, telephones, etc. The objective was to have every-thing ready prior to the festival starting. It worked -- just. Thanks to the outstanding cooperation of the local people at Glenlyon and Daylesford, we got everything done before the hordes descending.

In the future, we need to insure that our time line is more realistic, and that part of a coordi-nator's commitment is to be on site to insure that his/her systems are properly done.

CONFEST OPERATIONS.

The ConFest itself ran very well. The organisation seemed inobtrusive to most of the crowd which is a good indication that things went well. The various systems worked very well. After Friday, and part of Saturday, the organisation seemed to shake down very smoothly. This was indicative of good planning, and I think principally because we all tried to look after one another a bit.

Coordinator's meetings are necessary, and there were times when we were all flat out, but needed to get together. This could have been alleviated to a degree if we had followed our own procedures and each had someone else

who could run things. We were a sort of municipal working council who were also the employees of said council. Its a hard job.

Time again. If we agree to have a meeting at a certain time, for god sake let's make it on time. If we agree to have a morning sharing at 9.00 am, let's have at that time, not an hour later.

Someone mentioned that we should have a gong struck on the hour because most people don't wear watches at festivals. Perhaps we ought to consier this. Again, it's following through on what we say we intend to do. It's bad form to keep- people waiting and increases frustration at a time when we don' need it at all.

WHERE DOES DTE GO FROM HERE?

This doesn't have much to do with the ConFest at all. I have a feeling that the co-op's credibility has been considerably enhanced because of the ConFest. We are tired: We have some money. We have some ideas. And we may have a lot of new people and their energy and ideas coming to take a more active part in DTE. I think that now the co-op must take into consideration what it intends to do in 1981 - 82. It must develop a program. It must see to it that once the program is done, it is followed through. Some of the programs I can see happening and which can: make money, employ people, meet co-op- objectives, and assist people in finding their alternative life-style are:

- a. increasing network work.
- b. getting the computer bureau operational and making \$\$.
- c. Improving Open Mind.
- d. Working to more outside speaking engagements.
- e. Assisting other alternative groups to form.
- f. Getting a more timely newsletter out.
- g. Maintain a neat, efficient, friendly office.
- h. Plan discussion nights and other "one-off" events.
- i. Run weekend workshops on various activities.
- j. Organise a cleaning/light maintenance service.
- k Work on the personal relations side with various methods.
- l. Increase country market activity.
- m. Encourage new members to become involved, and assist them in new projects and activities.

There could be more, of course. But from me that's enough. In some ways I wish I could be here and work full time on these things, but I'm called elsewhere for a while. I thank everyone for their patience, their love, and their co-operation in the past to help build such a marvelous family and organisation.

CONFEST SYSTEMS LIST, WITH COORDINATORS.

SYSTEM	COORDINATORS/COMMITTEE
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Finance	Peter, Jean, Ted, Ray H.
Publicity	George, Ray H, Murray, Bill E.
Planning	Bruce N.
Public Relations	Bruce, Peter, Ted, Murray, Bill E.
Workshops	Mandy, Bill S.
Market	Mandy, Bill S.
Catering	Bill E.
Gates	Geoby
Healing village	George, Ewen
Children's--village	Mic, Katy
Signs	Gary, Benny
Stage	Roly, Don
Music	Don
Audio-visual	?
Electrics	Mark M.
Plumbing	Mark B.
Car park	Gary
Communications	James
Transport	James, Bridh, Adrian, Harmony
Fire/security-	Nigel
Workers kitchen	Jean, Mem
Tools, supplies	Bill S.
Sanitation/health	Jean, Michel, Bill E., Andy
Information	Mandy, Bill S- Trevor Mem
Garbage disposal	Various
Tents, marquees	Greg
Notice boards	Greg
DTE Information	George
Site works	Peter

NOTE: This list is out of my head only. Please feel free to amend it. PW