

From the Editor's Desk

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*I'll send an SOS to the world.
I hope that someone gets my....*

This being an editorial page, I figure maybe it's time for me to get on my soapbox about tournament planning. Clearly most organizers have figured out that tournaments need to be advertised in advance. Obviously so, as without some kind of notice to potential players, they wouldn't know there was a tournament to play in, and they would fail to show up.

This is not to say that organizers advertise their events far enough in advance, often enough, or in enough different venues. Organizers, like much of the rest of the world, usually don't start planning for events far enough in advance.

So step one, **start planning for next year's tournament right now**, the minute that the current event ends.

Let's also give organizers credit for knowing some of the essential elements of a tournament, such as having a playing site, a place to stay for multi-day tournaments and those drawing players from out of the area, and sufficient tournament directors to make the pairings and handle disputes. However, it's easy to overlook some of the most basic functions during the planning stage, such as having enough people working the registration desk.

Step two, **line up enough volunteers** to handle all of the paperwork. Make sure there is a way to check memberships and ratings at site. Make sure the person who can write checks is there in time to pay prizes. Make sure there's money in the account. Write checks to the correct people at the end.

Step three, and this is the main point I hope to make today, plan the post-event coverage just as thoroughly as the pre-event publicity. **It's not all over Monday morning.**

Players in chess tournaments like to have a good time during the event, of course. But they also want to remember it, read about it, as a significant chess event. A couple hundred players show up, play, go home. Is that the end? Of course not. **There must be press coverage, games, results, pictures.** The tournament must be rated promptly – gone are the days that events took months for the USCF to rate. The amount of post-event coverage helps to define an event as a success, encourages players to plan to play again the next year, and entices new players who hope to see their own names and faces published next time. Tournament stories in the magazine serve as advance publicity for next year, establish the current tournament as an important event, and make everyone who volunteered and played feel better about their involvement. **Respect your people.**

Northwest Chess has an interest in covering chess events, but we are not large enough or rich enough to send reporters and photographers to every tournament, simul, or club meeting. We depend on organizers and players to write about their experiences. Organizers should be cognizant of this, and plan for this in advance. Ask better writers to come and report from their own unique perspective. Ask good photographers to come, take pictures, and send high-quality electronic files to *Northwest Chess* and any other potentially interested media outlet.

It might even be worthwhile to offer an incentive to bring a good reporter or photographer to your event.

What brought this on? Well, the only reason we have a report from Reno's Western States Open in this issue is that I went to high school with Keith Yamanaka. We have pictures from the Washington Class because I asked Philip Peterson to drop in – but we still have no games, no story, and the event has not yet been rated.

I hope that someone gets my.... Message in a bottle....