

## **PRODUCTION OF THE NATIONAL SCRABBLE CHAMPIONSHIP**

As I type this we are about 7 weeks away from the 2013 National SCRABBLE Championship being held at the Riviera Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada.

The production of this event entails many things: finding adequate space; analyzing numerous offers from various cities and properties; contracting with a property; determining format, entry fee, and qualification requirements; securing staff members; recruiting volunteers; contracting with vendors; contracting with sponsors; receiving shipped goods; diagramming the playing room; ensuring proper electrical capability; ensuring proper Internet capability; communicating with hotel facilities staff to ensure that our requirements are met; making sure that all players are in their appropriate/desired division; producing and holding the Town Hall and Director Meeting and Reception; scheduling and holding committee meetings; scheduling and determining space for after-hour activities; designing winners' trophies; verifying yearly award winners and producing their certificates/plaques; making sure we have enough computers for adjudication; contracting with sound and audio-visual professionals; identifying nearby emergency facilities; buying lots of paper, printing ink and office supplies; printing player scorecards, score sheets, and tally slips; designing, purchasing and distributing tournament mementos (T-shirts, pens, racks, etc.); coordinating with media; running the actual event; posting news and photos to our website; determining awards and holding the awards ceremony; taking down our property at the conclusion of the event; shipping and restoring our goods; and doing it all on budget.

The playing space this year is approximately 18,700 square feet. NASPA likes to have 35-40 square feet per person. When you subtract dedicated space for the command center, vendors, guest/parent seating, and other miscellaneous items, we have enough room this year for 500 participants. We were hoping to contract some additional space at the hotel, but there is no more room at the inn. **Thus, registration for the 2013 NSC will be limited to the first 500 paid entries.** After that, we will maintain a waiting list of players to be admitted in the event of cancellations.

The contract with this property was a fairly straightforward agreement and was by far the best of the many offers we received and analyzed in the southern western portion of the continent. We guaranteed 600 sold room nights in exchange for our playing space. With the very economical room rate, we have a lot more people staying at the hotel and pampering themselves with their own rooms.

The staff is top notch. Dallas Johnson will direct his second National Scrabble Championship. Dallas is an absolute pleasure to work with -- professional and thorough. He has assembled 9 division leaders and assistants. We have data entry personnel for up-to-the-minute results, which will feed into Technical Director and Co-producer John Chew's magnificent pairing and results program.

We have numerous volunteers to help with player registration, handing out player packets, T-shirts to those who purchased one or more, room set-up, computers for adjudication and room teardown. Other volunteers have offered challenge computers for use during the tournament, or packing up our supplies on Wednesday after the prize ceremony.

The format will be the same as in many years past: 31 games over 5 days. We will have vendors selling their wares. We have a few sponsors this year who are providing prizes; Merriam-Webster will provide special dictionaries and a new company, Studio Remy Fine Art is providing special artwork for selected

winners. American Airlines once again provided discounted travel and Winning Moves is providing games for participants as they did in 2011. Southwest Displays will handle the shipment and short-term storage in their Las Vegas warehouse of NASPA product as well as providing signage.

Dallas is continually working on the room diagram as our registrations have swelled beyond our expectations. John Chew is on top of Internet requirements. The Championship Committee has been in regular contact with the hotel concerning room night pickup, increasing our room block, and adhering to Fire Marshall codes.

Connie Creed is once again producing the Director Reception which follows the Director Meeting. NASPA appreciates all of its directors. As an expression of our appreciation to those directors who demonstrate their support of the NSC with their attendance, NASPA is pleased to host a Director Reception. Connie is also in charge of securing the division awards and has contracted a firm to provide engraved crystal trophies for this year's winners.

The NSC's convention-like atmosphere allows for players to see people that they usually do not encounter during the course of the year from around the continent. NASPA schedules after hour activities each night to allow participants to socialize or play games on a more relaxed level. NASPA also schedules committee meetings so that all committee members have an opportunity for face-to-face discussion of their current issues and plans.

The Ratings and Recognition Committee identifies all category winners for the current playing season awards and Dallas has certificates printed up for them that are typically presented at the awards ceremony. This year we may do a few each day before play begins, so as to decrease the time for the final awards ceremony. These awards include: NASPA Player of the Year; Most Tournament Wins; Most Tournament Games Played; and many others. We also honor those people who reach the 5,000 Tournament Games Played milestone.

NASPA contracts an outside company at the hotel's recommendation for audio and visual needs. Dallas Johnson buys gobs of ink and paper upon arrival in the tournament city.

In previous years we have had a few medical emergencies and one dental emergency. We are prepared in case something goes awry for a player or staff member.

Sherrie Saint John and Patty Hocker will be providing Internet color and coverage for the thousands and thousands of viewers who like to follow this grand event. Even the players follow the coverage! Those two, along with our NSC staff, will be handling media inquiries, and there are many during this high profile championship. The NSC gets very good worldwide coverage.

After it is all done, we take down the room, pack the Big Board and boxes, ship it all back to Texas and get ready to do it all again. Next year the National SCRABBLE Championship finally returns to the Northeast in Buffalo, New York.

See you in Vegas, baby!

Chris Cree