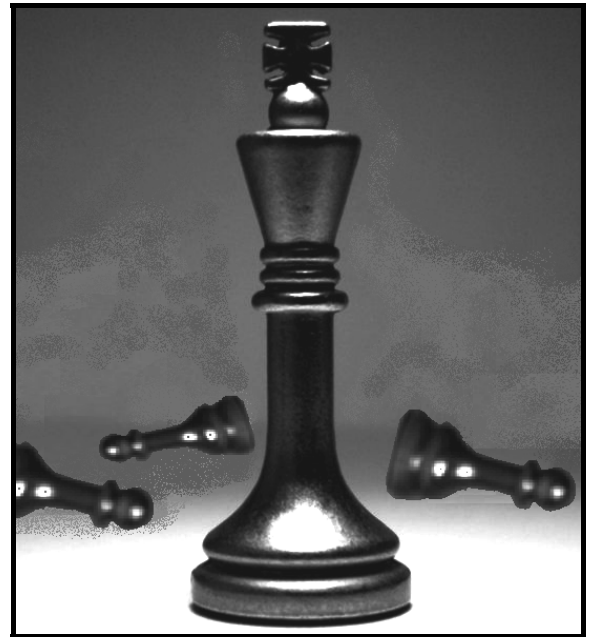


# Renaissance Convention Center: Post-Game Analysis

In the history books of Chicagoland home shows, we'll eventually come to terms with the issue of 'market saturation' (See other Lil' J Papers re. "Too many home shows . . .").

In the history books of the Renaissance Convention Center in Schaumburg, they'll be forced to do the same.

'Til then, the self-flogging and cannibalizing shall remain on schedule.



## Renaissance Convention Center (Schaumburg) and Marriott Management

There was so much anticipation when the Center opened a few years back. It was *'the'* big new hall for all the *Producers Who Would Be King*.

However, faced with a ton of debt, Schaumburg (who owns it) and the Marriott (who runs it) opted to take any and every show they could get into the hall. Is this smart? It never has been.

There was Full House, and then the *Other Guys* piled on: dmg, Tower, Showcase, Show Tech, HBA-GC ... and who knows who else!? Originally, there were more than half a dozen home show producers vying over schedules that ended with no less than 6 scheduled shows (5 spring; 1 fall). 'dmg' dropped 2 shows immediately (2007 and 2008). Show Tech dropped their 2008 show. The HBA-GC ran a 2008 show and dumped out thereafter. Showcase is gone too.

After the mounting grid-lock of would-be home show promoters ... I questioned, "Why bother?" We had Harper for over 15 years, and Lake and Kane County were building new halls with all the amenities and enough space to accommodate us. The new Fairgrounds buildings will dominate these respective markets for years to come. So, why?! We dropped out and never looked back.

From fall 2006, Marriott expanded the number of home shows to complete the self-destruction.

You'd think Schaumburg or Marriott would catch on. In all fairness, Schaumburg handed management of Renaissance over to Marriott, so Schaumburg was less at fault than Marriott. But really, who can say? . . . *I can.*

I can say every time a facility manager allows more than one producer to promote a like-themed show in competition with another, in the same facility, they're fools. It never worked at Rosemont, Odeum, Harper, Lincolnshire; and, it hasn't worked at Renaissance. It's killed more than the shows – it kills the hall's potential. They seldom recover, if ever.



## Producers Who Wouldn't Be King

You'd think the producers (the *Other Guys*) would figure out Renaissance management's Darwinian philosophy was eating them alive. Some did. Most didn't, until they failed.

The *Other Guys* all wanted to command the throne of this newly formed *Empire* and played their pawns – lining up their exhibitors for the sacrifice.

The schedule of 4 shows over 6 months (roughly, a home show every 6 weeks), was just too damn much and went on too damn long. Traffic variances between one show and the next have been negligible since its beginning (declining according to Renaissance exhibitors). It's *madness*.

Every show that Marriott added caused a further division of traffic, from 1/1 to 1/n (for the *algebraically-challenged*, 'n' equaled less attendance than any show in Chicagoland). The failures became apparent this past year, particularly due to the recession, and particularly for Fall 2008.

The fateful twists have wiped out all but one, Tower. And yet, their Fall 2008 show was so unimpressive that a number of exhibitors were *un-invited* for having "negative attitudes." Allegedly, they were told don't come back. [*Now I gotta ask, when times are hard and money's tight, who would do that?*]



### **The Pawns of War ~ The Market Wars**

The *Other Guys* hoped *exhibitors* wouldn't notice declining traffic while they fought a long, losing battle with other producers for better dates, better attendance, and better results. The 'results,' never came.

When viewing the big picture, pitting short-term facts against long-term strategies, the truth can't be avoided. If less is more, than too many shows is disastrous. Hiding these realities from exhibitors is no less a conspiracy than the wide breadth of sales *puffery*, channeled from the top to skewer the bottom – in case you didn't understand, that's *you* at the *bottom* -- the *exhibitor*.

Each show reduced the long-term *growth* and, therefore, the long-term *potential* of Renaissance – and, my friends, 'long-term' is what it's all about. The damage is done and it'll take years to correct.

The casualties?

The exhibitors who were sacrificed; battered, bleeding – some, broken for their experience.



### **The Home ShowS is Proud to Announce . . .**

Recently, the Renaissance offered its facility to us again. For a second, I sat with the contract and thought, "Is this another hall we could dig up from the dead?" [We've raised plenty of facilities from graves the *Other Guys* buried them in: Oak Lawn, Palatine, Glen Ellyn, Darien, Lake County and Homer.]

It's not *puffery* to say we could do better – but why risk our relationship with you? To know, going into a hall like Renaissance, that the numbers are against us both – history, traffic, expense, and too many home shows for too long a time ... well, that's a risk neither you nor we can afford to take, especially now.

In this industry, bad shows at bad halls leads to bad relations. It's not worth risking *your* business to prove a point – that we out-produce other producers – if that's even possible at the Renaissance.

The Renaissance is too eager to solve their financial problems at the cost of failing shows, failing exhibitors and failing promoters. They'll continue to play these games, contracting more and more like-theme shows, until they or the producers recognize the insanity of it all. Just because the losses are spread amongst *the many* (exhibitors) by *middle-men* (promoters), that doesn't mean the losses aren't real to *you*.

*Therefore, we're very pleased to announce we will not be producing The Home ShowS at the Renaissance in Schaumburg.*



Since 1986 . . .

From the desk of Lil' Johnny  
That's my opinion. What's yours? Comments to:  
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. . . avoiding bad gambits.