

TEXAS CLOWN ASSOCIATION CONVENTION GUIDELINES / RECOMMENDATIONS

BANQUET COST:

BEWARE! This can be your biggest cost. Work with your hotel catering staff on menu selection. Hotels usually will work with the Host to create a menu that can meet the budget needs. Be aware that chicken works best for a variety of reasons. Also, consider offering a vegetable plate.

BANQUET ENTERTAINMENT:

Use local talent if available. These people are sometimes unique to your area and make for a nice and interesting program. Consider any special needs or areas that might be needed for the entertainment such as the use of a public address system. Banquet entertainment is NOT required. If there is entertainment during the banquet, it should last no more than 30 minutes to allow sufficient time for all award presentations.

BANQUET ROOM:

A chart of the banquet tables could be set up in the registration area to allow attendees to "RESERVE" tables for their alleys. This is usually considered a fair method for advanced banquet seating. This method discourages "MAD DASHES" when the banquet room doors are opened. Set this out on Friday or earlier.

Keep in mind that the table decoration centerpieces should be kept low enough not to block the guests' view. Consider coordinating with the photographer for a slide show of winners of the different categories to be shown during the awards presentations.

COMPETITION AWARDS:

Top ten certificates for all categories **may** be awarded. TCA Competition Director will make decision and supply all certificates. TCA provides all trophies/medals/awards.

CONVENTION LENGTH:

The convention **usually** begins on Wednesday afternoon and ends on Sunday morning.

CONVENTION THEME:

A convention "THEME" is **not required but it is a good and fun idea**. Implementing your theme is fun and helps in your planning also. The theme should be carried out from start to finish of the convention. The theme can be a holiday, a movie, an era, history of your state or city, etc. Be sure to let your hotel know about the theme, as they may want to get involved.

DAY REGISTRATION:

This is typically for attendees who cannot stay for the duration of the convention, those who are interested in tracks only, or for locals who want to shop in the dealer room. Though sometimes difficult to police, it can be a profitable option for the host. Another thought would be to have a shopping day open to the public. Affix a cost to shop, i.e. \$10 to shop on Saturday from 9am until noon. Make this a "cash only" entry fee.

DEALERS:

The number and type of dealers is left to the discretion of the Host, usually 10-15 depending on space availability. The invited dealers should carry a good assortment of wares, sometimes having more than one (1) of each. For example: two (2) costumers, two (2) magic dealers, two (2) shoemakers, at least one (1) badge / name tag maker, etc. The dealers are charged for their tables. This helps the Host recoup some of the cost to rent the dealer room. Remember that the dealers come to make money, so be careful what you GIVE them. You might have them lecture in return for free additional tables. The dealers are good people to ask for auction/raffle items.

The Host must provide a table for the sale of TCA items. This may be in the Dealers room or near the Registration area.

DEALERS' ROOM:

Consideration should be given to the posting of a "guard" to restrict entry to convention registrants only. This "guard" could be a member of the hosting group. (It is recommended that it be a large room(s) that will easily accommodate the expected crowd without feeling cramped.) This room will need to be locked when the dealers are not "Open" for business.

FOOD SERVICE:

It is recommended when choosing a host hotel/venue that it be in close proximity of quick food establishments. Some hotels will prepare "sack" lunches for a reasonable price or may take advance orders. Also, buffets make for fast service.

GOODIE BAGS:

"Goodie bags" **are not required** but are a convenient way to distribute helpful information to convention attendees. These items could be part of the Registration Packet. Suggested items are as follows:

- Copy of the Hotel Rules (Pool / game room / check out times)
- Location of nearby restaurants
- Local shopping (Malls / Wal-Mart / Photocopy Center)
- Small notepad
- Sharpened pencils / Pen
- Highlighter
- Next year convention registration form
- Next year convention program book ad form

Copies of the following MAY be made available by TCA for inclusion in the goodie bags:

- TCA By-Laws and any proposed changes
- Competition Rules

HOSPITALITY ROOM:

TCA alleys usually take turns hosting and providing snacks, goodies and non-alcoholic beverages as a means of having a morning or evening social gathering place. The next year's convention Host should consider hosting the hospitality room on Saturday night. This would be a prime time to promote early registration.

HOST:

The convention will be planned and hosted by either an accepted and approved current TCA Alley or a Board appointed convention committee. All references in this document to the convention Host, will refer to this approved alley or appointed committee.

HOTEL:

It is recommended that the hotel be agreeable to allowing up to four people to share a room. The Host should work with the hotel to block a sufficient number of rooms with a reasonable cut-off date.

THE JOEY JOURNAL REPORTS:

It is very helpful to get information such as dates, maps, types of workshops, dealer names, lecturer names, convention theme, hotel information, type of auction/raffle, and will the Host accept donated items for the auction, to *The Joey Journal* for publication early and often (but NOT before the end of the previous convention). Each issue of *The Joey Journal* (following the previous convention) can promote your convention with information you supply to the editor.

JUDGES MEETING:

A short judges meeting is usually held in conjunction with a mandatory competitors' meeting prior to any scheduled competition. Plan for it in your convention schedule.

PHOTOGRAPHER:

It is helpful to have a convention photographer, but not a requirement. The photographer often needs a separate room that can be secured so that they can set up their equipment and leave it overnight.

PROGRAM BOOK:

This can be the Host's big money maker. The Host keeps all the proceeds from advertising sales in their convention program book. Start selling ads as early as possible. Put an article in *The Joey Journal* to sell program ads. Send a flier to each TCA alley soliciting their ads. Consider having fliers to sell advertisements at the convention prior to yours. (See the section on Promoting Your Convention in Convention Policies)

Remember to ask the TCA Board of Directors to place an ad in your program. They should pay the standard rate for their ad.

PROMOTE YOUR CONVENTION:

You should have some registration forms and program book advertisement sales fliers at the convention prior to yours. Encourage early registration. Some past practices of early registration had an advantage of lower cost or the possibility of winning a prize such as a free room. You may also consider having your registration form and program book advertisement sales flier in the preceding convention's goodie bag, registration bag or in the program book. (See section on Program Book under Convention Guidelines)

RAFFLES / AUCTIONS:

All proceeds from any raffle or auction will go directly to the Host. It is their decision as to how to distribute it. Often, a portion is given to their convention charity of choice. It is suggested that you keep the number of auction items down and the quality of items high. Decide if the Host will accept donated items for auction. If yes, then tell the membership at the “Promote Your Convention” show on Sunday morning. Also, put the information in *The Joey Journal*.

REGISTRATION:

Must have a good system. This is the backbone of a good and orderly system. Must have both advanced and “at the door” pricing. Suggest at least 4 stages of pricing by postmark – before end of current year, by end of April, by September 15, and at the door. Make sure that all payments **at the door are cash only**. Consider a way to accept credit card payments. No checks at the door.

VIDEO:

Video taping of your convention for sale is left to the Host’s discretion. Video taping should be done by professionals.

WORKSHOPS:

Education is the main focus of the convention. The Host should strive to include as many workshops / lectures / demonstrations as possible. Usually there are two (2) or three (3) or more workshops offered during each time slot, as to allow the convention attendees a selection. If you believe one workshop will be exceptional, consider offering it twice. Be sure not to overlook TCA members as lecturers for the workshops. We have many very talented clowns, magicians, balloonists, face painters, etc.

WORSHIP SERVICE:

Arrangements should be made to conduct a Sunday morning non-denominational service. This service is usually held prior to the Sunday morning breakfast.